THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Lesson 1 -- Introduction
Sept. 24, 1985

I. The place of the Gospels in the Canon of Scripture.

II. The place of Luke among the Gospels.

III. The special character of Luke's Gospel.

I. The place of the Gospels in the Canon of Scripture.

The message of the Bible has to do with salvation.

A. The divisions of the Old Testament where everything anticipates the coming of the Messiah (Christ).

B. The divisions of the New Testament which begins with the advent of Christ in the Gospels, followed by the ministry of the Apostles and the early Church, culminating in the prophecies of the last days leading to the new heaven and the new earth.

<u>The Gospels give us the focal point of Scripture.</u> The Old Testament anticipates Christ's coming; from the Book of Acts on through the New Testament the coming of Christ is explained and applied.

II. The place of Luke among the Gospels.

A. There is really only one Gospel, but we have four accounts of the Gospel, written by four different men: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Our right to call them Gospels is given in Mark 1:1. This shows us that the Gospel has to do with Christ and His death on the Cross.

B. The four Gospels, each devoted to the life and ministry of Christ show the great importance of the Lord Jesus Christ in Scripture (since there is no other such emphasis upon any person who is mentioned in either the Old Testament or the New Testament).

C. Four Gospels confirm the facts recorded concerning Who Christ was, and what He did while He was on earth. See Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Matt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1.

All four of the Gospels are different as to their arrangement, but are in perfect agreement as to their contents.

D. The first three Gospels of the New Testament are called, The Synoptic Gospels, because they give a general presentation of the life and ministry of Christ, and are in general agreement as to the order in which they presented their material. The order which John followed in his Gospel is altogether different.

E. Two writers were Apostles and eyewitnesses of much of what they wrote: Matthew and John. Mark and Luke got their information from others. However, all four men wrote under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

F. It is generally agreed by those who have studied the background of the four Gospels that they were written in the following order:
1. Mark, about 50 A.D.
2. Matthew, about 58 A.D.
3. Luke, sometime between 58 and 60 A.D., but after Matthew wrote his Gospel.
4. John, much later, about 95 A.D.

It is impossible to know exactly when each Gospel was written, and so these much be considered approximate.

G. Each Gospel writer wrote for a different group:

1. Matthew wrote for the Jews.

2. Mark and Luke both wrote for Gentiles.

   a. Mark for the Romans.

   b. Luke for the Greeks.

3. John wrote for the whole Church and for the world at large.

H. Each Gospel writer presented Christ in a different way:

1. Matthew presented Christ as the Messiah of Israel, their King.

2. Mark presented Christ as the Servant of the Lord. He is the Mighty Worker, the Doer of God's will and works.

3. Luke presented Christ as the Son of Man, the perfect Man.

4. John presented Christ as the Son of God, in His Deity.

Note: It should be remembered that none of the Gospel writers presented Christ only one way to the exclusion of any other way. For example, both the humanity of Christ

and His Deity are established by all four Gospels. The points above simply indicate the special emphasis in each Book.

III. The special character of Luke's Gospel.

A. Luke is the longest of the four Gospels.

In my Bible Matthew has 38 pages,
Mark has 24 pages,
John has 30 pages,
but Luke has 40 pages.

In terms of verses, Matthew has 1068,
Mark has 678,
John has 879,
but Luke has 1151.

B. Over half of the verses in the Gospel of Luke contain words spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ: 586 verses.

This is greater than either Mark (285) or John (419), but less than Matthew (644).

C. Although Luke's name is not found in the Gospel of Luke, there is overwhelming agreement among Bible scholars that he wrote this Gospel which bears his name.

It is also agreed that he wrote the Book of Acts. Both Books are dedicated to the same man, Theophilus. The first verse of Acts refers to a "former treatise," which seems to be a reference to the Gospel of Luke.

D. Luke is mentioned by name only three times in the Bible: Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11; Philemon 24. He was a medical doctor, and it is generally agreed that he was a Gentile (although there are those who insist that he was a Jew).

However, it is obvious that he was with the Apostle Paul during much of the Paul's ministry as recorded in the Book of Acts. See the passages where the pronoun "we" is used in Acts: 16:10-17; 20:5-21:1-18; 27:1-28:16.

E. One reason for saying that Luke presented Christ in His perfect humanity, as the Son of man, is because he devoted more space to the birth of Christ than all of the other three writers combined!

F. There are certain other interesting details to be noted about the Gospel of Luke:

1. Of the 20 miracles recorded in Luke's Gospel, 6 are found

only in his Gospel.

2. Of the 35 parables recorded in Luke's Gospel, 19 are peculiar to Luke.

3. Luke's emphasis on individuals.

4. Luke's emphasis on women. There are only 5 chs. where women are not mentioned.

5. Luke's emphasis on prayer.

6. Luke's emphasis on music.

   He did not write music (as far as we know), but he preserved music. His Gospel begins and ends with songs.

7. Luke's emphasis on the universal, world-wide, character and mission of the Gospel.

G. The outline of the Gospel. (See separate page.)

H. Encourage reading the entire Gospel once each week, and the first section, Luke 1:1-4:13, at least three times each week.

8. Luke has more to say about the Holy Spirit than Matthew and Mark combined. Cf. Luke 1:15, 35, 41, 67; 2:25, 26; 3:22; 4:1, 14, 18; 10:21; 24:49.

9/30/85

G. Campbell Morgan (p. 12) Four things Luke tells us:
1) His subject.
2) His sources.
3) His method
4) His purpose

Luke 1:1-4 - The Preface, or Introduction.
It is unique as far as the Gospels are concerned.
There is a special emphasis in each of the first 4 verses:
1) V. 1 - on "many."
2) V. 2 - on the "eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word."
3) V. 3 - on Luke himself.
4) V. 4 - the purpose of this Gospel with reference to "Theophilus" (named in v. 3).

(1:1) "many" had written before about the things which had been accomplished among them (NASB), so well-known that Luke did not specify in this intro. what he was going to write about. There was no question about the certainty of what Luke was writing. People were convinced of the facts, and they were w/ full confidence believed.

"Most surely believed" is the statement in Rom 4:21, "and being fully persuaded." They were convinced they had any doubt.

Luke was not trying to prove that there was such a Person as Jesus Christ, and that He did and taught these things. He was seeking to put them in order so that they might be better understood.
This ought to characterize our teaching and preaching, too. We are proclaiming a message concerning Christ which is true. We are not trying to prove anything. The Lord honors the truth as it is proclaimed.
Mark and Matthew were among the "many," but obviously Luke's Gospel was to meet a need which theirs did not meet.

(1:2) Luke had not seen the Lord, nor known Him. And so he had had to be dependent upon those who were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word.

Luke's record rested, therefore, on the testimony of those who had first-hand information.

He was certain of its accuracy. People were still living who had seen and heard the Lord.

Cf. 1 Cor. 15:5-8.

Also 2 Pet. 1:12-18, esp. vv. 16-18.

and 1 John 1:1-3.

Remember what was said in Dt. 17:6; 19:15; Mt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1.

Luke probably had reference chiefly to the apostles, but not exclusively.

The witnesses were "ministers of the word."

"Ministers" – ὑπηρέται. This is an under-rower, a subordinate, one who acts under another's direction. It suggests that those who were eyewitnesses were charged to tell what they had seen and heard.

Cf. Acts 4:13-22, esp. vv. 19, 20.

See Acts 2:32; 3:15; 5:29-32. "Obey" in Acts 5:29 indicates they were under the Lord's orders to tell what they had seen and heard.

See also Acts 10:36-43. See the "word" in vv. 36, 37. Note "commanded" in v. 42.

The commands of the Lord with reference to Himself, i.e., the Gospel: Mt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:45-48, 49; Acts 1:8.

Cf. 2 Tim 2:2; 4:1, 2.

So we have here the oral testimony and

Eyewitnesses from which we get our word autopsy – αὐτόπται, a personal, first-hand investigation

Note: Luke did not exalt the eyewitnesses. He showed that they were subordinate to the Lord. There is no place for pride in the Lord's work. Christ alone – much be exalted.

the written testimony

We, too, are under-rowers. Spreading the Word about Jesus Christ is not an option, but a command!

(1:3) Here we see what a careful and thorough student of the things of Christ Luke was. He had fully investigated all that he had heard about Christ "from the beginning," that is, from the beginning of those events which prepared the way for Christ's coming right on through to His ascension.

Inking those facts, He wrote an orderly account. He aimed at being chronological. Luke was a historian, concerned about the truth, the facts, even the details of those facts. This shows that every detail about our Lord was, and is, important!

Again, basic to all Christian living and service is the knowledge of Christ and His ministry upon earth. We need to know the Gospels! How amazing it is, evidence of man's total depravity, that the Gospels should be the most preached books of the Bible, and yet corrupted in their interpretation — the most corrupted.

Now Luke did this for one man: "Theophilus," meaning a lover of God. He is called by Luke here (but not in the Acts), "most excellent." It can mean a man of prominence, even royalty. It is used of Felix in Acts 23:26, and of Festus in Acts 26:25. But it can also mean that Theophilus was a very, very dear friend.

He did not mean that he knew all from the beginning, but that he had carefully investigated everything from the beginning.

The Greek for "from the beginning" is ἄνωθεν, from above. Luke certainly was claiming divine guidance.

Possibly inspiration of this is the translation.

(1:4) Here is the purpose for Luke's writing:

"Know" has to do w/ full knowledge.

"The certainty" shows the assurance comes through the knowledge of Christ and the Word. But the word implies more.

The word lit. means no slipping, no falling. It means that a person who knows the Gospel record about Christ is not likely to stumble and fall in his walk. He is going to be firm and steadfast, safe and secure.

Thus, Luke was thinking of the spiritual growth and maturity of Theophilus.

If we want to be strong Christians, we need to know about our Lord Jesus Christ. Cf. 2 Pet. 3:18. Also Phil. 3:10.

"That you have been taught." The word for teach is ~~κατεχω~~ KATHXÉW - KATηXήΘης, from which we get our words, catechism and catechumen (one who is being catechized). It is oral instruction. Luke was following that up with permanent, written instruction.

What a strong case for reading the Gospel of Luke - and all of the Word of God. You hear it, then read it - over and over again.

Behind all that Luke did was the influence, the guidance, the control, of the Holy Spirit. Luke was heavily interested in Christ + deeply concerned about Theophilus because the Holy Spirit made him so. And he was led by the Spirit in what he wrote.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE
Lesson 3 -- Luke 1:5-25
Oct. 8, 1985

See the General and Detailed outlines.

Outline of Luke 1:5-25:
1. Zacharias and Elisabeth (vv. 5-7).
2. Zacharias and Gabriel (vv. 8-20).
3. Zacharias' judgment (vv. 21, 22).
4. Elisabeth's conception (vv. 23-25).

Especially important regarding this passage is the fact that God was breaking His silence of approximately 400 years! There had been no revelation from God since the prophecy of Malachi.

It was a sad time in the history of Israel. The nation was under the heel of Rome, as is suggested by the reference to Herod in v. 5.

In spite of that two things could be said:
1) The forms of the worship of ancient Israel were being maintained in the Temple which Herod had restored.
2) The Lord had His true people like Zacharias and Elisabeth in spite of the low state of the nation spiritually.

It is also important to note that this particular work of the Lord began when things were very dark for the nation--a fact which should bring hope to the hearts of the Lord's people in difficult times. Cf. Spurgeon's remarks regarding his own personal times of depression throughout his ministry. See his autobiography, Vol. I, pp. 263, 264.

1. <u>Zacharias</u> <u>and</u> <u>Elisabeth</u> (Luke 1:5-7).

Herod was the King who was later called, Herod the Great. He was very wise and had accomplished much in Judea, but he was also very cruel. He taxed the people heavily, and it was he who ordered the death of all babies two years old and younger in his attempt to kill the baby Jesus. He was appointed King of Judea by the Roman Senate in B.C. 40, and he died while Joseph and Mary had taken our Lord and were living in Egypt.

Herod the Great - appointed king of Judea
(B.C. 40 - B.C. 3)
long before Christ was born (about 40 B.C.)
and he was in his last years when Christ
and John the Baptist were born. He ordered
(Mt. 2:15, 19)
the death of the male children in his attempt
to do away with the baby Jesus.
He was cruel. Alienated the Jews. And although
he restored their Temple, yet he never regained
their favor.
It was his son, Herod Antipas who had John
(became Tetrarch of Galilee + Perea
the Baptist beheaded.
diff. terr. from his father)

Course of Abia - one of the 24 divisions of the
priests, each of which served in the Temple 1 wk.
- S. 1 Chron. 24:10.

Blameless does not mean perfect, sinless, but
without any reason for censure. Cf. Phil. 2:15;
3:6

Burning incense - Ex 30:7,8 Cf. 1 Cor. 2:14-17.
Eph. 5:2x

Nazarite - Num. 6:3, 20
Similar to Samson, Samuel
Separated to the Lord.

1. Zacharias and Elizabeth (vv. 5-7).
2. Zacharias and Gabriel (vv. 8-20).
3. The dumbness of Zacharias (21, 22)
4. Elizabeth's conception (vv. 23-25)

a. His course (vv. 8-10)
b. The appearance of Gabriel (vv. 11-20)
(1) Z.'s fear (11,12)
(2) G's message 13-17
(3) Z's ques. (18)
(4) G's ans. (19,20)

v. 19 - good news - the Gospel

John means "God is gracious."
or gift of God

Gabriel - man of God, strength of God.

Formality in Israel remained

400 silent years - no revelation from God

The delay did not mean that God was unfaithful

God had His people even in these dark days of captivity and subjection to Rome.

The faithfulness of Zacharias + Elisabeth

1) By their lives.
2) By their prayers
3) By his service

Their trial - v. 7 Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE
Lesson 4 -- Luke 1:26-38
Oct. 15, 1985

This is the second major event in preparation for the coming into the world of the Lord Jesus Christ. (See the Detailed Outline.) The first was the appearance of Gabriel to Zacharias.

This is the account of Gabriel's appearance to the virgin Mary.

Outline of Luke 1:26-38:
1. The historical setting of Gabriel's appearance to Mary (vv. 26, 27).
2. The angel Gabriel's announcement to Mary (vv. 28-33).
3. Mary's question (v. 34).
4. Gabriel's answer (vv. 35-37).
5. Mary's faith and submission (v. 38).

Among the greatest wonders of the world we have in the New Testament those that are <u>the very greatest</u>. There are none greater than these:
1) The conception of Jesus Christ.
2) The birth of Jesus Christ.
3) The life of Jesus Christ.
4) The works of Jesus Christ.
5) The death of Jesus Christ.
6) The resurrection of Jesus Christ.
7) The return of Jesus Christ (and all of the events connected with His coming).

The details recorded in this section (Luke 1:26-38) are so important that, if these are not true, then we need not go any farther. Godet has expressed it this way:

> If this character of the appearance of Jesus be denied, the whole of the subsequent narrative remains unintelligible and inadmissible. Directly it is conceded, all the rest accords with it (Luke, Vol. I, p. 86).

Thus, Luke is here laying the foundation for all that is to follow. We will go through the text, and then I want to point out the major truths and the important lessons which it contains.

1. <u>The historical setting of Gabriel's appearance to Mary</u> (vv. 26, 27).

V. 26 -- Here we see our Lord's humble entry into this world. He was born not only in an obscure and notorious village (John 1:46), but of an obscure woman, and of a despised nation. <u>Humiliation characterized His life and ministry on earth.</u> Cf. Phil. 2:5-8.

"The sixth month" was the sixth month of Elisabeth's pregnancy.

"Sent from God" is an expression not used in v. 11, and so this is taken to mean that God acted even more directly in connection with the virgin Mary than He did with Zacharias. "Sent" is from the verb from which we get the word, apostle. Gabriel was God's messenger to Mary. (ἀποστέλλω)

V. 27 -- Mary had never been married. She was at this time "espoused" to Joseph, meaning that he had asked her to marry him, but they were not married. Espousal, or engagement, usually lasted for one year. He was of the Davidic line (which is important), and Mary must have been, too. See Luke 2:5.

Matthew gives us the record of the angel's appearance to Joseph. See Matt. 1:18-25.

2. The angel Gabriel's announcement to Mary (vv. 28-33).

V. 28 -- "Hail" is a greeting which means to rejoice, be glad. Possibly, joy to you! So it was to be a happy announcement. This would tend to calm Mary's fears who had never had such an experience.

"Highly favoured" means pursued with grace (χαριτόω). This the same verb that is used in Eph. 1:6. This is the first expression in the angel's message which emphasizes that God was dealing with Mary in grace. She was obviously a wonderful person, but not sinless as is sometimes taught.

"The Lord is with thee" -- an expression taken from the OT meaning that He was on her side, working on her behalf. Cf. Gen. 26:1-5 (esp. v. 3); 28:13-15 (esp. v. 15); Judges 6:11-18 (esp. vv. 12, 16); John 3:2. See also Psa. 46:7, 10 (also v. 5); Isa. 41:10.

"Blessed . . . " -- She was to be honored by God more than any other woman has been. And this is true in spite of what our Lord said in Luke 8:19-21. (See a similar statement regarding John the Baptist in Luke 7:28.)

V. 29 -- The reaction this had on Mary. "She was troubled," not by his appearance, but "at his saying." And she "cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be."

"Troubled" (διαταράσσω) means thoroughly disturbed, greatly agitated, upset, puzzled. She had not idea what this could mean.

"Cast in her mind" (διαλογίζομαι) means that she brought up all kinds of reasons, all kinds of thoughts were going through her mind. And she was afraid.

V. 30 -- The angel sought to allay her fears.

"Found favor," lit., found grace. This is the second expression from the angel emphasizing the grace of God. She did not merit what God was going to do with her; God had been graciously inclined toward her.

So this expression ties in with "highly favoured" in v. 28.

V. 31 -- Mary was going to have a child, a son. His name would be

JESUS. Cf. the message to Joseph in Matt. 1:21. JESUS means salvation, or Saviour.

Thus a prophecy was about to be fulfilled: Isa. 7:14.

V. 32 -- "Great," the same word as was used of John the Baptist in v. 15. He would be outstanding, eminent, in the sight of God, fulfilling a unique role in the plan and purpose of God.

"Son of the Highest," (ὕψιστος) or Son of the Most High (God). This indicates His DEITY. See this again in vv. 35, 76; 2:14; 6:35; 8:28; 19:38. The background for this title of Deity is in Gen. 14. Cf. also Acts 7:47-50 (esp. v. 48). This is the rank which God holds over all created beings. There is none greater than He, nor is anyone more powerful. He is sovereign and can work in any way that He chooses to work, and whenever He chooses to work.

The latter part of v. 32 and all of v. 33 speak of the Messianic hope of the redeemed in Israel. Bishop Ryle made this comment in his work on the Gospel of Luke:

> Let us beware of spiritualizing away the full meaning of these words. The "house of David" does not mean the office of a Saviour to all Gentile believers. The words will yet receive a literal fulfilment, when the Lord Jesus comes the second time and the Jews are converted. The promise of Gabriel is parallel with Jeremiah xxx. 9. The kingdom of which he speaks is the glorious kingdom foretold in Daniel vii. 27, before which all other kingdoms are finally to be overthrown at Christ's second coming (Vol. I, p. 26).

Thus, in v. 32 we have both the DEITY and the HUMANITY of Mary's Son. And the message given to Mary had significance regarding the purposes of God to the end of time.

3. Mary's question (v. 34).

Mary was not married; she was a virgin. How could she have a child? This is the meaning of "I know not a man."

Perhaps it had not occurred to her at this time, but she also should have wondered how she could give birth to One Who would be called, "the Son of the Highest." Cf. Job 15:14; 25:4b.

Nicodemus asked a similar question about the new birth in John 3:4, 9.

4. Gabriel's answer (vv. 35-37).

V. 35 -- The Child would not have a human father, but would be conceived in her by the Holy Spirit. He is also called, "the power of the Highest." "Power" is the word δύναμις, meaning the power inherent in God Himself.

This shows how her Child could be Deity. This truth which must be accepted concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, and the four Gospels are in perfect agreement on this point. Cf. Matt. 1:22, 23; Mark 1:1; John 1:1, 14. On "Son of God" meaning Deity to the Jews, cf. John 5:17, 18.

Note we have all of the Members of the Godhead mentioned in this 35th verse.

"Overshadow" (ἐπισκιάζω) is a verb which refers to the manifestation of the presence and power of God in the OT in which He revealed Himself in the form of a cloud. What is to prohibit the fact that at a point in her life Mary was lit. overshadowed by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit who impregnated her, and that thereafter she was an expectant mother?

The latter part of v. 35 could better be translated, " . . . that which is to be born of thee shall be called holy, the Son of God."

What an amazing revelation! Nothing like this had ever taken place before.

V. 36 -- For the encouragement of Mary's faith. The Lord knows our weakness.

"Cousin" would be better translated relative, or kinswoman.

Even though Elisabeth's child was not to be the Son of God, yet it was a miracle of God's power that he could be born when his parents were as old as they were.

V. 37 -- Also for the encouragement of Mary's faith.

A better translation: "No word of God shall be impossible." If God says a thing, we must accept it as true because He has said it. There can never be the slightest doubt about the truthfulness of any word from God.

5. <u>Mary's faith and submission</u> (v. 38).

"The handmaid" is δοῦλη, a female bondslave. Mary here was submitting herself to the Lord, worshipping the Lord with a willingness to serve Him in any way that He shall choose. She was making no reservations.

In this Mary is our example.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

1. The amazing ways of God. He did not appear to some prominent woman in Jerusalem, but to a lowly virgin in Nazareth, a despised city.

Thus, the very birth of our Lord Jesus Christ gives us the greatest lesson in humility that we could possibly have. Note again Phil. 2:5-8.

2. The uniqueness and the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. There has never been, and never will be, another like He is.

3. The importance of believing in the DEITY and the HUMANITY of the Lord Jesus Christ. Both are absolutely essential to our salvation.

4. The beginning of a special emphasis upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the work of salvation.

   The Gospel is to be preached under the power of the Holy Spirit. Cf. Acts 1:8; 1 Pet. 1:12.

   People must be convicted by the Holy Spirit in order to be saved. Cf. John 16:7-11.

   Salvation means that people are regenerated, born again, by the Holy Spirit. Cf. John 3:5-8

   Those who are saved are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Cf. John 14: 16, 17; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20.

   We are taught the Word of God by the Holy Spirit. Cf. John 14:26; 16:12-15.

   We are sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Cf. Rom. 8:1-17.

5. The reliability of the Word of God.

   This has to do not only with the promises which we may appropriate personally, but also with the purposes of God. The Jews had not had a revelation from God for over 400 years, and then, all of a sudden, things began to happen. Often in the darkest hour the light of God's power begins to be seen.

   It is enough that God has spoken, but God, knowing our weakness, gives us encouragements for our faith as He did with Mary.

6. The need to be submissive to God and to His will.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE
Lesson 5 -- Luke 1:39-56
Oct. 22, 1985

This is the third main event in the preparation for the first advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. The first was Gabriel's appearance to Zacharias. The second was Gabriel's appearance to Mary. This passage records Mary's visit to Elisabeth in the hill country of Judea.

There are three divisions to Luke 1:39-56:
1) Vv. 39, 40 -- Mary's journey to the home of Zacharias and Elisabeth.
2) Vv. 41-45 -- Elisabeth's response to Mary's salutation.
3) Vv. 46-56 -- Mary's song: The Magnificat.

This is a very touching scene between these two women, relatives: Elisabeth, the older; Mary, the younger. At this time both of them were expecting, and both knew that they would have sons. The angel had even told what their names would be: John and Jesus. Zacharias had been told that his son, John, would prepare the way for the Lord, the Messiah. Mary had been told that her Son would be the Messiah. So it was a joyous time for Elisabeth and Mary as our text shows.

1. Mary's journey to the home of Zacharias and Elisabeth (Luke 1: 39, 40).

"Arose" is a favorite word with Luke. He used it 60 times in this Gospel, as compared with its used only 22 other times in the remainder of the NT. "Arose" and "in haste" are meant to show how anxious Mary was to see Elisabeth. The visit was surely prompted by what the angel said to Mary in v. 36.

"The hill country . . . of Juda" was south of Jerusalem. Hebron was the main city of that area, but it seems unlikely that that was where Zacharias and Elisabeth lived, or Luke would have mentioned it. The place evidently was not important enough to mention. But in those days it would have been about a 4-day journey for Mary from Nazareth. This, too, shows how eager she was to see Elisabeth.

V. 40 tells us that Mary "saluted Elisabeth." Ordinarily this would mean that she greeted Elisabeth, embraced her, and probably kissed her, but the verses which follow indicate that Mary told Elisabeth immediately about that angel's appearance to her, and what he had said. Thus Elisabeth knew right away that Mary was also expecting a Child, and that He would be the Messiah, the Son of God! Elisabeth knew that her son was to be the forerunner of the Messiah, preparing the way for His ministry on earth.

2. Elisabeth's response to Mary's salutation (Luke 1:41-45).

V. 41 -- Luke's statement here clearly indicates that Mary had told Elisabeth all that Gabriel had told her. Then two things happened which were definitely of the Lord:
1) Elisabeth's baby "leaped in her womb."

2) "Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit." This was further confirmation to her of what Gabriel had told Zacharias. See Luke 1:15. Thus, all of the pieces of Gabriel's prophecy were coming to pass.

Notice Elisabeth's excitement: "And she spake out with a loud voice" (v. 42a).

In the remaining verses of this division we see what Elisabeth said. Her comments focus on the following:
1) First, on Mary (v. 42m).
2) Second, on Mary's Son (v. 42b).
3) Third, on herself (v. 43).
4) Fourth, on her baby (v. 44).
5) Fifth, on Mary again (v. 45).

V. 42m -- This is what the KJV indicates in v. 28 that the angel said to Mary (although it is not in all of the MSS): "Blessed art thou among women." The meaning is that God had blessed her in a most singular way, different from the way He had ever blessed any other woman.

Secondly, on Mary's Son: "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb." No woman ever had such a Son. Obviously the blessing of God was to be upon Him as it had never been upon any other. Cf. Gal. 4:4.

Thirdly, Elisabeth referred to herself (v. 43). Note the humility of this godly woman. There was no jealousy that Mary had been given a greater honor than she. She rejoiced for Mary, and was amazed that she was honored by a visit from Mary. One cannot but wonder if the humility of Elisabeth did not leave its mark upon her son, John the Baptist, from things that he said later about Mary's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. See Luke 3:16; John 3:25-30. It is a real indication of the reality of our relationship to the Lord when we can rejoice when someone else is blessed more than we are.

Fourthly, in v. 44 Elisabeth referred to her own son. Notice that she took the movement of her baby as an indication that Mary's salutation had to do with the Lord.

Finally, in Elisabeth's comments we have the word "blessed" used again for Mary. Here it is the word , whereas in v. 42 it was the word . Elisabeth's word here in v. 45 means happy. It is really the first beatitude. Thus Elisabeth taught Mary here that believing the Lord brings happiness because it anticipates the fulfillment of God's promise. Note: The message from the angel Gabriel was the very Word of God!

All of this showed how Elisabeth was thinking. And thus we see the proof that she was filled with the Holy Spirit: (1) She set herself aside in her preference for others; (2) she magnified the Word of God.

3. Mary's Song: The Magnificat (Luke 1:46-56).

It is very obvious from the following verses that Mary's heart was filled with the joy of the Lord. Although she must have been tired from her journey, yet her heart is so full of the blessing of God that she forgot her weariness in her desire to magnify the Lord. What an illustration of the words of Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites, found in Neh. 8:10, "the joy of the Lord is your strength." As Matthew Henry said, "God alone" was "the object of the praise and the centre of the joy" (V, 588).

(Read through this hymn of praise emphasizing the names and pronouns which refer to the Lord.) How much this is like Moses' song in Exodus 15! And this is a lesson in what the music of the church should be like. When we are conscious of the blessing of the Lord, our thoughts will be full of the Lord and a desire to glorify Him alone.

Another thing that we need to note about Mary's Song is that it is expressed in the language of Scripture. Jewish children were taught to memorize many passages from the OT, and so it was quite to be expected that Mary would express her worship and praise in the language of Scripture. And so we have a lesson not only in the music of the saints, but how the Word of God should be used in our prayers.

Many have noticed the similarity between Mary's Song here and the Song of Hannah in 1 Sam. 2:1-10. (Read.) But we see Mary's acquaintance with many other parts of the OT Scriptures as well. Note the following:

1) Vv. 46, 47; cf. 1 Sam. 2:1.
2) V. 48; cf. 1 Sam. 1:11.
3) V. 48b; cf. Gen. 30:13.
4) V. 49; cf. Deut. 10:21. Also on the Lord's holy name, cf. Psa. 99:3; 103:1; 111:9.
5) V. 50; cf. Psa. 103:17.
6) V. 51; cf. Ex. 15:16; Psa. 89:10; 98:1.
7) V. 52; cf. Prov. 3:34; 1 Sam. 2:4, 6-8.
8) V. 53; cf. 1 Sam. 2:5.
9) V. 54; cf. Psa. 98:3.
10) V. 55; cf. Gen. 12:3; Psa. 105:6-10; Micah 7:20.

Thus, it is easy to see that Mary had her heart full of the Word of God.

Several things to notice and keep in mind from Mary's Song:

1) In vv. 46, 47 we see that her adoration of the Lord came from within her, and thus it was genuine. Cf. Psa. 103:1. Among other things, her reference to her "soul" would indicate that her emotions were involved in her praise. Again, as Matthew Henry has said, "Praising work must be soul work" (V, 588).

Notice the present, the past, and the future in Mary's words in vv. 46-48.

2) In vv. 48, 51-53 we see that Mary recognized how the Lord delights in humility. Cf. Jas. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5, 6. Sometime in reading the Word through notice the many references to pride and to humility, and how often pride has been the main reason for the downfall of men and of nations.

   The Lord often takes the lowest to make them His instruments for the greater glory of His Name. Cf. 1 Cor. 1:26-31. Her statements should remind us of Gideon (Judges 6:15), and of the disgrace which had fallen upon Hannah (1 Sam. 1). For some reason Mary seems to have been the lowest in her family. Also as a member of the royal family of Israel she was in a "low estate."

3) Be sure to notice Mary's emphasis on the attributes of God:
   a) His power in vv. 49a, 51-54. This speaks also of His sovereignty.
   b) His holiness in v. 49b.
   c) His mercy in vv. 50, 54b.
   d) His faithfulness in v. 55.

4) Throughout her Song, Mary's emphasis is upon salvation.

   In this connection notice that Mary placed herself among those who needed salvation. There is nothing here nor in any other place in Scripture that Mary herself was conceived without sin, or that she lived a sinless life, or that she was an object of worship while she was here on earth--or afterwards, or that she was a mediator between God and men, or that she was taken up bodily into heaven. Enoch was so taken up, and so was Elijah, but not Mary!

5) In v. 55 by her reference to Abraham's "seed" we have Mary's emphasis upon the elect.

   This would make Mary's reference to Israel in v. 54, not a reference to all of the nation, but to the believers in the nation, to those who, according to v. 50, feared the Lord.

   "All generations" (v. 48) appears to be a reference to the fact that Mary understood that salvation was for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews.

6) Notice that Mary rejoiced in God's covenant with Abraham, not in His covenant with Moses. It was His covenant with Abraham that had to do with salvation.

   How important it is to see the joy that always accompanies salvation.

7) Vv. 51-55 show that the God had overcome all of the opposition of even those who were upon thrones ("seats" in v. 52) in order to keep His promise of salvation to Abraham and to Israel. This would include Pharaoh and the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Medes and Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans. What a marvelous picture of the absolute sovereignty of God.

Much more could be said about this passage which is so rich in spiritual truth, and the lessons which it holds for us as believers. But we conclude with Luke's historical reference to the length of Mary's visit (v. 56). Practically every commentator has speculated on whether or not Mary stayed until John was born. The evidence seems to indicate that she did <u>not</u>. Matthew Henry felt that Mary would not want to be in the center of all of the activity which would follow the birth of Elisabeth's son, the woman who surely must have given up hope that she would ever have a child. It seems certain that many, many people would come to her house to see her baby boy. As for Mary, Matthew Henry said, "Those in whose hearts Christ is formed take more delight than they used to in <u>sitting alone</u> and <u>keeping silence</u> (V, 591). But the fact remains that we do not know for sure.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE
Lessons 6 and 7 -- Luke 1:57-80
Oct. 29 and Nov. 5, 1985

The Outline:
1. The birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:57, 58).
2. The circumcision and naming of John the Baptist (Luke 1:59-66).
3. The prophecy of Zacharias--generally known as The Benedictus (Luke 1:67-79).
4. The early life of John the Baptist (Luke 1:80).

Thus our lesson today has to do with John the Baptist.

1. The birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:57, 58).

Here we see the faithfulness of the Lord to Zacharias and Elisabeth. "The Lord had shewed great mercy upon her." This is the same verb which Mary used in Luke 1:46, the verb μεγαλύνω. It means that He had magnified His mercy. What an evidence of the goodness of the Lord upon this holy couple who had been in misery for many years because they had no children. Little did they know that the desire of their hearts would be fulfilled in such an amazing way!

Lesson: Psa. 37:4. (Two possible meanings of "give thee the desires of thine heart.") Remember that Zacharias and Elisabeth were a couple who did delight in the Lord. Cf. Luke 1:6.

The neighbors and relatives of Elisabeth "rejoiced with her" because of the goodness of the Lord, but probably not realizing the significance of the birth of John.

2. The circumcision and naming of John the Baptist (Luke 1:59-66).

The naming of John was done on the day of circumcision because Abraham's name was changed from Abram on the day that he was circumcised. And so was Sarai's name changed at that time. Cf. Gen. 17:5, 15.

"They called him Zacharias." Who are the "they"? Cf. Ruth 4:17 where "the women their neighbours gave it (Ruth's child) a name." It was no unusual to honor the father by naming his son after him, especially when Zacharias was so old and would not have another son.

But Elisabeth objected! She said, "Not so; but he shall be called John" (v. 60).

The neighbors and relatives did not understand. See v. 61.

And so they asked Zacharias who had to answer by writing. The use of signs probably indicates that he was deaf as well as unable to speak.

Zacharias' answer: "His name is John." This means gift of God, or God is gracious. Zacharias and Elisabeth were acting upon what

the angel said to Zacharias as recorded in Luke 1:13. The child had been named by the Lord!

What happened immediately afterwards?

Zacharias' tongue was loosed and he spoke for the first time in more than nine months!

And his first words were of praise to God! Probably what is meant here are those words of praise recorded in The Benedictus in vv. 67-79.

Noticed the words which described the neighbors and relatives:
1) In v. 63 they "marvelled."
2) In v. 65 "fear came on all that dwelt round about them."
3) In v. 66, two things:
   a) "All they that heard them (i.e., "these sayings" of v. 65) laid them up in their hearts."
   b) And they said, "What manner of child shall this be!"

And they could see, as v. 66b records, that "the hand of the Lord was with him, i.e., with John. (Comment on the expression that the Lord was with John.)

3. The prophecy of Zacharias (Luke 1:67-79).

Here Zacharias, a priest, was speaking as a prophet--by divine inspiration! Although this was different. "Nearly every phrase here is found in the Old Testament" (Robertson, A.T., II, 18). Thus Zacharias was prophesying by proclaiming the truth of the OT. As in the case of Mary's Magnificat, it shows that Zacharias' heart was full of the Word of God! Being filled with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit brought it all out!

Note the relationship between the Spirit and the Word, as in Acts 4:31.

Zacharias was preaching. Preaching is declaring the Word of God.

THE BENEDICTUS

Outline: Vv. 68-75 speak of what God was doing.
Vv. 76-78a speak of what John would do.
Vv. 78b, 79 speak of what the Messiah would do.

a. What the Lord God of Israel was doing (vv. 68-75).

He was doing three things, as indicated in:
(1) Vv. 68-70.
(2) Vv. 71-73.
(3) Vv. 74, 75.

V. 68 -- "the Lord God of Israel," cf. Psa. 41:13; 72:18; 106:48.

"Visited" -- cf. Psa. 106:4, a good visitation, to bring blessing. After more than 400 years Israel was again hearing from the Lord! How suddenly and unexpectedly all of this had happened!

Lesson: This should be an encouragement to us to walk with the Lord like Zacharias and Elisabeth did even when we cannot see any evidence of the blessing of the Lord.

"Redeemed" -- a deliverance from something. We shall see in the verses that follow what that redemption was to be.

V. 69 -- The Lord God had "raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David." Every word is important here.

"Raised up" means to bring a person on the scene who will occupy a special place among the people of Israel.

That Person is called, "an horn of salvation"--"horn" being the horn of an animal, and indicating strength. This would mean that He would have the power to bring salvation to Israel.

It was well-known that the Messiah would come from the house of David. Cf. Isa. 9:6, 7. Zacharias does not seem to have recognized that this salvation would be for the Gentiles as well. But he clearly expressed the fact that he knew that the birth and life of his son had to do with the Messiah. And so his heart was full of praise to God.

V. 70 -- All of this was in fulfillment of what the Lord had said through His prophets from the very beginning of the world. His spokesmen were "his holy prophets," holy because they were the servants of a holy God.

This completes the first thing that Zacharias said the Lord would do.

The second thing follows it like another link in a chain.

V. 71 -- Here Zacharias interprets a part of that salvation as meaning earthly blessing, millennial blessing!

V. 72 -- But it was not be limited to earthly blessing. It also included "the mercy . . . his holy covenant . . the oath which he sware to our father Abraham." (This last statement is from v. 73).

All of these terms are synonyms for salvation, and describe different aspects of salvation.

(1) "Mercy" -- the undeserved pity which God has manifested toward sinners. Cf. "mercy" for Gentiles in Rom. 15:9.

(2) "His holy covenant" -- cf. Gen. 15:18; 17:4. These are a confirmation of what the Lord said in Gen. 12:1-3.
(3) "The oath" -- cf. Gen. 22:15-18. See the NT explanation of this salvation in Gal. 3:7-9. On "the oath" see also Heb. 6:13-20.

Notice that Zacharias, like Mary in Luke 1:55, was concerned with THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT, not the Mosaic covenant.

The third thing that the Lord God was doing:

V. 74 -- Here Zacharias was concerned with the evidence, the fruit of salvation: "that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear (v. 75) in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life."

Lesson: Thus a person who is truly saved will persevere in serving the Lord (and this is priestly, worshipful service), and the service will be characterized by holiness (separation from sin and separation unto God), and by a life lived in accordance with the righteous standards of God set forth in the Word of God! It is impossible to experience the salvation that Zacharias was prophesying about and still remain the same. Cf. John 15:16; Ecc. 3:14.

But it is also impossible to live such a life without experiencing this salvation.

b. What John would do (vv. 76-78a)

At this point Zacharias began to speak to his infant son. He knew that John would be the forerunner of the Messiah, and he must have known, too, that the birth of Jesus was only six months away.

V. 76 -- John would be called, "the prophet of the Highest"; the Messiah would be "the Son of the Highest" (v. 32). Note what Paul said of the Lord in Rom. 9:5. This title speaks of the transcendency of the Lord, i.e., having existence prior to creation, existing above creation, and having being apart from it. On John as a prophet, cf. Matt. 12:9, 10. See also Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1.

Note also that Jesus is called "the Lord" in this verse--a further declaration of His Deity.

John would prepare the way for the Lord. Cf. John 1:6-8. He did what the Lord God did for the Israelites in Canaan. Cf. Deut. 31:3.

V. 77 -- How would John prepare the way for the coming of the Lord?

He would "give the knowledge of salvation," a subject which had been corrupted, and which needed to be brought out of obscurity. Note, it was to be given "unto his people," and it had to do, not with deliverance from Rome, but with "the remission of sins"--the forgiveness of sins!

V. 78a -- The basis upon which sins could be forgiven: "the tender mercy of our God." Such was the deplorable condition of man that he could neither merit salvation, nor earn it. He was utterly dependent upon God's "tender mercy"--elsewhere translated with the word, bowels. It could be rendered, tender affections. Mercy and grace and love are all combined in these words, "tender mercy."

Lesson: We, too, are living in a day when the true Gospel of the grace of God has been corrupted and obscured. Note the expression, "unto his people." This very well may be a reference to the elect within the nation Israel. Even many professing Christians do not know or want to believe that salvation is all of the Lord! The way can be prepared for a mighty work of God through the faithful preaching of the true grace of God.

c. What the Messiah would do (vv. 78b, 79).

Here Zacharias speaks of the Messiah and His work, although it is possible that v. 79 has to do also with the ministry of John the Baptist.

V. 78b -- "The dayspring from on high hath visited us." This speaks of the Lord from heaven as breaking the long spiritual darkness that had covered Israel. Cf. Mal. 4:2. See also John 3:19.

V. 79 -- What was the purpose of The Dayspring? (John also had a part in this.) It was twofold:
(1) "To give light to them that sin in darkness and in the shadow of death."
(2) "To guide our feet into the way of peace."

Note: This is the object of all Gospel preaching--twofold! Cf. Matt. 4:12-16; 2 Cor. 4:3-7. We give the light to people who are in the darkness of sin, and hope to guide them into peace with God. Cf. Rom. 5:1.

See what Paul said about those who do know the saving grace of God: "And the way of peace have they not known" (Rom. 3:17).

Thus, the work of John and the work of the Messiah were made very clear by THE BENEDICTUS of Zacharias as he spoke by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

One point remains:

4. The early life of John the Baptist (Luke 1:80).

Although John was the son of a priest, he never functioned as a priest. As Matthew Henry said, he was preparing the way for a greater Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Cf. with what Luke stated of our Lord in Luke 2:40 and 52.

Luke tell us four things about John's early years:
(1) His physical development: "And the child grew."
(2) His spiritual development: "And waxed strong in spirit." The Greek is ἐκραταιοῦτο, from κραταιόω. It means, to be made strong. It is also used in Eph. 3:16. John not only knew the Lord in salvation, but he was growing in the Lord--the absolute requirement for great spiritual usefulness!
(3) His early obscurity: He "was in the deserts." The Lord saw fit to deal with Paul in much the same way. Cf. Gal. 1:15-17.
(4) His ministry: "Till the day of his shewing unto Israel." There are three things stated here:
  (a) There was a time for his ministry: "Till the day."
  (b) There was an announcement of his ministry: "His shewing." Cf. John 1:19-23; Luke 3:3-6.
  (c) There was a place for his ministry: "Israel." He was not sent to the Gentiles, but to the Jews. This was also the initial ministry of our Lord and His disciples. Cf. Matt. 15:24; 10:5, 6.

Thus in one short verse we are told a great deal about John and his ministry. And it is very helpful in understanding the ministry even today.

Special Lessons:

1) It is interesting to see how suddenly and how powerfully God can begin to move.

2) Notice how this passage confirms the truthfulness of the Word of God.

3) We see much evidence of the faithfulness of God, but also of the sovereignty of God.

God used the natural desires of Zacharias and Elisabeth to set in motion the most important events that have ever taken place in all the history of the world from that day until this. Zacharias also was enabled to speak with as much certainty about the Lord and about John as though the things he spoke about had already taken place!

4) We see here the meaning of the Gospel--what it is.

5) The ministry, and what the Lord did to prepare John for that work.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE
Lesson 8 -- Luke 2:1-20
Nov. 12, 1985

This is really a Christmas lesson.

The Outline:
1. The birth of Jesus Christ (Luke 2:1-7).
   a. The historical setting (vv. 1-5)
   b. The birth of Christ (vv. 6, 7).
2. The appearance of the angels to the shepherds (Luke 2:8-20).
   a. The message of the angel of the Lord (vv. 8-12).
   b. The praises of the heavenly host (vv. 13, 14).
   c. The shepherds' visit to Bethlehem (vv. 15-20).

1. The birth of Jesus Christ (Luke 2:1-7).

a. The historical setting (vv. 1-5).

Long ago Solomon said, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will" (Prov. 21:1).

We read of the people who returned from the captivity in the days of Ezra that they kept the feast of unleavened bread "with joy: for the Lord had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel" (Ezra 6:22).

In the same book of Ezra we read of Ezra's praise to the Lord because of the goodness of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, in assisting the people in adorning the Lord's house. Ezra said, "Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers, which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem" (Ezra 7:27).

2:1 We certainly see the hand of God in the timing of this taxation, or registration, in the days of Caesar Augustus. It was prophesied in Micah 5:2 that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, not Nazareth. When Herod sought to know from the chief priests and the scribes where the Messiah would be born, they told him that it was in Bethlehem. See Matt. 2:3-8. Many of the people of Israel understood this, too. See John 7:40-42. Therefore, somehow Mary needed to be taken to Nazareth for the birth of her Child. How did it come about? Through the decree of one of the greatest monarchs ever to rule on the earth. The Roman Empire reached its greatest extent in the days of Caesar Augustus. This is clear evidence of the SOVEREIGN, PROVIDENTIAL WORK OF GOD!

Lesson: What an encouragement this should be to our faith! The Lord makes a great King like Caesar Augustus an instrument in His hand for the fulfillment of His Word. And so there is nothing that will stand in His for the accomplishment of His purposes. Whatever may have been Caesar's reason for this enrollment, the important thing is to see that God was at work

through him.

"All the world" -- i.e., the Roman world. It could also be called the Gentile world. This gives us a clue as to the use of the word world in the New Testament. The Empire was predominantly Gentile, and so the word came to be used for the Gentiles in contrast with the Jews.

"Should be taxed" -- The verb actually means, to be enrolled. It was a registration of the people, although it usually was followed with taxation.

2:2 For a long time historians felt that Luke was wrong in the information he gave in the first two verses of this chapter, but research done by Sir William Ramsay has proved beyond any doubt that Luke was right. It is generally thought that Christ was born about B.C. 6.

2:3 According to Roman custom, people were registered where they lived. But according to Jewish custom, they went to register where their family records were kept.

2:4, 5 All of these governmental requirements put Joseph and Mary in Bethlehem at the very time when Mary was ready to give birth to her Child. Cf. Gal. 4:4. Paul's statement, of course, does not refer to the fulness of Mary's time, but the fulness of God's time.

This would have been a very difficult trip for Mary to make, but it was evidently necessary for her to go, too. She is called Joseph's "espoused wife." But we need to remember that they had been married by this time. See Matt. 1:18-25, esp. vv. 24, 25. The term "espoused" was used both for what we call engagement as well as marriage.

b. The birth of Christ (vv. 6, 7).

We continue to note the humble beginnings of the earthly life of our Saviour. What a significant statement regarding our Lord's ministry on earth when it is said here in v. 7b that He was born in a manger "because there was no room for them in the inn"! Cf. John 1:11.

This was the greatest birth ever recorded! It marked the fulfillment of many OT prophecies. This was the hope of the nation Israel. Again, God had proven Himself faithful to His Word, faithful to His purposes. And yet it was done in such a place and at such a time that no one knew about it until after it had taken place.

The miracle of this birth -- God and man in one Person. See John's explanation of the coming of Jesus Christ into the world: John 1:14 (and relate it to John 1:1). See also John 20:30, 31;

Rom. 1:3, 4; 8:3; Gal. 4:4; Phil. 2:5-8; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 2:9, 14; 1 John 4:1-3; 2 John 7. Thus, belief in the incarnation of the Son of God is an essential part of believing in Christ for salvation.

2. The appearance of the angels to the shepherds (Luke 2:8-20).

a. The message of the angel of the Lord (vv. 8-12).

2:8 Here is further evidence of the lowly circumstances of our Lord's birth. It is true that rich, wise men came from the East later, but this is more in keeping with the ways of the Lord. These were elect shepherds, as the following verses will show. Cf. 1 Cor. 1:26-31.

Shepherds were prominent in Israel. Both Moses and David were shepherds. In fact, it is thought that David probably kept his sheep in these very "field." Abraham had many flocks. And the sons of Jacob were shepherds. This was to be one of the great claims of the Lord: "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11, 14). Shepherds would understand such a claim.

"Keeping watch over their flocks by night." This was an indication that it was at a mild time of the year since the sheep were not left out in the fields during the winter. The mild part of the year is from March to November

2:9 "The glory of the Lord" was the very presence of God, the Father. Nothing like this had ever happened to them before. Whether or not this was Gabriel again, we cannot say, but it is very likely that it was Gabriel. It is no wonder that "they were sore afraid." This was probably a more spectacular appearance of the angel than either Zacharias or Mary experienced.

2:10 Notice the word "you" here, and the words "unto you" in verse 11. Also the Gk of "all people" is lit., all the people! Wycliffe translated the statement, "I bring you good tidings," "I evangelize to you a great joy." It is the common verb for preaching the Gospel. Thus, it would indicate that these shepherds were elect men, looking for the redemption of Israel, and that this message would also bring "great joy" to all of the people of God, all of the elect people. Not everyone was happy over the birth of Christ; for example, Herod. When the Lord entered upon His ministry, it soon became apparent that the leaders of Israel were not happy about it. But here and there throughout Israel the Lord Jesus caused "great joy" in the hearts of those who were "the people."

Lesson: The shepherds were told that the message that the angel of the Lord brought was a message of "great joy" because that was not yet apparent. There is nothing that brings greater joy to the hearts of men than the personal knowledge of Christ as Saviour. We should keep this in mind when we are hesitant to

speak to others of Christ.

2:11 Here is the message of "great joy."

Note again the phrase, "unto you"--evidence that these were elect shepherds ~~angels~~. Notice the way Isa. 9:6 begins: "For unto us . . ." There was no longer any waiting: "For unto you is born this day". The Gk of the verb is an aorist passive, was born.

"The city of David" -- Cf. v. 4.

Three titles and names are here given by the angel:

1) "Saviour," depicting His work--salvation. Cf. what the angel had told Joseph in Matt. 1:21.
2) "Christ," His position with respect to Israel and OT prophecy. This is the equivalent of Messiah, the Anointed One.
3) "Lord," His nature, Deity. It corresponds with Jehovah in the OT. It speaks of His sovereignty. This is important to keep in mind with reference to all of the events which follow. Cf. for example, what the Lord said in John 10:17, 18. Also what He said to Pilate in John 19:10, 11.

"Saviour" and salvation occur often in Luke and Paul; "not often elsewhere in the N. T." (Bruce, EGT, I, 472). "Lord" is also used by Luke frequently where the other Gospel writers speak of our Lord as Jesus. Bruce also said that the angel was using the language "of the apostolic age" (Ibid.).

Thus again we have reference to the fact that Jesus was not only man, but God! Any ideas concerning Jesus Christ which are less than what the angel said are a blasphemous contradiction of the Word of God. It is no wonder that the angel said that this was "good news." This was the greatest news ever!

2:12 "A sign" -- a mark of identification to help them, and evidence that the message of the angel was true. The miracles of our Lord are called signs especially by the Apostle John--marks of identification. The "swaddling clothes" would indicate that the Child was newborn; the greatest part of the sign was the place where the shepherds would find Him: "lying in a manger." There may have been other children born that night, but none placed in a manger afterwards.

2:13, 14 At this point the lone angel of the Lord was joined by a countless host of angels. The nature of what they said according to v. 14 is described in v. 13 as "praising God."

The words of v. 14 give us the effect of the Saviour's work. It will be felt "in the highest" heavens; it will also be felt upon the "earth." The order in which these are stated by the angels is important: God in the highest, first; men upon earth, afterwards.

"Glory to God in the highest" -- Remember that our Lord was called "the Son of the Highest" by the angel Gabriel in Luke 1:32. God

was called "the Highest" in Luke 1:35. And John the Baptist was called "the prophet of the Highest" in Luke 1:76. Salvation was designed by God to bring glory to Himself, and not to men, nor to angels. And the angels in heaven as well as the saints in heaven are occupied with giving God this glory. But this glory can also be expressed on earth. Cf. Eph. 1:3 ff.; 1 Pet. 1:3-5. Men are the beneficiaries of the saving grace of God, but the work of salvation is all of God and, therefore, all of the glory belongs to God.

"And on earth peace, good will toward men" -- A better translation would be, and on earth peace to men of good will. "Peace" is the fruit of salvation--Rom. 5:1, 10, 11. It speaks of a reconciliation. And those who will experience it are those who are the objects of God's divine good will, those upon whom His good will rests. God had good intentions to accomplish through the coming of His Son, and these divine intentions were to come specifically upon people who were called, men of good will. Cf. Phil. 2:13. Also see Jas. 1:18; John 1:11-13. So salvation is not determined by the so-called "free will" of man, but by the sovereign, eternal will of God! We are assured of that by the angels of heaven, and by the Word of God.

"On earth" is a suggestion that the coming of the Saviour would involve more than the Jews, as Simeon would clearly indicate in Luke 2:29-32.

c. The shepherds' visit to Bethlehem (Luke 2:15-20).

2:15 Note the positive and immediate response on the part of the shepherds. How do we reconcile this with Rom. 3:11? Here were men experiencing something which was truly unbelievable, something which had never happened to them before, and yet they went. Cf. John 6:44; Acts 16:14.

"Said to one another" shows their agreement. It even indicates, being in the imperfect tense, that they kept saying this. There was excitement and urgency in the voices. They treated the message of the angels as a message from God--"which the Lord has made known to us."

2;16 Two things are indicated here:
1) The speed with which they went.
2) The success of their search--a proof of the truthfulness of the angels' message.

How important it is for us to respond immediately when God speaks to us!

Bishop Ryle relates the following in his commentary on Luke, Vol. I, pp. 60, 61:

> There is a touching comment on this conduct of the shepherds, in a letter of Bishop Hooper's to certain "godly and faithful prisoners, which were taken together at prayer in a house in

> Bow Churchyard." He says, "Read the second chapter of St. Luke, and there ye shall see how the shepherds that watched their sheep all night, as soon as they heard that Christ was born at Bethlehem, by and by must go to see Him. They did not reason nor debate with themselves who should keep the wolf from the sheep in the mean time, but did as they were commanded, and committed their sheep to Him whose pleasure they obeyed. So let us do, now we be called: let us commit all other things unto Him that called us. He will take heed that all things shall be well. He will help the husband; He will comfort the wife. He will guide the servants; He will keep the house; He will preserve the goods; yea, rather than it should be undone, He will wash the dishes, and rock the cradle. Cast, therefore, all your care upon God.

What did Bishop Hooper mean by this? He meant that nothing must be allowed to stand in our way when God is calling us to Himself.

2:17 The Apostles bore witness to the things which they had seen and heard. Cf. Acts 4:19, 20. See also 1 John 1:1-3. The shepherds did the same. See also the words "heard and seen" in Luke 2:20. They could not keep the good news to themselves.

2:18 Notice: "All" lit. marvelled at the message, but no one but the shepherds made the effort to go see the Christ child.

2:19 Quite evidently the shepherds had told Joseph and Mary about the visitation of the angel of the Lord, and then of the other angels. Godet says of this verse, "What a difference between this thoughtfulness and the superficial astonishment of the people around her!" (I, 134).

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"Kept" -- means to preserve, to keep safe, as a precious treasure. And then she "pondered" them in her heart, i.e., put them together with the other things that had happened.

Lesson: We rarely understand immediately all that we see in the Word of God, but it is important to accept what is there, and then trust the Lord to make His Word clear through our meditation. Cf. what is said of Peter in Acts 10:19. Cf. 1 Tim. 4:15: Joshua 1:8; Psa. 1:2; 119:97. How much we miss because we do not ponder the Word of God!

2:20 The shepherds did what the angels did--glorifying and praising God. They honored God. They sought to magnify Him, to make Him greater in the minds and hearts of those who heard their praises.

Godet said that "glorifying" "expresses the feeling of the greatness of the work; . . . , to praise, refers to the goodness displayed in it" (I, 134).

Thus we see different reactions to all that was happening. Most of the people marvelled, but it stopped there. Mary quietly went

over every detail, trying to put everything together. The shepherds were exuberant, and could not contain their joy.

Lesson: And so it always is with those who hear the Gospel. There is always a difference, sometimes even different from what we have here. Some will scoff; others will believe. But we can be sure that the purposes of God are being fulfilled. Bruce commented, "The wonder of the many was a transient emotion (aorist); this recollecting and brooding of Mary was an abiding habit (imperfect)" (EGT, I, 474). What is your response? Will you forget all about this as soon as this class is dismissed? Or will you, if you have not already done so, HASTEN TO CHRIST IN ORDER THAT YOU MIGHT BE SAVED?

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE
Luke 2:21-40

The Outline:

I. THE PREPARATION FOR CHRIST AND HIS MINISTRY (Luke 1:1-4:13).
   G. The infancy and early childhood of Christ (Luke 2:21-40).
      1. His circumcision (v. 21).
      2. His presentation to the Lord at the Temple in Jerusalem (vv. 22-39).
         a. The presentation as the firstborn (vv. 22-24).
         b. Two unexpected contacts (vv. 25-38).
            (1) With Simeon (vv. 25-35).
            (2) With Anna, a prophetess (vv. 36-38).
         c. The presentation completed, and their return to Nazareth (v. 39).
      3. His early childhood--a summary (v. 40).

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1. His circumcision (Luke 2:21).

There are three verses which are similar which seem to mark out the divisions of the first two chapters: 1:80; 2:40, 52. The first has to do with John the Baptist; the second two have to do with the Lord.

Thus, we have in this section, starting with 2:1, and going to 2:40, that which Luke considered to be a special segment in the life of the Lord Jesus.

Matthew Henry (IV, 600) pointed out that, as a Man, the Lord Jesus lived under the law of nature; as a Jew, He was "made under the law" of Moses. This latter part is seen in the two ceremonial events in this section:
1) His circumcision--in v. 21.
2) His presentation to God as the firstborn--in vv. 22-24, 39.
We need to make note of the devotion of both Joseph and Mary in this regard. (Review the circumcison of John the Baptist in Luke 1:59-66. Remember that Jewish boys were named at this time because the name of Abram was changed to Abraham when he was circumcised, as we are told in Genesis 17.)

2:21 The eighth day after birth--cf. Gen. 21:4; Lev. 12:3. This was done in recognition of the covenant which God made with Abraham, as Gen. 17 clearly indicates. It was a covenant having to do with Israel as a nation and with God's purpose to bring salvation to all of the nations of the earth. Thus, for Joseph and Mary to have our Lord circumcised was evidence of their faith in the redemptive purpose of God even at that time when Israel was under the heel of Rome.

Griffith Thomas (Genesis, p. 155) said,
> The truths connected with it (circumcision) seem to include at least four ideas: (a) designation, as belonging to God; (b) separation unto Him; (c) purity in Him; (d) possession by Him.

"His name was called JESUS" -- the NT equivalent of Joshua in the OT.

Cf. Matt. 1:21; Luke 1:31. It speaks of His humanity, His Deity, and His work of salvation.

From that day until this, there has been no greater name. And it will continue to be the greatest of all names throughout eternity. Cf. Phil. 2:9-11; Eph. 1:21; Heb. 1:4; 2:5-10.

2. His presentation to the Lord at the Temple in Jerusalem (Luke 2:22-38).

a. The presentation as the firstborn (vv. 22-24).

2:22 "The days of her purification according to the law of Moses" -- cf. Lev. 12:1-4. This was a total of 40 days.

"To present him to the Lord" -- presenting here having the idea of dedicating. Cf. Ex. 13:1, 2; 22:29, 30; 34:19, 20. See also in Num. 3:40-51 how the Levites were taken instead of the firstborn, and how the firstborn were to be redeemed.

Bruce said (EGT, I, 474):

> This act was performed in accordance with the legal conception that the first-born belonged to God, His priestly servants before the institution of the Levitical order (Num. viii. 18, 19). J. Weiss suggests that the narrative is modelled on the story of the dedication of Samuel (1 Sam. i. 21-28).

Lesson: Thus Joseph and Mary set an example for all parents. To present our children to the Lord means that we recognize that the Lord has given them to us, that they belong to Him, and that it is our desire that they be used by the Lord according to His will for them and for His glory. The same truth applies to ourselves as the people of God. Cf. Rom. 12:1, 2. See also Rom. 6:11-14.

2:23 Luke told here why Joseph and Mary did what they did. Cf. Ex. 13:2.

2:24 Commentators have raised the question as to why this purification should have been required in the case of the birth of Christ, but consulting Lev. 12:6-8 we can see that this was not for the baby Jesus, but for Mary!

And the nature of the two offerings would give further evidence that Mary was herself a sinner. The two turtledoves were to offered, one as a burnt offering, the other as a sin offering. They expressed (1) her desire to give herself to the Lord, and (2) her acknowledged need for cleansing. These two offerings both represented Christ, and show that neither our dedication to the Lord nor our cleansing can be accomplished except through Christ.

Normally the offering was a lamb and a pigeon, or a turtledove, but Lev. 12:8 indicates that, if a person were not able to bring a lamb, then two turtledoves or two pigeons would be acceptable. Thus, again

we have evidence of the lowly circumstances of Joseph and Mary.

Lessons: The humble social status of our Lord obviously was to prepare Him "to preach the gospel to the poor" (Luke 4:18a). The lowly in society constitute the majority of the people of God. Mark tells us, with reference to the ministry of the Lord Jesus, that "the common people heard him gladly" (Mark 12:37b). The Apostle Paul told that Corinthian church that this was not by accident, but by design. Cf. 1 Cor. 1:26-31. Our Lord said how "hard," but not impossible, it was for rich men to enter into the kingdom of God. Cf. Mark 10:23-27. These circumstances ought to be a great encouragement to those who do not possess much in the way of this world's goods. Cf. Jas. 2:1-10. The more we have, the harder it is for us to realize how great our need is before God. But whether rich or poor or in between, we can only be saved by grace.

It is also encouraging to see how promptly and thoroughly Joseph and Mary fulfilled their obedience to the Lord. We need to follow their example.

b. Two unexpected contacts (vv. 25-38).

(1) With Simeon, a prophet (vv. 25-35)

Simeon and Anna (vv. 36-38) prove to us that even in times of great spiritual declension God has His saints who walk with Him and who have their hearts set on the promises of His Word.

Bishop Ryle wrote in his commentary,

> It is a cheering thought that God never leaves Himself entirely without a witness. Small as His believing church may sometimes be, the gates of hell shall never completely prevail against it. The true church may be driving into the wilderness, and be a scattered little flock, but it never dies. There was a Lot in Sodom and an obadiah in Ahab's household, a Daniel in Babylon and a Jeremiah in Zedekiah's court;--and in the last days of the Jewish Church, when its iniquity was almost full, there were godly people, like Simeon, even in Jerusalem (Luke, Vol. I, p. 66).

And then he added,

> True Christians, in every age, should remember this and take comfort. It is a truth which they are apt to forget, and in consequence to give way to despondency. "I only am left," said Elijah, "and they seek my life to take it away." But what said the answer of God to him: "Yet have I left me seven thousand in Israel (1 Kings xix. 14, 18). Let us learn to be more hopeful. Let us believe that grace can live and flourish, even in the most unfavourable circumstances. There are more Simeons in the world than we suppose (Op. cit., pp. 66, 67).

2:25 Notice the description of Simeon as a man of God.

There is nothing to indicate that he was well-known. Various attempts have been made to identify him with one of the Simeon's of that day, but it is very unlikely that any are right. He is simply identified

by the Holy Spirit as "a man in Jerusalem." But look at what else is said about him:
1) "Just and devout."
2) "Waiting for the consolation of Israel."
3) "The Holy Ghost was upon him."
He may not have been famous in Israel, but he was certainly a man after God's heart.

"Just" -- the familiar word for righteous, means that he was a true believer. Cf. Luke 1:6, where it is said of Zacharias and Elisabeth that "they were both righteous before God." That has to be the meaning here.

"Devout" -- , describes his walk with the Lord. He walked in the fear of the Lord. He was a man whose life was characterized by obedience to the Word of God. This, too, is similar to what was said in 1:6 about Zacharias and Elisabeth: "walking in all of the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."

"Waiting for", the verb , a present tense, meaning that he was continually waiting, looking forward to as something that he would gladly accept. "The consolation of Israel," the coming of the Messiah. He was like Joseph of Arimathaea in Luke 23:51 "who also waited for the kingdom of God." "Consolation" takes us back to Isaiah's prophecy in Isa. 40:1, 2. Note also 2 Cor. 1:3, 4. The Holy Spirit is also called the Comforter, one called to the side of another--to help! What comfort Israel anticipated from all of the trials and testings of her turbulent history!

"And the Holy Ghost was upon him." Prominence is given in the Gk text to the word, "Holy." This probably refers to the prophetic gift which he had, although it apparently was not even recognized by the official leaders of Israel. True men of God are not always prominent among men.

2:26 Just when this revelation was given, and how, we are not told, but we are told Who gave it, and what it was. He would not die until he had seen "the Lord's Christ," the Messiah! This could also be translated, the Anointed of the Lord, the One Whom God had sent to be the Messiah.

In like manner, there are those in every generation who hope and look and pray that they will live to see the Lord's next coming, and some will be granted that privilege! What a joy that would be!

Illus: Yesterday (12/2/85) people in Seattle paid $1,000 each for lunch for the privilege of seeing and hearing the President of the US. How many are there who are praying (not paying) that they will live to see the Lord when He comes?

2:27 Note how the Holy Spirit providential led Simeon into the Temple at the very time that Joseph and Mary were there with the Lord Jesus. In fact, Simeon was already there when Joseph and Mary brought

in the the baby Jesus. Notice that the Holy Spirit is mentioned in three successive verses: vv. 25, 26, 27. Cf. also 1:15, 35, 41, 67. Thus Luke has much to say about the Holy Spirit in connection with the birth and early life of our Lord.

Notice how God often uses times of obedience as times of special blessing; Joseph and Mary were there in obedience to the Lord. Not only was Simeon blessed, but there was a message for Mary from the Lord.

2:28 This that Simeon did was doubtless done many, many times, but it never ceases to amaze me--a godly, mortal man, holding the eternal Son of God in his arms! What a dear, dear sight this is!

"And blessed God." Prayer had been answered for Simeon, and, what was even greater, the hope of Israel was being fulfilled in the coming of the Messiah. Again, we do not know how he recognized that this was the Messiah, but he did. Perhaps it was through the Holy Spirit Who had led him there at that particular time. One reason for answered prayer is that we might praise the Lord Who delights in our praise.

2:29 Here is one of the prayers recorded for us in Scripture. Simeon addressed the Lord as Despot. He acknowledged the Lord God as His Master, the One Who owned Him, the One Who had absolute authority over him.

This has been called the Nunc Dimittis. It has been used as an evening hymn since the fifth century, and has often been used by the people of God when they were dying. In it Plummer (p. 67) wrote that Simeon "represents himself as a servant or watchman released from duty, because that for which he was commanded to watch has appeared."

And notice from Simeon's words here that he had no other reason for living. This was all that the Lord had promised him, and now he was ready to die. Death held no fears for him as a devout man of God.

Lesson: It is wonderful to be living in such a way that our chief purpose in life has to do with the things of the Lord. What is it that you want more than anything else in this life?

2:30 The Gk word that Simeon used here for "salvation" actually means One Who is qualified to save. Think of the faith of this man! He believed that that little Baby was to be God's instrument for providing salvation. Thus, Simeon was enlightened beyond most men in his day, having seen that "salvation" was the primary work of the Messiah.

2:31 God had "prepared" His Son, i.e., made Him ready. Simeon looked upon the birth of Christ as that which God had done.

"Before the face of all people" -- lit., as in 2:10, all the people. Again this may refer to the elect people, or, in this case, it may be explained by v. 32--having to do with Gentiles as well as Jews. Simeon

had come to understand a truth that the Church was going to struggle with, a truth predicted by the OT prophets, and yet not comprehended by many at the time our Lord was on earth.

2:32 "A light to lighten the Gentiles" -- Cf. Isa. 42:5; 60:3. Light means enlightenment. The world is enveloped in spiritual darkness. "The glory of thy people Israel" -- The idea is of light also in this expression, but does it not have some implications of the "glory" that was manifest in Israel in the OT, a glory which was no longer to be seen at the time of our Lord's first advent?

It is interesting that in John 1, the Apostle John wrote of both light and glory. See John 1:6-14.

Actually from Luke 1:25-31 we have six names for our Lord:
1) "The consolation of Israel (v. 25)."
2) "The Lord's Christ" (v. 26).
3) "The child Jesus" (v. 27).
4) "Thy salvation" (v. 30).
5) "A light" (v. 32).
6) "The glory" (v. 32).

What great insight into the truth of God Simeon had! He went beyond that which Joseph and Mary had because of what we see in . . .

2:33 Joseph and Mary "marvelled" at what was spoken by Simeon. With the possible exception of the shepherds, no one thus far had spoken of the far-reaching extent of the Messiah's work like Simeon did--a work in behalf of the Gentiles as well as of the people of Israel.

And so Joseph and Mary had their hearts enlightened to more of the truth of God as they came in obedience to dedicate the Lord, their firstborn, as they were told to do in the OT Scriptures.

2:34 Next, Simeon turned his attention to Joseph and Mary, especially to Mary.

First of all, "he blessed them." This is the same verb ( ) which Luke used in 2:28 (also of what Zacharias did in 1:64). When it is used concerning God, it means to praise, to worship. When it is used concerning men, it means to bless. Simeon prayed for Joseph and Mary.

Then he spoke by divine revelation concerning the Lord and the effect that His ministry would have on Mary, His mother.

"Is set" -- could be translated, is appointed. This speaks of what the Father had ordained for His Son. His birth might have gone unnoticed by most in Israel, but Mary's Child was to have a most profound effect upon "many in Israel." It was called "the fall and rising again." What was meant by these words?

"The fall and rising again" -- This speaks of damnation ("the fall") and salvation ("rising again"). To illustrate, Judas fell; Peter rose again. One thief fell; the other rose again. Cf. Isa. 8:13-16. All men do one or the other. No person ever had, or will have, such an influence upon the whole world as our Lord Jesus Christ.

Other verses on "the fall" -- cf. Matt. 21:42, 44; Rom. 9:30-33 (which includes also the "rising again"), also 1 Pet. 2:6-10; John 3:19. On "the rising again" see also Rom. 6:4, 11; Eph. 2:6.

"A sign which shall be spoken against" -- "sign" indicating that there would be indisputable evidence that He was the Son of God and the Messiah, and yet, in spite of the evidence, men would speak against Him--rejecting Him, despising Him, and finally crucifying Him. The verb means to oppose outwardly and verbally, to refuse to obey Him, to refuse to have anything to do with Him (according to Thayer, p. 50). Cf. John 19:12; Heb. 12:3.

2:35 Mary would suffer because her Son would suffer. There would be grief beyond what any other would experience. (There is really no need to make this a parenthetical statement. It fits right in with all that Simeon was saying about Mary and the Lord.) Perhaps this explains the contemplation with which that which many said about the Lord was received by Mary--the thought of what it would mean that He had come to provide salvation for Jews and Gentiles alike. She knew the OT types. In fact, she had just presented two of them in presenting her Son to God.

"That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" -- The Cross not only demonstrates what was in the heart of God, and in the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ, but also what was in the heart of man! It showed man to be despicable and wicked beyond description. Men can appear to be kind and gracious and the like until they are confronted with the truth concerning Christ and the reason He came to the earth. Then we see what is in man. Cf. John 2:23-25.

Lesson: Remember that if you find your heart inclined toward the Lord Jesus Christ, it is evidence of the grace of God, not of your inherent goodness, making you an exception. If Jesus Christ were to come back to the world today, He would receive the same kind of treatment that He received 2,000 years ago.

THEN WE COME TO THE SECOND OF THE TWO UNEXPECTED CONTACTS WHICH JOSEPH AND MARY HAD IN THE TEMPLE:

(2) With Anna, a prophetess (Luke 2:36-38).

2:36 "Anna" is a form of Hannah. Perhaps she was named for Hannah, the mother of Samuel.

She was of the tribe of Asher, which was in Galilee. Thus she had left her home to come to Jerusalem to spend her last years.

Some feel that her "great age" is to be calculated as follows:
1) She was married at about 15 years of age.
2) Her husband died after they had been married for only 7 years.
3) She had been a widow for 84 years.
4) Thus 15+7+84=106 years of age.
Matthew Henry felt that this was mentioned in vv. 36, 37 to the praise of Anna that she had not remarried, but instead had given her life to the Lord.

2:37 "Departed not" probably does not mean that she lived at the Temple, although some say that that was a possibility. But she was at the Temple every day, and her devotion to the Lord was indicated by the way she served Him with fastings and prayers. Night and day she was giving herself to prayer. Probably the older she got, the more time she devoted to the Lord.

Lesson: This likewise should be true of us. Although it does not seem that Anna had any children, yet as even she got older she had more time to devote to the Lord. Notice that fastings and prayers are spoken of here as service. People often wonder how they can serve the Lord. This is one of the best ways!

2:38 As Anna came in (probably meaning that she lived elsewhere) she did what Simeon had done: "gave thanks likewise to the Lord." This was evidence that she, too, believed that Mary's Child was the Messiah. Consequently, she "spake of him (Christ) to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." "Looked for" is the same verb that was translated, "waiting for," in 2:25. Thus, Simeon and Anna were not the only ones who were expecting the Messiah, and who would turn to Him when He came.

"Redemption" -- the Gk is . This is deliverance from sin through the payment of a ransom. Cf. Luke 1:68. See also Heb. 9:12. Thus we have Joseph and Mary had two witnesses as to the mission of the baby Jesus in the world.

c. The presentation completed, and their return to Nazareth (Luke 2:39).

Luke tells nothing about the visit of the wise men, nor of the flight into Egypt. They are only in Matthew's Gospel. No writer gave all of the details of the life of Christ. We must look at each Gospel in the light of the purpose that God had in causing each of the four men to write as they did.

3. His early childhood--a summary (Luke 2:40).

"The child grew" -- His physical growth. "Waxed strong in spirit" -- which perhaps has reference to the manifestation of His divine wisdom which became more apparent as He got older. "In spirit" is not in the best MSS. "And the grace of God was upon him" -- meaning that there were evidences of God's blessing upon His life. Some of these are words with reference to our Lord which are hard for us to explain.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE
Luke 2:41-52

The Outline:

I. THE PREPARATION FOR CHRIST AND HIS MINISTRY (Luke 1:1-4:13).
   H. Christ at the Passover at twelve years of age (Luke 2:41-52).
      1. At the Passover (vv. 41, 42).
      2. Joseph and Mary--the return trip (vv. 43-45).
      3. Jesus in the Temple (vv. 46-50).
      4. At Nazareth again (v. 51).
      5. Jesus' youth (v. 52).

This is the only account in the Gospels concerning the life of our Lord between His infancy and the beginning of His public ministry. Its very uniqueness makes it a precious passage of Scripture. How we wish there were more! But we must agree with Bishop Ryle: "If it had been good for us to know more, more would have been revealed" (Vol. I, p. 78). This account is important because it foreshadows the future greatness of our Lord's ministry, and we see evidence of His divine wisdom in His discussion with the Jewish doctors of the Law in the Temple.

H. Christ at the Passover at twelve years of age (Luke 2:41-52).

1. At the Passover (vv. 41, 42).

2:41 Again we see a parallel between what Joseph and Mary did and what Elkanah and Hannah did--the parents of Samuel. Cf. 1 Sam. 1. Thus we see their devotion to the Lord. The Law required that all of the men of Israel keep three feasts during the year: The Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. Cf. Ex. 23:14-17. From Acts 2 we know that Pentecost was still an important time in Israel. Although the women were not required to go, Mary accompanied Joseph at the time of the Passover even though it must have been a great sacrifice for them to do so.

Joseph and Mary did this faithfully every year.

2:42 It is very significant that this one event taken from our Lord's youth would have to do with the Passover. The Passover is described in detail in Exodus 12. It was followed by the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Both of these are great OT types of the Lord Jesus Christ. Exodus 12 gives us the first detailed type of Christ in His death that we have in the Word of God. It was in connection with this Feast that our Lord began to exercise his first responsibilities as a son of the Law, according to the traditions which were prevalent at the time.

(Briefly discuss the Passover.)

2. Joseph and Mary--the return trip (vv. 43-45).

2:43 "And when they had fulfilled the days" -- cf. Deut. 16:1-8 where, along with Exodus 12 (and Lev. 23) we see that the Passover was observed with the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The Lord Jesus "tarried behind." This was not an act of disobedience on His part, but, as the following verses show, a preoccupation on His part with the Temple, its ceremonies, and the men in charge. Perhaps some special arrangement was made for the children, and so Joseph and Mary left, thinking that the Lord was "in the company." Some think that Joseph thought Jesus was with Mary, and Mary thought that He was with Joseph. The fact is that we do not know exactly what the circumstances were. But "the company" was evidently so large that it would have been very easy to assume that Jesus was with someone in the group.

2:44 It was not until they had gone "a day's journey" that they began looking for Him, thinking then that He might have been with some of their other relatives.

2:45 When they did not find Him, they went back to Jerusalem, looking for Him.

3. Jesus in the Temple (vv. 46-50).

2:46 After three days they found Him. The three days can be accounted for as, one day travelling away, one day returning, then seeking and finding Him on the third day.

At this point we begin to see why Luke was led by the Spirit of God to refer to this incident in the life of our Lord. We see three things in the verses which follow:

1) The evidence of unusual wisdom in our Lord, evident when He was only 12. This is a very important attribute of God.
2) The consciousness that the Lord had of a special relationship with God. This speaks of His Sonship; therefore, of His Deity.
3) The realization that He had a special mission to accomplish in the world. This is an indication of His Messiahship.

We have already had much evidence of the fact that He was both Lord and Christ, but it is important that these were apparent to our Lord when He was only twelve, and that this was clear when He went for the first time to observe the Passover.

When they found Him, He was "sitting in the midst of the doctors," i.e., the doctors of the Law. Cf. Luke 5:17. It was their responsibility to explain the Law to the people of Israel, and the training of the young men was a part of their responsibilities. These doctors were rabbis. Nicodemus was such a doctor. Cf. John 3:10. So was Gamaliel. Cf. Acts 5:34 (vv. 33-40).

The Lord was both hearing them and asking them questions.

2:47 From the Lord's participation in the discussion it was apparent to the doctors that He was a very unusual Child. They were "astonished" -- an imperfect middle in the Gk, "descriptive of their continued and repeated astonishment" (Robertson, II, 33). The verb suggests the fact that they were beside themselves, an expression which means to stand outside of one's self, or, as we might say, "He had their eyes bulging!" It describes a group of men who were very amazed at what

they were hearing.

Cf. a later situation in which a similar response was experienced by those who heard the Lord: John 7:15.

Luke mentioned in particular "his understanding -- . This is the Gk word from which we get our English word, synthesis, which is the ability to put things together. This is what very few are able to do when it comes to the Word of God, and it usually requires a great deal of maturity and much study of the Word. See Paul's prayer in Col. 1:9. This is the only way that any of us can arrive at a proper knowledge of the doctrines of Scripture. We need to get it all together! No one passage nor one book of the Bible gives us all that is revealed concerning any doctrine. If we are to have a correct understanding of the truth we need to see what all of Scripture has to say about it.

This is what the Lord had. And the doctors were beside themselves.

2:48 Joseph and Mary were, lit., shocked! They did not expect to find Him doing what He was doing. But there He was.

Joseph and Mary could rightly have felt guilty that they had not noticed that Jesus was with them on their journey home, and so it may have been with some attempt to justify herself that she asked the question, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." There is no doubt but that they were very worried. But we have in the question the evidence that Mary did not yet really understand the mission of her Son on earth. Cf. vv. 50, 51b.

2:49 These are the first recorded words of our Lord.

"How is it that ye sought me?" This did not mean that He was surprised that they would look for Him, but that they would look for Him any other place than in the Temple, the house of God.

"Wist ye know that I must be about my Father's business?" Lit. His question was, Did you not know that I MUST be about the things of my Father? As He said later,

> I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge:
> and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will,
> but the will of the Father which hath sent me (John 5:30).

And He also said,

> For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will,
> but the will of him that sent me (John 6:38).

When the Lord was in the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed,

> Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me:
> nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done (Luke 22:42).

This conviction that was so prominent throughtout the life of our Lord was in His heart when he was 12!

Note that important NT word, "must." This means a necessity laid upon the Lord by the counsel and decree of God, "that constraint which arises from divine appointment" (Thayer, p. 126). It is used many times in the

NT with reference to our Lord's work as the Saviour. Cf. John 3:7, 14, 30; 4:4.

Thus, He was clearly conscious of His Deity and of His mission in the world.

2:50 The verb used here means that they could not put together what they had seen and heard with what the Lord said that it meant. We must be sympathetic with Joseph and Mary because we, too, are slow to comprehend the things of the Lord. It is only by small steps that we enter into the knowledge of God and His Word.

4. At Nazareth again (v. 51).

2:51 The next thing that Luke had to say about the Lord has to do with His baptism when He was 29 or 30 years of age. See Luke 3:21. So this describes our Lord's relationship with His parents throughout the years ahead. However, Luke wanted us to know that Mary in particular thought much about what he called, "all these sayings," i.e., the sayings of the angel, the sayings of Elisabeth, the sayings of the shepherds, the sayings of Simeon, the sayings of Anna, and the sayings of Jesus Himself. And it is very possible that she knew about the sayings of Zacharias. She wanted to understand it all.

Lesson: How important it is for us to use the Word of God the way Mary did! Cf. what Paul told Timothy to do in 2 Tim. 2:7, "Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things." Here is the word synthesis again. As we meditate on the Word, the Lord will teach us what it means. Cf. Joshua 1:8; Psa. 1:2; 1 Tim. 4:15.

5. Jesus' youth (v. 52).

2:52 Four things are stated about our Lord as He progressed from youth to full manhood. In all four areas of life He "increased," a verb which Robertson said (II, 35) means to cut one's way through a forest or jungle as the pioneers did. Thayer says that it speaks of lengthening out metals by hammering, such a smith would forge metals in a fire (p. 540). The Lord made progress; He grew:

1) "In wisdom" -- in which we see the humanity of our Lord (although the extent to which He was wise far surpassed the wisest men who ever lived. The wisdom He displayed in the Temple is not mentioned, but the Gospels are full of His teaching. No one ever spoke like He did.
2) "In stature" -- which can mean either age, or physical height, or both.
3) "And in favour with God" -- which means that there was ever-increasing evidence of the blessing of God upon His life.
4) "And in favour . . . with man" -- for which see an interesting statement in Prov. 3:1-4, esp. v. 4. It was some time before the hatred of men was turned against the Lord, but even then it was instigated by the leaders of the people, not the common people. They "heard him gladly" (Mark 12:37).

So here we have further evidence that there was something very unique

about Mary's Son, Jesus. And Luke is very careful to put all of these details before Theophilus, and us!

For the next 18 years the Scriptures are absolutely silent about our Lord.

Concl: Four things (at least) stand out in this passage which are worth our close attention:

1) The diligence that our Lord manifested in doing the will of His Father.
2) His subjection to His parents--a worthy example for all young people.
3) The value of the years of seclusion.
4) The way our time should be spent. As the Lord advanced in age, He also grew in wisdom, and saw greater and greater evidence of the blessing of God upon His life.

Tuesday Class -- 12/17/85

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE
Luke 3:1-22

The Outline:

I. THE PREPARATION FOR CHRIST AND HIS MINISTRY (Luke 1:1-4:13).
   I. The ministry of John the Baptist (Luke 3:1-22).
      1. The mission and message of John the Baptist (Luke 3:1-18).
      2. The imprisonment of John the Baptist (Luke 3:19, 20).
      3. John and the Baptism of Jesus (Luke 3:21, 22).

The remainder of the outline of this first section is:
   J. The genealogy of Jesus (Luke 3:23-38).
   K. The temptation of Jesus (Luke 4:1-13).

(The outline division here is the letter "I", not the Roman numeral "I".)

I. The ministry of John the Baptist (Luke 3:1-22).

F. B. Meyer, who was a contemporary of Spurgeon, and who also ministered in London as Spurgeon did, said in his Introduction to his book, John the Baptist,

> . . . I am thankful to have been permitted to write this book. But I am more thankful for the hours of absorbing interest spent in the study of his portraiture as given in the Gospels. I know of nothing that makes so pleasant a respite from the pressure of life's fret and strain, as to bathe mind and spirit in the translucent waters of Scripture biography (italics mine).

The story and ministry of John the Baptist are of the greatest importance in the Scriptures. In Luke 7:28 we have recorded these words of the Lord Jesus concerning John (see also Matt. 11:11):

> For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist . . .

In what ways was John a greater prophet than all others? This, of course, speaks of the importance of his ministry.

1) His ministry was foretold by two Old Testament prophets: Isaiah and Malachi. See Isa. 40:3-8 (which is quoted in all four Gospels: Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4; John 1:23).
2) He and his ministry are the connecting link between the OT and the NT. In fact, John's ministry was of immense importance because by his coming the prophetic ministry, which had not been exercised for over 400 years, was revived.
3) With his ministry the line of great OT prophets comes to an end.
4) He was the immediate forerunner of the Lord Jesus Christ, the greatest Person Who ever lived on this earth, the One Who is the main theme of both the OT and the NT.
5) No prophet in Israel ever had a greater acceptance with the people than did John.
6) He is the only prophet who was thought to be the Messiah.

Godet said this about John (Vol. I, p. 165):

> Perhaps no more stirring character is presented in sacred history than that of John the Baptist. The people are excited at his appearing; their consciences are aroused; multitudes flock to him. The entire nation is filled with solemn expectation;: and just at the moment when this man has only to speak the word to make himself the centre of this entire movement, he not only refrains from saying this word, but he pronounces another. He directs all the eager glances that were fixed upon himself to One coming after him, whose sandals he was not worthy to carry. Then, as soon as his successor has appeared, he retires to the background, and gives enthusiastic expression to his joy at seeing himself eclipsed. Criticism is fertile in resources of every kind; but with this unexampled moral phenomenon to account for, it (i.e., criticism) will find it difficult to give any satisfactory explanation for it, without appealing to some factor of a higher order.

In a special sense we can concur with the words of the Apostle John in John 1:6, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John," referring to John the Baptist.

These verses which contain Luke's report of John the Baptist's mission and message can be divided into the following sections:

1) The time, place, and nature of his ministry (vv. 1-6). This shows when John first appeared in his public ministry, probably not very long before the ministry of the Lord Jesus began.
2) The preaching of John to the people (vv. 7-14).
3) John's response to the people as to whether or not he was the Messiah (vv. 15-18).

1. The mission and message of John the Baptist (Luke 3-1:22).

a. The time, place, and nature of his ministry (vv. 1-6).

3:1 The time of John's ministry is clearly set in vv. 1, 2 both with reference to the governmental leaders of his time (v. 1), but also with respect to those who were the high priests at the time (v. 2).

"In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberias Caesar," the successor of Augustus Caesar. All of the rulers of the Roman Empire were called Caesar after the reign of Julius Caesar. Tiberias was the third of twelve Caesars. Matthew Henry described him as "a very bad man, given to covetousness, drunkenness, and cruelty" (V, p. 610). Lightfoot, referred to by M. Henry, said that Tiberias was mentioned so that we could anticipate the character of the times and of the men who reigned under him.

The Jews were under the heel of Rome at this time, and so John came on the scene at what was both a very difficult time and a needy time.

The following four men, Pilate, Herod, Philip, and Lysanias were rulers under Caesar, and they ruled the areas from Judea on toward the north and the northeast. They all lived and ruled in the early part of history which we now designate by the letters, A.D.--the first century. All of the ministry of Christ fell under the rule of Herod Antipas (the one

mentioned here), who was the son of Herod the Great, the man who sought to kill all children under 2 years of age after the wise men did not return to tell him where the Messiah was. Herod the Great died before Joseph and Mary returned to Nazareth. See Matt. 2:16-23.

"Tetrarch" originally was used to designate the one who was in charge of a fourth part of any area, but it seems that when John began his ministry it was just one a many terms which was used to designate one of the Roman officials. The different terms apparently indicates differing degrees of favor which the leaders had with Rome.

3:2 Not only was the government of the day a Gentile rule over the people of God, but the spiritual leadership of Israel was very corrupt. God had decreed from Aaron on that there would be but one high priest; here we read that there were two: Annas, who was the most powerful, and who would not let go of his authority, and Caiaphas, his son-in-law, who succeeded him. Cf. Acts 6:5-22, esp. v. 6. So these men lived throughout the entire ministries of John and of the Lord Jesus, and were not at all sympathetic with them.

So the human scene, politically and religiously, was not good. In fact, both were very bad!

This impressive list of names heralds the beginning of something new. In some ways it indicates that chapters 1 and 2 have been introductory, and that here we begin to get to the main message of Luke.

That new thing is now seen to be that into these times just described "the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness." It was at such a time that John began to minister, not in Jerusalem, nor in any largely populated area, but "in the wilderness," or desert--a hitherto obscure man, in an obscure place, but the recipient of the Word of God! This indicated his call, his authority for doing and saying what he did and said. Cf. John 1:6 ff.

"Word" here is ῥῆμα. It speaks here of a "particular utterance of God" (Plummer, p. 85), and is "the O.T. formula to express Divine inspiration" (Ibid.).

This "word" is the Gospel, as can be seen also from the Gk verb that Luke used in Luke 3:18. We have seen this also a number of times in the first two chapters:

1) The angel of the Lord spoke of it to Zacharias in 1:16.
2) Mary spoke of it in her Magnificat. See 1:47, 54, 55.
3) Zacharias spoke of it in his Benedictus. See 1:68-79, esp. vv. 68, 69, 72, 73, 77.
4) The angel of the Lord spoke of it again to the shepherds in 2:10, 11.
5) Simeon spoke of it in his Nunc Dimittis in 2:29-32.
6) Anna spoke of it in 2:38.
7) And from all of these references we know that this is what the Lord had in mind when He said what He did in 2:49.

See also the next verse, Luke 3:3.

Therefore, it becomes very clear that the ministries of John and of our Lord had to do with the salvation of sinners. Consequently we are right in calling this Book, written by Luke, the Gospel according to Luke.

For "the word of God" to come to John meant that he spoke by divine revelation. He did not originate his own message; it was indeed the Word of God!

Campbell Morgan made an interesting comment on the expression, "the word of God came unto John." He said,

> In this translation I do not like that preposition "unto." The Greek preposition is ; and it ought to be rendered, "The word of God came upon John." The force of the preposition is that of pressure from above. The word of the Lord came upon him, pressed down upon him from above. Here is the qualification for preaching. The message of God comes upon a man. It is a great thing that he be prepared in every way; but the preparation leaves a man unable to preach until the word of the Lord falls upon him. That is the keynote to the marvel of this ministry (The Gospel According To Luke, pp. 47, 48).

3:3 Here we are given the place of John's ministry: "the country about Jordan." This is where John grew up. See Luke 1:80.

There probably were at least two reasons for this:
1) The vital place that baptism had in his ministry; he needed to be near water, i.e., the Jordan River.
2) This would make it necessary for people to go out where he was, an added way for them to express the sincerity of their repentance (although even this could be used by hypocrites, as Matthew pointed out regarding the Pharisees and Sadducees--cf. Matt. 3:7).

We have an excellent summation of John's ministry in this verse. Note three things. We have already seen that his message was the Gospel.
1) He preached the necessity of baptism.
2) Baptism was to be a sign of repentance--repentance meaning a change of mind. This applied to both past and future sins--sorrow over the past, and a sincere intention to turn from all sin in the future.
3) The main object of his ministry was that sins might be remitted, i.e., forgiven!

Now let us keep in mind that there is ONLY ONE GOSPEL, whether we are talking about the OT, the period of time recorded in the Gospels, or during the remainder of the time in the NT, even down to the present day. Therefore, we need to be clear on these various aspects of Paul's ministry.

We need to recognize the following facts:
1) The Gospel is the Gospel of the grace of God. Consequently, there could be nothing meritorious about it, i.e., nothing that any of the Jews could contribute to their salvation. Therefore, baptism was not a part of their salvation. It was a part of their repentance, but did not contribute to their salvation. Salvation is exclusively a

work of God in the hearts of those who are saved. Baptism did not guarantee that there had been true repentance, neither did it bring about the forgiveness of sins. Forgiveness is always an act of God bestowed upon the repentant sinner in pure grace.

A study of the Epistles shows that baptism ~~takes~~ took on even added significance after the Church came into existence in the book of Acts.

2) Repentance had to precede their baptism. If they had not sincerely repented in their hearts, baptism would mean nothing. The preaching of John clearly brought that out.

But we need to recognize, too, that even repentance is from the Lord. Cf. 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Acts 5:31; 11:18; Heb. 12:17.

When people really repent, it is evidence that God is at work. But that was also apparent in the fact that people were going out of the cities to hear John preach. It was a special time of blessing from the Lord.

So, this is why we pray for people to repent and to be saved--because it is God Who brings people to repentance! This is very important for us to understand.

3) The nature of forgiveness. This is one of the sweet words of the Gospel. But let us remember that it was provided for us, purchased for us, at a most terrible price: the blood of the Son of God. Cf. Eph. 1:7. See also Rom. 3:21-26. And, when God forgives our sins, He forgets them--something which we cannot do. Cf. Jer. 31:34b; Heb. 10:17.

So Luke said a lot when he wrote this third verse. He gave us here not only the place of John's ministry, but began to describe the nature of his ministry. More about the nature of his ministry in vv. 4-6.

3:4 "As it is written . . ." indicates that Luke was citing this passage from Isa. 40:3-5 as proof of what he had just stated in v. 3 about the nature of John the Baptist's ministry. John's ministry was of such great importance in the plan of God that it had been predicted 700 years previously by Isaiah, the prophet.

The importance of these verses is emphasized by the fact that they are recorded by Matthew (Matt. 3:3), Mark (Mark 1:2, 3), and John (John 1:23) --the latter being John the Baptist's own use of Isaiah's prophecy when he was asked by certain priests and Levites who he was. But Luke's quotation of Isaiah is more complete than that of any of the other Gospel writers.

It seems certain that these words are to be taken in the figurative, poetic sense in which the prophets of the OT often spoke.

Note that John is simply spoken of as "a voice"--a voice that would cry out, and a voice that would be heard. What an example this is to all preachers of the Gospel! It is not important for people to know who we are, but it is important for them to hear the message that we proclaim.

What was the voice crying out?

"Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." John was sent ahead of the Lord to prepare the way for His coming. He was the Lord's forerunner. John's ministry was to make it easier for the people to receive the ministry of our Lord. And, once the ministry of Christ began, the ministry of John would be completed. See John 3:22-36.

3:5 This verse seems to describe how John would "prepare . . . the way of the Lord." All difficulties would be removed. No longer would any obstacle stand in the way. As Matthew Henry said, "The gospel has made the way to heaven plain and easy to be found, smooth and easy to be walked in (V, 612). The Gospel had never been clearer than it was as a result of the ministries of John the Baptist and of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3:6 There are probably two ideas that we are to understand from this verse:

1) That, as we have seen before in the preceding chapters of Luke, the Gospel was given to "all flesh," i.e., to Gentiles as well as to the Jews.
2) This would be a reference also to the time when the Lord Jesus Christ will return to the earth to reign. Then truly the whole earth will see the salvation of the Lord. Cf. Isa. 11:9b, " . . . for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

We preach a Gospel that is universal in its scope--not that all men will be saved, but that there will be those from every nation who will be saved.

b. The preaching of John the Baptist (vv. 7-18).

3:7 Notice the spectacular nature of John's ministry: the people came to him! They came apparently in repentance, but somehow John knew that, with many of them, they had not really repented. Lesson: We must be aware of the fact that, in times of a spiritual awakening (such as this was), there will be false professions as well as true. Matthew reported these words of John as being spoken to the Pharisees and Sadducees, but John evidently preached them also to all of the people who came.

Obviously John was not a crowd-pleaser. He was intent on seeing a real work of God done in people's hearts, not just getting a large response to his preaching.

What is a viper? It is a poisonous snake. It was undoubtedly in John's mind a reference to Satan in that the hearts of many of the people ~~will~~ were still held in darkness by Satan. And, when such people enter in among the people of God, the results are anything but good.

And, as snakes flee from fire, but remain snakes, so there those who were fleeing "from the wrath to come," but there supposed repentance was not real, and so would not be permanent. John's words were designed to awaken them to their true need.

"The wrath to come" -- i.e., eternal judgment.

Bishop Ryle has a very important statement with regard to "the wrath to come":

> Let us beware of being wise above that which is written, and more charitable than Scripture itself. Let the language of John the Baptist be deeply graven in our hearts. Let us never be ashamed to avow our firm belief that there is a "wrath to come" for the impenitent, and that is is possible for a man to be lost as well as to be saved. To be silent on the subject is positive treachery to men's souls. It only encourages them to persevere in wickedness, and fosters in their minds the devil's old delusion, "Ye shall not surely die." That minister is surely our best friend who tells us honestly of danger, and warns us, like John the Baptist, to "flee from the wrath to come." Never will a man flee till he sees there is real cause to be afraid. Never will he seek heaven till he is convinced that there is risk of his falling into hell. The religion in which there is not mention of hell, is not the religion of John the Baptist, or of our Lord Jesus, and (or of) His apostles (Expository Thoughts On The Gospels, St. Luke, Vol. I, pp. 90, 91).

3:8 True repentance will be accompanied by outward "fruits" which can be seen. Their will be sorrow for past sins, and a desire to be different in the future. But with many of the people this kind of a change was not evident. Therefore, John called for repentance.

Some felt that it was enough that they were Jews, the sons of Abraham. But, again, we must remember that salvation is by grace. If Jews had special rights to salvation because they were Jews, then salvation would not be by grace. So John reminded the people of Israel who came to him to be baptized that "God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham."

Cf. John 1:11-13. No man is more deserving of salvation than others, either because of who he is or because of good things that he has done. Every sinner, Jew or Gentile, is altogether unworthy of salvation.

Lesson: We need to remember that, when it comes to salvation, it makes no difference who our parents have been, nor what church we may have joined. Salvation is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. What we need to be concerned about is whether or not we have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and whether or not we are walking in the faith of the Word of God.

3:9 This verse continues with the idea of eternal punishment.

Initially the appearance of the tree (a figure of speech used here of people) is not the important thing; the important thing is what is taking place at "the root," i.e., in the heart. The axe of the Gospel is directed there.

If you look at Isaiah 40 where the prophecy of John the Baptist is given,

you will see that Isaiah was called to speak to the hearts of the people. Cf. Isa. 40:2. This is what John was doing, too--speaking to their hearts. If the fruits of repentance were not there, the act of going through baptism meant nothing!

And so John added, "Every tree therefore . . ." It is not that anyone is saved by "good fruit," but the "good fruit" is evidence that one is truly a believer in Christ. Cf. Eph. 2:8-10. It is impossible for a person to come to Christ and yet remain the same person that he was before. Cf. 2 Cor. 5:17. See also Matt. 7:15-20, esp. v. 20.

"Fire" here speaks of hell. In v. 17 below it is called "unquenchable" fire. In Rev. 20:10 it is called "the lake of fire," and those who are in it "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." There is no more solemn truth, sobering truth, in all of the Word of God!

3:10 JOHN'S PREACHING BROUGHT AN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE FROM (1) THE PEOPLE, (2) THE PUBLICANS, AND (3) THE SOLDIERS. See vv. 10, 12, 14a. It was, "What shall we do then?"

See Matt. 19:16-22. Also cf. Acts 2:37; 16:30. How wonderful it is when people begin to ask this question! We can tell that the Spirit of God is working when we are not doing all of the talking, but people begin to ask us questions about the Gospel.

The imperfect tense of the verb "asked" indicates that the people were continually asking John this question, i.e., they continually put this question to him.

3:11 John did not mean that people would be saved by doing what he said for them to do in vv. 11, 13, and 14b, but he did mean that these would be the ways in which they would prove that their repentance was a true repentance.

Lesson: People should not be baptized until there is evidence that their hearts and lives have been changed.

Cf. Jas. 2:14-26. James preached the same Gospel that John the Baptist preached. A true believer is not just going to be concerned about his own needs, but he is going to be concerned about the needs of others.

Lesson: We do need to realize from this that a person is not showing true repentance because he is concerned about meeting other people's needs. There is much charitable work that goes on continually in the world. But the good works that indicate true repentance are those works which accompany a person's profession of faith in Christ!

Lesson: A true believer will recognize that what he has belongs to the Lord, and is to be used for the glory of the Lord. And what he has is not to encourage laziness on the part of those who do not have, but should be used to meet true needs: clothing and food.

Note: All three answers which John gave to the three groups who asked

him what they should do had to do with the sin of selfishness, covetousness. These, quite evidently, were the characteristic sins of the day in which John ministered--as it is in every age.

3:12 The response of the publicans.

These men were the prime examples of greed and selfishness. Plummer had this to say about them:

> These "tax collectors" were detested everywhere, because of their oppressiveness and fraud, and were classed with the vilest of mankind (such as harlots and other sinners, the outcasts of society--my addition) . . . The Jews especially abhorred them as bloodsuckers for a heathen conqueror. For a Jew to enter such a service was the most utter degradation. He was excommunicated, and his whole family was regarded as disgraced (ICC, p. 91).

This is what made the contact that our Lord had with Zacchaeus so amazing. See Luke 19:1-10 (esp. v. 7).

3:13 John the Baptist did not condemn their business, but he did renounce the way the publicans would use their office to gather over and above what they were required to gather, and the overage was for their own personal gain. They worked the people, and this was one of the main reasons they were hated.

3:14 The response of the soldiers, and John's answer to them.

These "soldiers" were probably more like policemen, and it seems that they worked with the publicans. They would intimidate the people and blackmail them, often using rough, cruel action. And so they, too, were hated. They were Jewish also, like the publicans. They were paid by the government, but took their job as an opportunity to get more than they were paid. In the language of World War II, they were considered to be collaborators!

3:15 All of this raised another question: Was John the Baptist the Messiah?

This question was raised because "the people were in expectation"--the verb what was used in Luke 1:21. Many were waiting for the Messiah. Obviously the Lord had prepared His people for the coming of Christ. The people saw no other hope for their plight--like we often speak of the coming of the Lord. And so they "mused," reasoned, "in their hearts." The possibility that John was the Messiah was very prominent. See the Apostle John's account in John 1:19, 20.

Lesson: There is always a tendency on the part of people to worship a man. And this becomes a snare to the Lord's servants. Cf. Rom. 12:3. What an example John the Baptist is to all who serve the Lord! He did not even feel worthy, according to the next verse, to do the menial task of taking off the Lord's sandals in order to wash His feet! How the Lord's servants need to beware of flattery! John the Baptist did not feel that he was worthy to be a bondservant of the Messiah. The Lord's servants in every generation would be far more effective if they had the

same attitude.

3:16 The fact that Luke said that John said the following "unto them all" is evidence that it was widely thought that John could have been, and possibly was, the Messiah.

But John's answer left no doubt but that (1) he was not the Messiah, and (2) the Messiah was far greater than he was.

The greatness of the Messiah here was to be seen in the fact that John could only baptize with water; the Messiah would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. John was like we are: he could only serve the Lord in obedience to what the Lord had for him to do. It was entirely in the Lord's hands to change people's lives, or to execute judgment. See John 15:4. Also 1 Cor. 3:4-7.

What does it mean to be baptized "with the Holy Ghost (or Spirit) and with fire"?

When John was baptizing in water he was immersing people in water. But the point was that John was using water; the Lord Jesus would use the Holy Spirit, and fire.

Was the baptizing which our Lord would do, with the Holy Spirit and fire, one baptism, or two? In Acts 1, 2 it seems like they may have been one and the same. But the context here in Luke 3 (see v. 17) seems to indicate clearly that they are separate baptisms--one for believers, with the Holy Spirit; the other for unbelievers, with fire.

3:17 The fan is in His hand! All judgment has been committed, not to John the Baptist, nor to us, nor to any other person. It has been committed to the Lord Himself. See John 5:27.

The statements here speak of a harvest, and so of the final judgment. The Lord will either work in people's hearts by the Holy Spirit, joining them to Himself (as is indicated in 1 Cor. 12:13), or He will pronounce eternal judgment upon those who do not believe. It is all in His hand.

3:18 Here we have another and (in v. 19) statement. Luke was pointing out the facts that (1) there was great blessing under John's ministry, but (2) there was also opposition (v. 19). We could translate vv. 18, 19, On the one hand John preached the Gospel like this, and he saw great blessing; on the other hand his preaching led to his death. Great movements of the Spirit of God have always been characterized by both blessing and opposition!

There is a message here for anyone who preaches the Word of God in any generation. It is to be seen in the word, "exhortation." John not only proclaimed the truth, but he pressed home upon the hearts of his hearers the necessity of responding in the right way to the truth of God's Word. He was not satisfied that many came to hear him, but he wanted to see lives changed. And, as the verb "preached," i.e., preached the Gospel, indicates, he knew that their lives could only be changed through the

preaching of the Gospel of the grace of God.

2. The imprisonment of John the Baptist (Luke 3:19,20).

Here Luke projected himself into the future of John's ministry--the event in his preaching which ultimately ended his ministry. Luke referred to this again in Luke 9:7-9. See also Matt. 14:1-12; Mark 6:14-29.

Note the boldness of John the Baptist, speaking out against sin wherever he found it. He not only reproved, but his reproofs brought conviction.

However, not all who are convicted of their sins actually repent. Herod sought to silence John. He feared John, and heard him gladly, as Matthew and Mark have told us, but he did not realize that, through the dancing of Herodias' daughter, the fate of John would be taken out of his hand.

Lesson: How important it is to act positively with respect to the Gospel when we here it. People think that their response to the Gospel is in their hands, but it is not!

Lesson: The book of Acts also informs us that there is often a high price to be paid for the preaching of the Gospel.

3. John and the Baptism of Jesus (Luke 3:21, 22).

There are two things of great significance which we need to learn from the baptism of the Lord Jesus Christ: (1) the meaning of His baptism; (2) the outstanding event which followed His baptism.

3:21 On the meaning of our Lord's baptism, we need to consult the account of it given by Matthew in Matt. 3:13-15.

The baptism of our Lord was different from the baptism of the Jews under John's ministry because our Lord was without sin. It was also different from believer's baptism today in the church. It pictured His substitution for the sinner in order that sinners might have a place equal to His before God. So His baptism was unique.

Luke alone mentioned that the Lord was "praying" at this time. Plummer pointed out that, "More than any of the other Evangelists S. Luke brings before his readers the subject of Prayer; and in two ways, (1) by the example of Christ, and (2) by direct instruction" (ICC, p. xlv).

3:22 Here we have the manifestation of the Trinity.

This marks the formal beginning of the public ministry of our Lord. He began with the Father's blessing and with the power of the Holy Spirit. We have here both the humanity of our Lord, and His Deity--with no question about either of them.

The Lord's humanity and His Deity and also brought out in the following two passages in which we have (1) His genealogy and (2) His temptation.

"Thou art my beloved Son; in whom I am well pleased." Note that these words were spoken to the Lord. Lit. the Father said, Thou art my Son, the Beloved. The Father was well pleased with Him because He was His Son and because He sought always to please the Father.

And so to this point Luke has given us ample evidence of the Deity of our Lord, and of His humanity, and of His purpose in coming into the world, i.e., to provide salvation for sinners.

Tuesday Class -- 1/21/86

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE
Luke 3:23-38

The Outline:

I. THE PREPARATION FOR CHRIST AND HIS MINISTRY (Luke 1:1-4:13).
   J. The genealogy of Jesus (Luke 3:23-38).

   The final point in this first division is:
   K. The temptation of Jesus (Luke 4:1-13).

J. The genealogy of Jesus (Luke 3:23-38).

3:23 There have been many disputes over this section concerning two questions:

1) The exact age of the Lord Jesus when he began His ministry. Was He actually 30, or only about 30?
2) From the difference between this genealogy and the genealogy of our Lord given in Matthew's Gospel, how can we reconcile the two genealogies? The important difference is that Matthew traced our Lord's genealogy through Solomon (see Matt. 1:6, 7); Luke traced it through another son of David: Nathan (see Luke 3:31).

One thing is certain: The emphasis in the Gospel now clearly shifts from John the Baptist to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a new beginning to the Gospel. That is why the genealogy was delayed to this point.

On the age of the Lord Jesus, Plummer (p. 102) cited the translation of Tyndale who rendered this verse, "Jesus was about thirty years of age when He began," i.e., when He began His public ministry.

The question is not of major importance, but it is a point to keep in mind that the Levites did not begin their ministry under the Law until they were 30 years old. Cf. Num. 4:3. This was also the age of Joseph when he began his work with Pharaoh. Cf. Gen. 41:46. It was also the age of David when he began to reign. Cf. 2 Sam. 5:4.

The second question is more important.

But, before we deal with it, let us consider the importance of the genealogy itself with respect to the Lord Jesus.

Since Luke was claiming Messiahship for Jesus, it was extremely important that he show our Lord's connection to those to whom the Messianic promises had been given, namely, Abraham and David. We have this in the genealogy given in Matthew's Gospel, and we have it here in Luke's account of our Lord's genealogy. So there is no doubt that our Lord was in the Messianic family.

But why are the genealogies different? Both seem to be genealogies of Joseph who, of course, was not the father of our Lord, and not related to Him by blood. And yet the genealogies are different.

Several explanations have been given:

1) One is that Joseph's mother had been married twice, and that Luke gives the genealogy of Joseph from his true father as well as from his stepfather. This is very unlikely.
2) Another explanation is that the ancestors of Joseph, from David on down to the Lord, had two names. This, too, is very unlikely.

Various other explanations have been given, but the most likely seems to be this:

3) Luke's genealogy is that of Mary, not Joseph, and that Heli was the father-in-law of Joseph, Mary's father. This latter point cannot be proven from Scripture, and so it is an assumption, a very likely assumption, which is neither disproven nor contradicted by Scripture.

The fact is that the question cannot be settled conclusively, and it is certainly true, as Matthew Henry has said, that it is good that our salvation does not depend upon our being able to solve the problem. One thing is certain: As further light is cast upon the Word of God it has always proved the record of Scripture to be true. But certain points would seen to point us in this direction, that the genealogy in Luke is His genealogy through Mary:

1) It was most common for genealogies to be traced through the man in the family, not the woman. Therefore it was quite in order for Luke to begin Mary's genealogy with a reference to her husband.
2) It would seem incredible that no genealogy of Mary would be given when she was the one who was related by blood to the Lord Jesus, and who, therefore, would give our Lord the right to the throne of Israel.
3) The two genealogies would show that our Lord was related to Abraham and to David through both Joseph and Mary--Joseph, the husband of Mary, giving Him <u>the legal right</u> to the throne; Mary, giving Him <u>the blood right</u> to the throne.

With this explanation Jacob in Matt. 1:16 would have been the father of Joseph; Heli in Luke 3:23 would have been his father-in-law.

And so it seems that we can conclude that Mary was related to David through Nathan; Joseph was related to David through Solomon.

<u>Two other interesting differences</u> in the two genealogies are that Matthew began with Abraham, and moved on down to Joseph; Luke began with Joseph and moved back to Adam.

The differences can be explained in the fact that Matthew was writing for the Jews, while Luke was writing to Gentiles. The Jews would want to know immediately if Jesus were related to Abraham, and so Matthew began with him. Relating our Lord to Adam, as Luke did, would show the universality of the Gospel, and that the mission of Jesus Christ to the earth was for the Gentile as well as for the Jew. Besides, Luke was primarily concerned about the Saviorhood of our Lord, not His Messiahship. Consequently he traced the genealogy of our Lord back to Adam, the head of the race, through whom "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12), i.e., sinned in Adam.

Along a more edifying line of thought, this genealogy (as is the case

also with Matthew's account), points out five things at least:

1) Our Lord was indeed the seed of the woman. See Gen. 3:15. There is no question regarding His true humanity.
2) Our Lord's identification with men who had died, or would die. He is the ever-living One, the eternal Son of the eternal Father.
3) Here the Lord was identified not only with the dead and the dying, but also with sinners. He became a man that He might be the Saviour of men.
4) We also see the sovereignty of God in history. From the beginning of time God had been carefully preserving this family because of His promise of salvation.
5) Finally, we have this further confirmation of the reliability of the Word of God.

These point should all be an encouragement to our faith.

Tuesday Class -- 1/28/86

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE
Luke 4:1-13

The Outline:

I. THE PREPARATION FOR CHRIST AND HIS MINISTRY (Luke 1:1-4:13).
   K. The temptation of Jesus (Luke 4:1-13).

K. The temptation of Jesus (Luke 4:1-13).

The Lord Jesus passed from a time of great honor and glory in connection with His baptism to a time of great trial when He was tempted by the Devil. This is often the way things go in the lives of the people of God, too. Times of great blessing are often followed by times of severe testing. The Devil likes to attack us when we least expect it.

But it is obvious that there was a divine purpose also in the testing. At this time it is said that our Lord was "full of the Holy Spirit" and that He "was led by the Spirit into the wilderness" where He would be under attack from the Evil One. (See verse 1.)

But we need to ask the question, Why was the Lord tempted?

There are several answers to that question.

First, from the Devil's point-of-view, He obviously wanted to know if the incarnation of the Son of God had had any effect upon His Deity. Did the Lord Jesus become vulnerable to sin in becoming a man? Could He sin? The Devil knew that God cannot sin, but for the Son of God to become man was something new, and the Devil certainly did not know if the Son of God were still incapable of sinning.

Second, note that the Lord Jesus "was led by the Spirit into the wilderness" (v. 1). The Holy Spirit surely knew what was going to take place there, and He deliberately led the Lord to the place of temptation. Why?

Quite evidently it was to prove at the very outset of our Lord's ministry not only that He would not sin, but that He could not sin. The Lord was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). "Without sin" means apart from sin. The outcome of our Lord's temptation made it possible for John to write many years later, "And in him is no sin" (1 John 3:5b).

Thus, the Holy Spirit did something with our Lord that He would never do with us: He led Him into temptation. See James 1:13.

If we are inclined to doubt the sinlessness of Jesus Christ, all we need to do is to consider the problems we would face if He could sin, or if He had sinned! To say even that He could, but did not, is to admit that our Lord had not only a human nature but a sin nature.

It ought to be of great comfort to us to know that our Lord Jesus Christ could not sin.

But there is a third point.

The temptation of Jesus means that "he himself hath suffered being tempted," and therefore "he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:18). He can, as a result of the incarnation, "be touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Heb. 4:15). This is a point that is hard for us to comprehend if the Lord could not sin, but we need to begin with what the Word says, and then go from there. And the Word says that this is what the Lord is able to do. We cannot expect to be able to explain the great mysteries which will always surround the humanity of the Lord Jesus, but we can certainly believe what is written and profit from knowing that it is true.

When we come to truth in Scripture which we cannot fully comprehend, and which is not explained in Scripture, we need to be satisfied to know what is written. If an explanation were necessary for our spiritual growth and blessing, the Lord would have given it. But since the explanation has not been given we must believe that we can profit from what has been written, and we must not question the wisdom of God in that He did not reveal more than He did.

We do know from the book of Hebrews that the temptations were real, and we also knew from the Gospel records that the Lord did not sin.

One thing is certain about the temptation of the Lord Jesus. He could not have been "drawn away of his own lust, and enticed" (Jas. 1:14), as we are. He had no sin within him. Therefore, the solicitations to sin came wholly from outside of Him, and He would feel the force of the temptation much more than we do. Remember that the full impact of temptation never hits us as it did Him because we have that within us which is responsive to the temptation. Perhaps the difference between the Lord's temptation and ours could be likened to the difference between the way a bum would respond to the appearance of sin on skid row as compared with the way a pure young woman would respond who had never seen anything like that before!

The record of the temptation is also given in Matt. 4:1-11 and Mark 4:12, 13. The Apostle John said nothing about the temptation in his Gospel. The order of the temptations is different in the Gospel of Matthew from the order reported by Luke. In Matthew we have:
1) the temptation regarding the stones,
2) the temptation from the pinnacle of the temple,
3) the temptation regarding the kingdoms of the world.
Luke began the same way, but reversed 2) and 3).

While we may not be able to determine the reason for this difference, yet it is apparent that our Lord was being tempted as to the use of the powers with which He was endowed as a Man. Would they be used for His own glory, to serve His own purposes, or would they be used to do the will of God and for the glory of God. As Godet pointed out in his

commentary, the first Epistle to the Corinthians shows that it is possible to have spiritual gifts, but to use them in the wrong way. Such was never the case with our Lord Jesus Christ.

The outline of Luke's account is very clear:
1) The circumstances under which the Lord was tempted (vv. 1, 2).
2) The first temptation (vv. 3, 4): to turn the stone into bread.
3) The second temptation (vv. 5-8): to gain the kingdoms of the world if he would fall down and worship the Devil.
4) The third temptation (vv. 9-12): to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple.
5) The Devil's departure (v. 13)--after being unsuccessful in tempting the Lord.

1. The circumstances of the Lord's temptation (vv. 1, 2).

4:1 As we have seen, it followed our Lord's baptism. It was brought about by the Holy Spirit Who had filled the Lord. It was in the desert.

Thus we can say that the temptation of our Lord was according to the will of God, and that He willingly submitted Himself to the Father's will in this, as He did in all other things.

"Was led" -- an imperfect passive, indicating that He was continuously led. Thus, all three temptations were under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We see here again, as at the baptism, the complete harmony between the Members of the Godhead.

4:2 Here we are told,
1) What happened to the Lord,
2) How long the period of temptation was,
3) The one responsible for the temptation: the Devil.

"Being . . . tempted" -- The verb here suggests a bad motive. The Devil was seeking to get the Lord to sin. Sin was involved if the Lord had submitted to any of the temptations.

"The devil" -- means the accuser, the slanderer. The meaning of this title has to do primarily with the Devil's attitude toward God; in a secondary sense, toward man.

Thus, we have evidence that the Devil is a real person.

And in the hunger of the Lord, after fasting for forty days and forty nights, we see the evidence of His humanity. In such a condition He would feel the force of the first temptation even more. We are not told the reason for the Lord's fasting, but perhaps He was in the wilderness for a twofold purpose:
1) Communion with the Father.
2) Temptation by the Devil.
If so, it would not have been the only time that the Devil has taken advantage of such a holy time.

"Forty days" -- the same period of time that Moses and Elijah fasted--a period of about six weeks! See Gen. 44:18 and 1 Kings 19:8. Thus the Lord was tempted under the most severe physical conditions. But, while we see things about the Lord during this time, we also see the impotence of the Devil in the presence of the Lord incarnate. Both of these facts obviously should strengthen our faith. "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4b).

2. The first temptation (vv. 3, 4).

4:3 We immediately see the issue: the Sonship of Jesus. The Father had spoken from heaven, as recorded in Luke 3:22. This statement of the Devil's could be translated as a first class condition, Since you are a Son of God, . . . And the point that the Devil was making was that the word of the Father was not sufficient; he sought to indicate that the Son had to prove that the Father's word was true.

Remember that this also was the issue in the first temptation, the temptation of Eve. She was tested regarding the Word of God. See Gen. 3:1 ff. The Word of God does not need to be proved; it must be accepted by faith, and then its truth will be realized. Too often we are like Thomas who wanted to see before he would believe. This always opens the door for the Devil to take advantage of us. The Word of God does not need to be proven; the Word of God is that which proves or disproves the truthfulness of all other things. What a tragedy that we do not learn this sooner than we do, and then abide by it!

4:4 The emphasis on the truthfulness of the Word of God, and the sufficiency of that Word, are apparent in our Lord's response. The Lord here honored the written Word. "It is written" means not only that God had committed His Word to writing, but that it STOOD written. By this He meant that this ancient word from God had not changed. (He was quoting from Deut. 8:3.) And so the Lord, Who could have originated Scripture at that time, saw fit to declare to the Devil that which the Lord had revealed long ago. (See the context of the Deut. 8 passage.)

Cf. Heb. 4:11-16. Also see Eph. 6:10-20, esp. vv. 17, 18. Also see Psa. 119:11. If we are to profit from the Lord's temptation, we must see the place which He gave to the revealed, written Word.

It would have been a very legitimate thing for the Lord to demonstrate His Deity in this way. He could have done even more than that; He could have made people out of stones! Cf. Luke 3:8. But the spiritual gifts given to us are not to be used for our own glory, but according to the will of God, and for His glory. The same was true of our Lord in His humanity.

3. The second temptation (Luke 4:5-8).

The first temptation was an attack upon the Lord's Person; this second one was an attack upon His work, His Messianic work.

4:5 We should have no trouble with this verse because in dealing with

the Lord, and with the Devil, we are dealing with the super-human, with the supernatural. So, such a thing as this was possible where they could see, lit., the inhabited world, the world of people, in a moment of time. He saw the Gentile world as well as the Jewish world. And we have learned in the preceding chapters that the Lord's work on earth involved Gentiles as well as Jews.

4:6 Did the Devil have the right to make such an offer?

The Lord did not dispute that. See our Lord's words in John 12:31, 32. Also John 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:3, 4; Eph. 2:2.

And so the answer is, Yes! He had that right. He had usurped the authority to be over the kingdoms of the earth--but not apart from the sovereign will of God!

Did the Lord expect to have this position? Again the answer is, Yes! One day He will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. Every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue shall confess that He is the Lord, to the glory of God, the Father. Cf. Rev. 11:15; 17:14; 19:16. And Phil. 2:9-11.

But what was the Devil's price? See . . .

4:7 Matthew wrote that the Devil's words were, "All these things will I give thee, if thou will fall down and worship me" (Matt. 4:9).

Psalm 95:6, 7a says, "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our make. For he is our God . . ."

If you will stop and think for a moment (which is what we usually do not do when a temptation is presented to us), you will realize that several things are involved here:

1) The Devil was asking Jesus to adore him as only God should be adored.
2) The Devil was asking Jesus to submit Himself to the Devil, and thus to become, in effect, at enmity with His Father.
3) The Devil was suggesting to the Lord that He could get to the throne without going to the Cross. Thus, the Devil would have been frustrating that work of our Saviour by which salvation from the Devil's power would have been provided for the people of God. And it was by the Cross that the doom of the Devil would finally be sealed. All of that would have been defeated, and the purposes of God from before the foundation of the world would have been nullified forever.

The Devil will often suggest to us the easy way out. Job's wife said in that time when her husband was being so sorely tried by the Devil, "Curse God, and die" (Job 2:9b). That was the easy way out.

But what did the Lord do?

4:8 He had His answer in the Word of God. And so again He resorted to what was written. This seems to be a reference to Deut. 6:13, the

Greek rendering of this in the LXX.

Worship leads to service. But the Lord did not come to the earth to serve the Devil; He came to do the will of His Father. How tragic it is that people do not realize that to do the will of the Devil is to bring themselves into bondage to him.

How important it is that we know the Word of God! Nothing but the truth of the Word in our hearts can keep us from submitting to the temptations of the Devil. People who are without the Word are hopelessly at his mercy.

But then we come to . . .

4. The third temptation (vv. 9-12).

4:9 Again we must assume supernatural activity.

And again the issue is that our Lord was to demonstrate His Sonship. He was to do what no one else had ever done.

And, having seen what the Lord did on the two previous occasions, the Devil thought that he would meet the Lord on His own grounds: the Word of God, the written Word.

4:10, 11 Now the Devil used the Word of God. He cited Psa. 91:11, 12.

We must not be so gullible as to assume that anyone who uses the Word of God is speaking the truth of God. The Devil not only uses the Word of God but he takes on the role, as he did in Gen. 3, of expounding and explaining the Word of God.

What the Devil said was true. God would do this for His people. But, if you will read Psalm 91 you will find that the Devil was seeking to get the Lord to forget the context, that is, the verses which went before these verses which he quoted, and the words which followed. See Psalm 91:9 and 14-16. Both vv. 9 and 14 begin with the word, "Because," giving the circumstances under which vv. 11, 12 would be fulfilled. " . . . Jesus shows that isolated texts may be misleading" (Plummer, p. 113). We need to know all of Scripture, and we arrive at the truth when we are able to compare Scripture with Scripture.

And so, what was the Lord's answer?

4:12 Again He referred to the Word, and for the third time it was the book of Deuteronomy. (Our Lord's use of this book ought to make us realize how dear it was to Him, and how important it ought to be to us.)

Here the Lord was indicating (and teaching us) that the words of God are not contradictory! There is a wonderful harmony throughout the Scriptures. If we would be inclined to be confused by what the Devil said, then we need to be guided by that about which there can be no

question. People will often forget that which is clear and act upon that about which there may be some question as to the meaning.

Deut. 6:16 says that we are not to "tempt" the Lord as the people of Israel did at "Massah." What happened there? Cf. Ex. 17:1-7, esp. v. 7.

You see, again it was that philosophy of the Devil, Let me see it, and I will believe it. What God wants us to do is to trust Him, not to test Him. And, as Plummer pointed out, testing is not trusting (p. 114).

5. The Devil's departure (v. 13).

The child of God has three enemies: the world, the flesh, and the Devil. And it is important that we know how to combat each enemy. If we try to deal with all three in the same way, we are certain to face defeat. Of course, all opposition to our enemies has to be done trusting in the power of God.

Here is what the Word of God says:
1) For the world, cf. Rom. 12:1, 2; 1 John 2:15.
2) For the flesh, cf. 1 Tim. 6:11 (see the context); 2 Tim. 2:22. Joseph's response to Potiphar's wife is a good illustration of what needs to be done when we are facing fleshly temptation. See Gen. 39:12.
3) For the Devil, cf. Jas. 4:7 and 1 Pet. 5:8, 9. We are to do what the Lord did: we are to stand our ground against him, using the Word of God!

Now notice the words, "all the temptation." The Gk simply says, all temptation, every temptation, that is, every kind of temptation. Thus we have an important truth here. All temptation falls within the category of the three temptations of our Lord. There are no others!

We can see this even more clearly when we compare this passage (vv. 1-13) with Gen. 3:6 and 1 John 2:15-17. The three areas of temptation are:
1) "The lust of the flesh."
2) "The lust of the eyes."
3) "The pride of life."
Eve saw that the fruit was:
1) Good for food.
2) Pleasant to the eyes.
3) Would make her wise.
Our Lord's temptations fell into these same three categories:
1) The stone could be made into bread.
2) He saw the kingdoms of the earth, and the idea of the Devil was that, if He saw them, He would covet them.
3) Casting Himself down from the temple would supposedly convince the Jews that He was the Messiah, and so He would be wise to do that.

We need to be very careful in these three areas. All of our temptations will fall into one or more of these categories. Examine your own sins and you will find that this is true.

Now, in the Lord's case, what happened?

The Devil "departed from him <u>for a season</u>."

Even in connection with the Lord, the Devil did not leave Him permanently. A present victory does not guarantee that the Devil will leave us alone either. And so we need to be constantly on guard, trusting in the Lord, filling our hearts with the Word, fully committed to do the will of God.

<u>Concl:</u> This passage is of infinite value to us, not only in understanding the power and the sinlessness of our dear Saviour, but also in knowing how to deal with temptation when we are under attack.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE
Luke 4:14-30

The Outline:

III. THE FIRST PERIOD OF JESUS' MINISTRY--IN GALILEE AND ITS VICINITY (Luke 4:14-9:50).

A. Jesus at Nazareth (Luke 4:14-30).

It is difficult to place this ministry of our Lord in Galilee as to time because it does seem from the Gospel of John that the Lord had ministered some in Judea prior to this. But Luke evidently recorded this event, which is not mentioned by the other Gospel writers, because it forms a proper introduction to our Lord's ministry.

We have three things in this passage, after a general introduction in vv. 14, 15:
1) Our Lord reading the Scriptures in the synagogue in Nazareth (vv. 16-20).
2) Our Lord's message in the synagogue (vv. 21-27).
3) Our Lord's rejection by the people in the synagogue, and his departure from Nazareth (vv. 28-30).

In many respects this gives a preview of what His ministry would be.

As an introduction to our Lord's ministry in vvv. 14, 15, Luke made three points;
1) The Lord ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit (v. 14a).
This probably has reference to miraculous works which were performed by Him, although Luke did not mention any of them at this point. However, this statement needs to be added to all that Luke mentioned previously about the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Lord.
2) The popularity of the Lord (vv. 14b, 15b). "Glorified" would mean honored. At this point the Lord was well-known and well-liked.
3) The teaching of the Lord in the synagogue in Nazareth (v. 15a).
It is significant that Luke began with an emphasis upon the teaching which our Lord did, and that He did it in the synagogues. There is no reference in Scripture to the origin of synagogues. The word suggests a bringing together, a place where Jews gathered for the reading of the Scriptures, and for instruction. The origin of the synagogue is usually traced to the Babylonian captivity. At the time of our Lord, there were synagogues throughout Israel, wherever there were a considerable number of Jews, and often there were several synagogues in the larger cities. It is apparent from what we read in the Gospels that there was a great deal of empty formality in the synagogues, but the Lord went to them, and it was His custom to do so (see v. 16), because that is where the people were in the habit of assembling to hear the Word of God.

And so we have . . .

1. An introduction to our Lord's ministry (Luke 4:14, 15).

This is followed by . . .

2. Our Lord reading the Scriptures in the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:16-20).

4:16 Nazareth was not where the Lord had been born, but it was where He grew up. The people knew Him. And He went to what might have been called his synagogue, i.e., the synagogue which He had attended as a child and as a young man.

From Acts 13:15 and 15:21 it seems that it was customary to read a passage at each synagogue service from the Law and the prophets. However, we must keep in mind that these two terms were used to cover all of the OT. See Luke 24:27. So this would not just include the books from Isaiah to Malachi when we think of the prophets, but the Psalms, Proverbs, etc. One man would read from Moses; another would read from the prophets. On this occasion our

Lord apparently was asked to read from the prophets.

4:17 Usually there was an assigned reading, but it seems that the Lord took the liberty on this occasion of selecting His own reading, and this was for His own particular purpose. This probably was at least one reason for the statement which we have at the end of v. 20. The people felt that the Lord must have had some reason for doing what He had done.

"Book" here would indicate a scroll.

It is important to notice again, as we did in the instances when the Lord responded to the Devil at the time of His temptations, that the Lord used the written Word of God. Thus, He honored the Old Testament Scriptures.

But let it be noted also that the Lord not only encouraged the reading and the hearing of the Word, but He encouraged gathering together for that purpose, and for the purpose of prayer--even though both had become largely a formality at that time.

Cf. Heb. 10:19-25 -- for us today.

And so, although we are entering upon Luke's account of the first period of our Lord's ministry where Luke had much to say about the Lord's miracles, yet he began by this special emphasis upon our Lord's preaching and teaching.

4:18 We need to read this with v. 21 in mind. The Lord indicated that this passage in Isaiah (Isa. 61:1, 2) was written about Himself.

Thus, in addition to honoring the written Word, the Lord indicated a very important fact regarding the content of the Old Testament Scriptures, an emphasis which became stronger and stronger throughout His public ministry, culminating in the statements that we have in Luke 24:27, 44--that the Scriptures spoke of Him!

This is an important key to the understanding of the Word of God.

And it is important to note that the Lord never did hesitate to speak of Himself and of His place in the Scriptures and in the plan and purpose of God. No other prophet and no apostle did this like the Lord Jesus did. Note this in the reading of the Gospels.

What an unheard of thing it was to speak about the Holy Spirit! And yet this, too, was to be an outstanding part of our Lord's public ministry.

The Lord said that the Holy Spirit had done three things with respect to Himself:
1) He is "upon me."
2) He has "anointed me."
3) He has "sent me."

Notice you have another instance here in which all thre Members of the Godhead are mentioned: "The Spirit--of the Lord (the Father)--is upon Me"(Jesus Christ).

The anointing, the commissioning, the mission of our Lord, had to do with the preaching of the Gospel. Thus His ministry had to do with the proclamation of the good news concerning salvation. His message was one of salvation for sinners. And the statements which followed pictured in a most vivid way the spiritual needs of people, and what salvation would mean to them.

(It should be noted that the expression, "to heal the brokenhearted" does not appear in some MSS, and so it is omitted by the NASB and the NIV. But the fact that it is in some

MSS, and it is in the KJV, and fits right into the other expressions, I am going to include it in my comments on this verse.)

It might seem at the outset as one looks at this verse, that the Lord was speaking of the physical and outward circumstances of the people. But, as we compare them with each other, that is, the expressions, it seems more likely that the Lord was describing the conditions of man because of sin. This would seem to be the meaning also from the fact that the Lord had been sent to preach the Gospel. Thus, while the reference to "the poor" could mean those who were materially poor (and He did preach to the poor in this sense), yet it is more likely that He was talking about those who were spiritually "poor." And so let us consider these terms as indicating the effects of sin upon men, and also the remedy which is suggested in each case for those who turn to the Saviour.

First note that salvation is a work of the Triune God.

Then note that salvation comes through the preaching of the Word. Cf. 1 Pet. 1:23.

And then note that salvation is through Christ! The Father sent the Son to do the work that is referred to throughout the verse.

And we can also see that salvation has no national limitations. It was not for the Jew only, but for people wherever they might be who were "poor," "brokenhearted," "captives," and so on.

This 18th verse gives us five terms to describe what sin has done to man:

1) "The poor" -- Sin impoverishes.

   Regardless of what material wealth a man may have, or not have, if he is without God and without Christ, he is poor! He does not have the qualities to merit salvation. He does not possess the ability to earn his salvation. But the man with Christ is rich, rich before God, even though he may be materially poor.

   Never is the spiritual poverty of man more apparent than in facing the trials of life, and, ultimately, in facing death.

   The natural man has nothing in relation to God, and is reduced to the place of a beggar. If God does not help him, he can find help in no other place or person.

2) "To heal the brokenhearted" -- Sin breaks people's hearts.

   Think of the tears that have been caused by sin. Think of the lives that have been ruined. Think of the homes that have been destroyed. Think of the countless numbers of hopeless situations that exist in people's lives at this very moment for which there is no human answer or remedy.

   It is only through Christ and the Gospel that healing can come.

   To "heal" is to cure, to restore. Our Lord's miracles pictured what the Lord could and often did do for the hearts of men.

3) "Deliverance to the captives" -- Sin enslaves.

   Cf. John 8:34; Rom. 6:16-23.

   Even in the lives of those of us who know the Lord we can still see the enslaving effects of sin. "The sin which doth so easily beset us" (Heb. 12:1). The reason

that people do not turn away from their sins is because they cannot! Our wills are not even free; they, too, are enslaved. There is terrible bondage in sin, and no one but Jesus Christ can set us free. And this freedom comes through the Gospel. Any other remedy is only temporary.

4) "Recovering of sight to the blind" -- Sin blinds the mind and the heart.

Sin keeps people from understanding God, from understanding their true need, and from understanding the remedy.

Cf. 2 Cor. 4:3, 4. It is not that people will not see; they cannot see!

It is through the Gospel that that blindness is cured, is dispelled. As Christ opened the eyes of those who were physically blind, so He is the only One Who can open the eyes of those who are spiritually blind. He makes us see.

5) "To set at liberty them that are bruised" -- The word translated "liberty" is the Gk word for forgiveness, a release.

A bruised person is one who has been broken down, one who is dejected, discouraged, hopeless. Sin batters us again and again until we are without hope. We may get up for a time, but it is not long before we are down again.

And so here we have the Lord's portrayal of the human heart--a totally hopeless picture however you may look at it. The circumstances may differ from one person to another, but the overall picture remains the same wherever you look. It is so desperate that God had to send His only begotten Son to work out the remedy.

But this reading concluded in a very unusual way--another reason for the statement at the end of verse 20:

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

"Acceptable" means a time which has been favorable to the Lord. It is a time chosen by the will of the Father, a time in which He has determined to deal in grace with guilty, helpless, and lost sinners.

We have the same word in 2 Cor. 6:2 with regard to salvation.

"Year" is used in this verse of a period of time. Now is the time when God has chosen to deal in a special way with regard to salvation. It indicates that men do not chose the time when they will be saved; that is in the hands of God alone.

AND THE FORCE OF THE VERSE IS BROUGHT OUT WHEN YOU CONSULT THE ORIGINAL PASSAGE IN ISAIAH 61. If the Lord had gone on He would have read this: "AND THE DAY OF VENGEANCE OF OUR GOD." This has not yet come. This is not the day of judgment. This is the day of salvation. But just as surely as the former has come, the latter will come also. How this ought to awaken our hearts to the urgent need to hear the Gospel, and receive the Lord Jesus Christ NOW!

4:20
Godet distinguishes between the reading and the preaching. At the end of verse 19 the reading was completed. And it is very apparent that this alone made a great impression upon the people in the synagogue. The Lord stood to read; He sat down to teach (or to preach.

4:21 This probably was the opening statement which the Lord made--and it surely would have increased the interest of the people in the synagogue.

"Is . . . fulfilled" means stands fulfilled, or has been fulfilled. The Lord was making it clear that Isa. 61 was not only descriptive of His ministry, but descriptive of the preaching that He would do as well.

4:22 The first response of the people was acceptance. This is probably a summary verse given by Luke, His message being described as "gracious words," lit., the words of grace. Even to their minds the message of our Lord could only be described in terms of grace. This is what salvation is, not something merited, nor something which can be earned, but a provision made by God for guilty sinners who are totally unworthy of such a great salvation. The people marvelled at it. This is not what they were accustomed to hear in the synagogues.

However, at this point a very determining thing happened. The people could have followed the first impressions made upon their hearts by the reading and the preaching of the Lord, or they could allow their hearts to be taken over by questions. They followed the latter course.

Perhaps one person said initially, "Is not this Joseph's son?" But they all were soon asking the same thing. It was as though they were saying, "Let us not be carried away by a sudden impression. This man cannot be the one he claims to be because we know his father, and he has grown up in this very synagogue."

What a dangerous thing it is to cast aside impressions that are made when the Word of God is read, and when it is proclaimed!

4:23 Here we see that the Lord knew what was going on in their hearts. They were not about to accept His claim that He was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. "Physician" must have been a reference to healing in verse 18. They were saying in their hearts that the Lord was going to have to give proof of His claim by performing miracles, and that they would not accept what He had to say unless He did.

This is the world's philosophy: If we can see, we will believe. Their response was not one of faith. People who will not accept the Word of God will not be convinced even though hundreds of miracles were performed. See what the people said later about believing if the Lord would come down from the Cross. Cf. Matt. 27:42.

4:24 But the Lord did not stoop to their demands. He never does in such cases. He would not yield to Satan's temptation to demonstrate Who He was by casting Himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple. Cf. Luke 16:27-31.

If people are going to be saved, they will be saved through the Word. Cf. Heb. 4:12. It is sharper than any other weapon that we can possibly use. It never fails to accomplish the purposes of God. Cf. Isa. 55:8-11. See also Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:22, 23.

And this all is very much related to what the Lord said in Luke 4:25-27. In these verses we see our Lord's teaching concerning the sovereignty of God in salvation. Both of these truths, (1) the place of the Word in salvation, and (2) the sovereignty of God in salvation, are truths that we need to understand if we are to understand a passage like the one before us just now. The work of evangelism is NOT a work wherein we try to get as many

people saved as we can, but it is a work in which we preach the Gospel, trusting the Lord to save those whom He has ordained for salvation.

4:25, 26 This is a reference to 1 Kings 17:8-24, and it teaches the doctrine of election.

4:27 This is a reference to 2 Kings 5. This also teaches the doctrine of election.

Note the reaction:

4:28-30 They wanted to kill of the Lord! THERE IS NO DOCTRINE IN SCRIPTURE THAT MAN HATES MORE THAN THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY, ESPECIALLY AS IT RELATES TO SALVATION!

Why?

1) Because man wants to make God a debtor to all men, so that what He does for one He has to do for all. Man does not believe that God has the right to have mercy on some, those of His choosing, but not upon all. God exercises grace, but it is a distinguishing grace.

2) Because of the pride of man. Man wants to be able to claim some part in his salvation, and that part which man usually claims is faith.

3) Because man does not realize what it means that he is dead because of his trespasses and his sins.

God does not owe salvation to anyone. And, if He determines that some shall be saved, He is not, therefore, unrighteous if He does not determine that all shall be saved.

But we must also see that these men in Nazareth were closing the door of salvation on themselves. They were given the Word. Then they began to doubt that the Lord could have been the One about Whom Isaiah was speaking. And, when exposed to further teaching of the Word, they finally wanted to kill the Lord!

We need to understand that anyone who calls upon the Name of the Lord can be saved. But no other widows sought the Lord. No other lepers wanted to be cleansed. Cf. Acts 13: 44-48.

We must accept this teaching because it is what we find in the Word of God. We may not be able to understand it fully to our own satisfaction, but we can still believe it--and we have no other alternative. The Word is our authority regarding salvation, and, for faith, the Word alone is enough! Do not close your mind to any teaching in the Word of God. And do not try to explain it away. Remember: God's thoughts and ours are not the same.

One thing that certainly must have angered them must have been our Lord's reference to Gentiles in the two OT illustrations that He gave them. (In addition to the Acts 13 passage cited two paragraphs above, cf. Acts 22:20-24. Also Deut. 32:20, 21.) It has always been difficult for the Jews to accept the fact that salvation is for the Gentiles as well as for them. And we see it breaking out early in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. There was no problem greater than this in the early Church.

And so we have this very evident proof of the depravity of the human heart. They did not want to enter into salvation, nor did they want anyone else to enter in. And to put an end to it all, they would even destroy the Lord Jesus if they could. Cf. Matt. 23:13.

On v. 30 -- We do not know how the Lord did this, but He did. One critic has said, "'In the absence of any other miracle, He left them this'" (quoted by Godet, I, 240). No man ever could touch the Lord Jesus until His time had come. What marvelous evidence even here of His Deity!

Tuesday Class -- 2/25/86

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE
Luke 4:31-44

The Outline:

III. THE FIRST PERIOD OF JESUS' MINISTRY--IN GALILEE AND ITS VICINITY (Luke 4:14-9:50).

A. Jesus at Nazareth (Luke 4:14-30)--which we have just completed.

B. Jesus at Capernaum (Luke 4:31-44). Here we have the following points:

1. The power of Jesus' teaching (Luke 4:31, 32).

2. The power of Jesus' healing: Luke's first recorded miracle performed by our Lord--the deliverance of the man in the synagogue who was demon-possessed (Luke 4:33-37).

3. The healing of Peter's mother-in-law (Luke 4:38, 39).

4. Various other healings (Luke 4:40).

5. Our Lord's rebuke of the demons (Luke 4;41).

6. Our Lord's departure from Capernaum to preach in other synagogues throughout Galilee (Luke 4:42-44).

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1. The power of Jesus' teaching (Luke 4:31, 32). Cf. Mark 1:21, 22.

4:31 Notice again, as in Luke's account of our Lord's ministry in Nazareth, that the emphasis is upon our Lord's teaching.

4:32 People can marvel at the teaching of the Word, can be astonished even at our Lord's teaching (probably at the power of the authority which He demonstrated), and yet NOT believe! Every servant of the Lord needs to be aware of this.

"With power" in the Gk text is with authority. There is an authority which accompanies the faithful preaching of the Word of God. (Relate this to what Luke had already emphasized about our Lord's ministry in Nazareth--vv. 16-27.) We no longer see the miracles which were performed in our Lord's day, but we still have the Word!

2. The power of Jesus' healing: the first miracle in Luke's Gospel (Luke 4:33-37). Cf. Mark 1:23-28.

Trench, Miracles, p. 248: "But He was not mighty in word only, but also in work...."
Miracles may be more spectacular, but the teaching of the Word is more effective, and is also more of an indication of true effect of our Lord's work on the hearts of people. And the same is true today. People will flock to see an indication of the miraculous, but they will turn away from the simple, yet authoritative, teaching of the Word of God.

We are to see more clearly now that even our Lord's ministry was not primarily against "flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritua wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12).

In Luke 4:13 we were told that "the devil . . . departed from him (i.e., from the Lord) for a season." Now in v. 33 the conflict is renewed--"in the synagogue"!

"Devil" should be translated, demon. And he is "unclean" in contrast with the purity, the holiness of our Lord (and of the Holy Spirit). The Devil and his demons defile all whose lives they touch, corrupting them, rendering them even more unfit for the presence of God and/or fellowship with Him. Note the demon was in the synagogue.

4:34 The Grk word which has been translated, "Let us alone," is probably more like "a diabolical screech" (Robertson, II, 63). Plummer (p. 133) says that it was probably uttered either in anger or dismay. It may have been both. Obviously the demon was distressed. Cf. Jas. 2:19 - "the devils believe and tremble."

"What have we to do with thee?" means, What do we have in common? The demon felt that the Lord was encroaching upon his territory even in the synagogue.

His confession to be an attempt to outwrestle on us met Jesus.

He knew Who the Lord was, and he knew that the Lord had the power to destroy him. He called Him, "the Holy One of God." See Luke 8:28 for a similar incident. Note that it was the holiness of our Lord that brought out hostility and horror in the demon. Neither demons nor unregenerate men can tolerate the holiness of God--this attribute of attributes! Heaven witnessed in 2:11; the Father - 3:22; now hell.

The demon had no desire to change.

4:35 Again we notice a difference in the ways of the Lord. Most men would have revelled in such recognition from a demon, BUT, NOT SO, WITH THE LORD! There are a couple of reasons:

1) He does not need nor want the testimony of a liar.
2) He will not enter into any kind of an alliance with the Devil. He came to destroy the works of the Devil. See 1 John 3:8.

The Lord was always primarily concerned with who any person was, not with what he had to say. We need to remember this in serving the Lord today.

'4/86 Paul had a similar experience. Cf. Acts 16:16-18, and his attitude was the same as that of the Lord.

Note the power and authority that our Lord had over the demon.

"Hold thy peace" lit. means, Be muzzled. And he was! He said no more. And he came out of the man. Mark said that the demon tore the man (see Mark 1:26), but Luke said that the demon "hurt him not," i.e., did not permanently harm him. The demons and Satan will do all that they can to harm men, especially those who are being, or have been, delivered forever from their power.

4:36 The people had been astonished at his teaching; now they were amazed at his power. They had never experienced either of these before.

Obviously the demon was mightier than men, but that was not the case with the Lord. He is greater than all!

4:37 The Lord's ministry was not to be a long ministry, and so this must have been one of the purposes of God with regard to His miracles, i.e., that the report of His work and of His teaching would spread quickly around the country.

This miracle was followed by another--of a different kind.

3. The healing of Peter's mother-in-law (Luke 4:38, 39).

4:38 Cf. Matt. 8:14, 15; Mark 1:29-31.

Note that Peter was married.

We have in these two miracles two of the effects of sin:

1) Demon-possession.
2) Physical illness.

In our Lord's day fevers were usually fatal, and often became epidemics among the people. So this was no simple problem. Mark (1:29) related that not only Peter was there, but

also James and John. This was after all of them had been called to follow the Lord. It is significant that none of them could help Peter's mother-in-law. But they lost no time in telling the Lord about her, and seeking His help. "Besought" is one of the Gk verbs for ask.

4:39 Luke emphasized again the power of the words of the Lord Jesus. He "rebuked" the fever, i.e., told it to depart.

The healing was immediate, and then she did what people cannot usually do after they have suffered from fever: she began to minister to them, and continued to do so (is the idea in the verb). What a happy day that was in Peter's household! Such a condition was usually fatal, but the Lord intervened.

At this point it will be good for us to note the significance of the miracles of our Lord.

Several things can be said:

1) The miracles were obviously to show the Deity of Christ. Cf. John 20:30, 31. The miracles of the Apostles were done in Jesus' Name, so they served the same purpose.

2) The miracles were to show the mercy, the tenderness, the compassion of God.

   We can see that the work of sin and the work of the Devil and his demons is to make life hard and miserable for people. But not so with the Lord. Consequently, as we see in v. 40 and following that the people flocked to bring their sick and demon-possessed to the Lord.

3) The miracles give us many wonderful illustrations of the Gospel, and the whole truth of salvation.

   Note the following in connection with the Gospel:

   a) We note in the first the Satanic activity. Cf. 2 Cor. 4:3, 4.

   b) Sin affects people spiritually, and sin affects people physically. Satan would not have power in this world, there would be no sickness nor would there be any death, if there had not been sin. All of the tragedies of life are traceable to the effect of sin upon man.

   c) The people involved were helpless, and so were those who wanted to help them. Cf. Tit. 3:5.

   d) The Lord Jesus Christ was the only One Who could help.

   e) We have two illustrations here of how people are saved:

      (1) In one case the Lord intervened without any appeal from men. This often happens when people come to the Lord. No human instrument is involved.

      (2) In the second case there was intercession: "and they besought him for her" (Luke 4:38b).

   f) In both of these miracles the deliverance came through the words of the Lord.

   g) The deliverance was instantaneous.

   h) The deliverance was permanent.

   i) The deliverance was followed w/ministry in the case of Simon's mother-in-law.

   (j) Worthiness does not enter the picture. Salvation is by grace.

The two miracles were followed by . . .

4. Various other healings (Luke 4:40).

Note from Luke 4:31 that these healings were on the Sabbath.

Here the emphasis upon the way in which these healings portrays the Gospel, continues. "Had" is in the imperfect, which speaks of chronic cases, those of long standing. The healing of some brought hope to many others--and such is the case where salvation is concerned. People brought the needy to the Lord, and all who came were healed. God is sovereign in the work of salvation, but it is true that all who come to the Lord will be saved. He is no respecter of persons. Again, a person's worthiness to be healed did not enter the picture. And note that each healing was personal, the result of what the Lord did for each person. It was not en masse. Neither are people saved in groups, but one by one.

5. Our Lord's rebuke of the demons (Luke 4:41).

This is a repetition of what took place in v. 34, but it is an even clearer declaration of the Deity and Messiahship of our Lord. And again, the Lord silenced them--for the same reasons as before.

"Came out" -- a perfect tense, suggesting repetition, one by one. Again we see the emphasis that the Lord deals with people individually, not en masse.

6. The Lord's departure (Luke 4:42-44).

He evidently worked all night.

Note the succession of places where the Lord worked: the synagogue, Peter's home, the streets of Capernaum, and then he sought "a desert place."

There are several things of importance in the last three verses of this chapter:

1) Note that the place of the Lord's ministry was not determined either by the desires of the people, nor by their needs.

2) His ministry was not primarily a ministry of healing, nor of delivering people from the demons. PREACHING WAS THE FIRST THING WITH THE LORD--and it should be with us, too. Cf. 1 Cor. 1:17, 18. And note from Paul's statement that his emphasis was not on the preaching method, the oratory, but on the content of the message. The same was true of the Lord's preaching. It is the truth which must be declared, the preaching of the kingdom of God. Cf. John 3. The word kingdom is used in different ways in the NT; this obviously had to do with salvation.

3) Note the words "must" and "sent."

   These meant that the Lord Who exercised such great authority over demons and diseases was Himself under authority--the authority of the Father. The Apostle John placed special emphasis upon this in his Gospel. Later the will of the Father was the death of the Son, but at this point it was that He should preach throughout the land of Israel.

   So the Lord's place of ministry was determined by the will of the Father, not by the will of the people, nor even of His own will!

   This is the ministry of the servants of the Lord today, and of the Church. People will always be more interested in spectacular healings, but there is nothing more spectacular nor needed than the preaching of the Gospel.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE
Luke 5:1-6:11

The Outline:

III. THE FIRST PERIOD OF JESUS' MINISTRY--IN GALILEE AND ITS VICINITY (Luke 4:14-9:50).

A. Jesus at Nazareth (Luke 4:14-30).

B. Jesus at Capernaum (Luke 4:31-44).

C. From the calling of the first disciples to the appointment of the twelve apostles (Luke 5:1-6:11).

1. Three miracles (Luke 5:1-26).

a. The miraculous draught of fish and the calling of Peter, (Andrew, not mentioned), James, and John (Luke 5:1-11).

b. The leper (Luke 5:12-15).

c. The man with palsy and the Luke's first recorded dispute between the Lord and the scribes and Pharisees (Luke 5:16-26).

2. Three additional disputes between the Lord and the scribes and Pharisees (Luke 5:27-6:11).

a. The call of Levi (Matthew), and the dispute about eating with publicans and sinners (Luke 5:27-39).

Here we have in vv. 36-39 the first parable recorded by Luke.

b. The dispute about plucking corn on the Sabbath day (Luke 6:1-5).

c. The dispute about healing, on the Sabbath day, the man with the withered hand (Luke 6:6-11).

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1. Three miracles (Luke 5:1-26.

a. The miraculous draught of fish and the calling of Peter, (Andrew, not mentioned), James, and John (Luke 5:1-11).

On this section, cf. Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20. These seem to be earlier than the place given to them by Luke. Commentators are divided and/or uncertain as to whether or not they are the same. See also John 1:35-42. The accounts of the synoptic writers do not seem to refer to different events, but Luke just did not follow the chronological arrangement given by Mark. And Luke gave special prominence to Peter.

5:1 Note again the eagerness of the people to hear the teaching of the Lord Jesus. They "pressed upon him."

The place: "the lake of Gennesaret." It was called this because of a fertile plain to the northwest of the lake, called Gennesaret. It was also called, the sea of Galilee, the province which was its border on the western side of the sea. A third name it had was, the sea of Tiberias. Tiberias was one of the famous cities on the shore of the sea. In the OT it was called the sea of Chinnereth. This also was from a city which was located on its shore. (See Smith's Bible Dictionary, p. 210.)

The lake, or sea, was located some 700 feet below sea level, and was 13 miles long and 6 wide. At the time of our Lord's ministry there were 9 cities located on its shores, and this was the most densely populated area in all of the land of Israel--which explains one reason why the Lord spent so much time in that area. Luke never called it a sea, and the others never called it a lake.

5:2 The two ships belonged to Peter and Andrew, and to James and John. They were partners in business. As v. 5 they had fished all night, had caught nothing, and now were washing their nets before hanging them up to dry.

5:3 Evidently because of the crowds, the Lord got into Peter's boat and "prayed him" (NASB: "asked him") to push the boat out a short ways into the sea where seated, He taught the people. This was open-air teaching, which enabled the Lord to reach more people at one time that He could have in a synagogue. But the point is that the Lord taught people wherever they gathered together. He looked upon assembled crowds as an opportunity for ministry. This should be a lesson to us.

5:4 The main point in this incident obviously is not what the Lord said when He taught, but what happened afterwards: the miracle of the catch of fish.

"Launch out" is in the singular; "let down" is plural. It took two to handle the nets, and so it seems that Andrew was with him. If not Andrew, someone else. Note the change from "we" to "I" and then to "they" in vv. 5, 6, 7. Perhaps there were more than two men.

"And let down your nets for a draught." The Lord indicated in these words that their work would not be in vain; they would catch fish!

5:5 Peter responded by calling the Lord, , "Master." Luke is the only one in the NT who used this term. See 8:24, 45; 9:33, 49; 17:13. It is a title which recognized the Lord's authority over them. Even though it seemed like a worthless waste of time, Peter agreed to do what the Lord told him to do.

5:6 The result was amazing even to these experienced fishermen. Obviously, the Lord Who has authority, not only over His followers, but over all of creation, brought the fish into the net! The nets were beginning to break.

5:7 They signaled for help. Their partners in the other boat must have been watching to see what the result of this second fishing trip of the day might be.

When they came, all of the men together succeeded in filling both boats with fish, so much so that they began to sink!

5:8 At this point Luke forgets about the large catch of fish, and concentrates attention on what Peter did and said.

This is the first time that Luke has mentioned the name "Peter," and the only time in his Gospel that he used "Simon" and "Peter" together.

Peter obviously had seen the Lord perform other miracles, but this one ministered to him in a special way. Why, we do not know. But it did. Somehow there was impressed upon him the Deity of the "Lord," and His holiness, whereas he saw himself as utterly sinful, and unworthy to be in the presence of such a Person as the Lord Jesus Christ!

Campbell Morgan believed that Peter and his associates had gone back to their fishing after leaving it (as indicated in Matthew and Mark), and that here he was strongly rebuked in his heart that the Lord would have anything further to do with them because of what they had done. But we do not know this for sure.

5:9 Here we have Luke's explanation for what Peter did: "For he was astonished" -- he was gripped and held with amazement. And so were the others. And it all was over

the fish which they had caught after fishing all night and catching nothing!

5:10 James and John shared his amazement.

But the Lord immediately calmed their fears, and said a most amazing thing: "From henceforth thou shalt catch men." Thus, this experience was designed to teach them something about the work that the Lord was calling for them to do: catching men. We will come back to this in a moment.

5:11 This marked a real turning point in the lives of Peter (and Andrew) and James and John. As Robertson said, "Then and there" they left their fishing business and followed the Lord to serve Him.

WHAT ARE WE TO LEARN FROM THIS MIRACLE?

1) It seems very clear, as Godet taught, that the Lord was establishing here what we know today as the Christian ministry--men called of God in a special way to devote their lives to the service of the Lord.

   And it is apparent that the choice of the men is in the hands of the Lord.

2) Secondly, we learn the importance of obedience to the Lord, even when it seems not to be the part of wisdom. Note Peter's words: "nevertheless at thy word . . ."

   The Lord has never, and will never, relinquished His authority over His work. He remains in charge. He is the One Who directs when and where and how His work shall be done.

3) The catch of fish portrayed great fruitfulness in the work--fruitfulness which really was not seen until after the Lord had returned to heaven.

   The Lord may not bless all of His servants in the same way, but we can be sure that there will be fruit--that the Lord's Word does not return to Him void.

4) In the Lord's work, the Lord does not forget the worker. Two things stand out from what Peter said in v. 8:

   a) Peter's keen awareness of his own sinfulness; thus, of his unworthiness to be a servant of the Lord.

   b) The Lordship, the holiness, the majesty and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

5) This was an encouragement to the disciples to enter upon a life of faith, trusting the Lord to meet their needs in connection with the work He was calling them to do. One Who could provide such a catch of fish where before there had been none, was obviously able to do whatever was necessary to supply the needs of those whom He chose and who were following Him.

In connection with 3) above, it is important to note that catching men is the work that the Lord has called His servants to do. It is the servant's job to put the net into the water; it is the Lord's work to sovereignly bring men into the net!

Bishop Ryle wrote the following (Vol. I, p. 135):

> Let us not forget, in reading this miracle, that holy and good men in every age have seen in it a remarkable type and emblem of the history of Christ's Church in the world. They have regarded the ships as emblems of the Churches,--the fishers, of Ministers,--the net, of the Gospel,--the sea, of the world,--the shore, of eternity, --and the miraculous draught, of the success attending work done in strict compliance with Christ's word. There may be truth in all this. But it needs to be cautiously and delicately used. The habit of allegorizing and seeing hidden meanings in plain language of Scripture has often done great harm.

b. The leper cleansed (Luke 5:12-15).

This is the second in the series of three miracles. Cf. also Matt. 8:2-4; Mark 1:40-45. Matthew tells us that this miracle was performed after the Lord came down from the mountain after delivering the Sermon on the Mount. Luke says that it was "when he was in a certain city."

5:12 Although some medical men have expressed doubt as to whether or not this was the disease which we know today as leprosy, yet we can only treat it as it is described in the Word of God. If not leprosy, it was something even worse.

Godet pointed out three things about this disease (I, 259, 260):

1) Physically. It was a hopeless disease (apart from the mercy of God). It was a progressive disease, destroying the flesh, attacking one body member after another, even destroying the bones. It caused sleeplessness, a continual burning sensation, and general agony. It was a terrible disease.

2) Socially. Because it was extremely contagious, lepers were forced to live alone or with other lepers. Thus, they were separated from their loved ones and all other human beings.

3) Religiously. They were unclean, unable to participate in any of the duties imposed upon the people by the Mosaic Law. It was generally thought that they were under divine judgment because they had the disease.

Luke's words, "behold a man full of leprosy" (without a verb) shows how startled everyone was when this man showed up.

"Full of leprosy" indicates that his leprosy had covered his body, and that he was probably in the last stages of the disease.

He showed both humility in falling on his face before the Lord, but also how desperate he was: he "besought him." He knew that the Lord was his one hope for cleansing (the word used with leprosy instead of healing). Undoubtedly he had heard of others who had been cleansed, and so he came into that city seeking the Lord.

He did not doubt the Lord's power to heal; the only question that he had in his mind was the Lord's willingness to heal.

5:13 At that point the Lord did an amazing thing: "He put forth his hand, and touched him." According to the Law (see Lev. 5:2, 3), this made the Lord ceremonially unclean, and in danger of contracting the disease.

But to the leper's great delight the expressed a willingness to cleanse him, and, saying the words, "Be thou clean," He "immediately" cleansed the leper so that no trace of the dreaded disease remained.

5:14 The Lord charged the man (commanded him) not to tell anyone, but to go to the priest and to offer the proper sacrifice which was prescribed by the Law for his cleansing which would enable him to enter into society again, and to participate in the religious activities of the Jewish people.

Mark makes it clear that he could not contain himself, but told everywhere what had happened to him, and consequently the Lord was not able to enter into the city, but people came out to him in the desert places. See Mark 1:45.

5:15 Luke tells us how the fame of the Lord Jesus spread, and more and more people came (1) to hear Him, and (2) to be healed of their diseases. Note again that there was a special attractiveness about the Lord's teaching--since it is mentioned first.

The application: We need to remember that this was a genuine miracle which actually took place, and yet, at the same time, we need to see that there is spiritual truth here which we cannot overlook.

1) Leprosy has long been considered by teachers of the Scriptures as a type of sin. As was the case with leprosy in our Lord's day, there is no human remedy for sin. It is fatal--eternally! It is progressive. It renders us unfit for the presence of God, and for the worship of God. It not only affects our relationship with God, but also our relationship with men.

2) This man knew what his condition was, and so he came to the Lord.

   Sin is more subtle and deceptive than leprosy was. And the reason that more people do not come to the Lord is because they do not realize what their spiritual condition is. When they do learn of their need, they will usually try every other possible remedy before coming to the Lord.

   This man was desperate. He doubtless had heard of others who had been healed and cleansed, and so he broke with all of the restrictions that had been placed upon him and suddenly appeared where the Lord was.

   When people realize that they are sinners, and what this means--the hopelessness of any man-made cure--then they are more likely to turn to the Lord.

   But even in this man's coming we see the hand of God. Cf. John 6:44 and 37.

3) Notice how he came to the Lord--with urgency, and yet with humility, but also realizing that he was not worthy to be healed. His only hope lay in the will of the Lord Jesus Christ. He said, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. Thus, we must also say that he came in faith.

4) The Bible makes it clear that those who are saved from their sins are a chosen group--chosen by God. But here we see a truth that needs to be put alongside of the doctrine of election. And it is, that whoever calls upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved. This in no way contradicts the doctrine of election, but is in full harmony with it. God moves upon sinners hearts, they hear, they come, they call--all because of what God is doing in them. We can say from Scripture that it is impossible for a person to call upon the Lord in faith from the heart, and not be saved!

   Such was the case with this leper.

5) Note what the Lord did to heal him: He touched him, and then He spoke: "I will: be thou clean." Cf. John 1:11-13; Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:22, 23.

6) The cleansing was immediate! There was no delay. It was not a healing process. The leper was cleansed instantaneously! That is the way salvation is!

   Cf. John 5:24; 10:27, 28; 1 John 5:12.

7) Following his cleansing, we note two things: (1) He was to be submissive to the Lord and His Word. (2) His testimony was something that he could not contain, and it was the means by which many others were moved to seek the Lord also.

   The latter was so much in his heart that he failed regarding the first--not necessarily in showing himself to the priest, but by not withholding his testimony as the Lord told him to do.

   One thing we can say about the prohibition that the Lord placed upon him is that one who has recently been saved can, in his enthusiasm, spread confusion and error because he does not really understand the full significance of what has happened to him. He

needed to obey the Word that had been given, and then to receive further light from the Word of God.

This brings us to the third miracle:

b. The healing of the palsied man which led to Luke's first account of our Lord's constant trouble with the scribes and Pharisees (Luke 5:16-26).

5:16 Before Luke related the story of the healing of the palsied man, he related a very important interlude in the public ministry of our Lord. The Lord took time out for prayer!

This was something which He deliberately did. He went off by Himself to a secluded place where He could be alone with His Father. See Luke 4:42a. Luke places such an emphasis upon the prayer life of our Lord that his Gospel has been called, the Gospel of prayer. Cf. Luke 6:12; 9:18, 28, 29; 11:1; 22:41-46.

Although the Lord is our Saviour, we must remember that He is also our Example in many respects. Cf. 1 Pet. 2:21-23.

How amazing it is that our Lord felt the need to pray--that He regularly got off by Himself to commune with His Father! He never allowed the demands of His public ministry to keep Him from prayer.

This is where pastors and people alike are weak today. There is a real premium placed upon public ministry--preaching and teaching, visiting, working in various ways--but there is not an equal emphasis on personal and private prayer. We pray in public, and attend prayer meetings, but private prayer is neglected, or, if engaged in at all, occupies very little time out of an entire day--or night!

Bishop Ryle wrote this:

"Why is it that there is so much apparent religious working, and yet so little result in positive conversions to God,--so many sermons, and so few souls saved,--so much machinery, and so little effect produced,--so much running hither and thither, and yet so few brought to Christ? Why is all this? The reply is short and simple. There is not enough private prayer. The cause of Christ does not need less working, but it does need among the workers more praying. Let us examine ourselves, and amend our ways. The most successful workmen in the Lord's vineyard are those who are, like their Master, often and much upon their knees" (Vol. I, p. 140).

E. M. Bounds wrote in his book, Power Through Prayer (sometimes called, Preacher and Prayer):

"The preaching man is to be the praying man. Prayer is the preacher's mightiest weapon.

"The real sermon is made in the closet. The man--God's man--is made in the closet. His life and his prfoundest convictions were born in his secret communion with God. The burdened and tearful agony of his spirit, his weightiest and sweetest messages were got when alone with God. Prayer makes the man; prayer makes the preacher; prayer makes the pastor.

"The pulpit of this day is weak in praying. The pride of learning is against the dependent humility of prayer. Prayer is with the pulpit too often only official--a performance for the routine of service. Prayer is not to the modern pulpit the mighty force it was in Paul's life or Paul's ministry. Every preacher who does not make prayer a mighty factor in his own life and miistry is weak as a factor in God's work and is powerless to project God's cause in this world" (pp. 10, 11).

And so there is a wealth of truth, a great lesson to be learned, from those nine words of v. 16. If the Lord felt this need in His heart, how much greater should be the need in our lives!

But let us go on to the third miracle.

5:17 This is the first time Luke has mentioned the Pharisees, but he did mention "the doctors" in Luke 2:46. The Greek is teachers. It is a term which usually refers to the scribes, as Luke 5:21 seems to indicate.

The Pharisees were a group which arose in Israel between the close of the OT and the beginning of the NT. The term Pharisee means a separatist--which probably indicates that they separated themselves for the service of God. They were watch-dogs for the strict observance of the Law as well as for the many traditions which had been added to the Law throughout Israel's history. One of their chief objections to the Lord and His ministry had to do with those things which they considered violations of the Sabbath day. They were a corrupt group, but exercised great power in Israel. In Matthew 23 we have a vivid picture from the words of our Lord Himself as to what they were like. And yet devout Jewish boys sought to be Pharisees. See Paul's statement in Phil. 3:5. Also Acts 23:6; 26:5. And so, although they were devoted to the Law, they were hypocritical and corrupt. And they were very jealous of the popularity of the Lord, believing it to be a threat to the authority which they had held over the people up to that time.

The scribes were teachers, interpreters of the Law, men who spent much time copying the Law.

They were present, listening to the Lord teach, and watching Him as He performed His miracles. At this point, people were coming from all over Galilee and Judea to be healed by the Lord, AND HE WAS HEALING THEM: "the power of the Lord was present to heal them."

5:18 At this point Luke turned his attention to the palsied man. See also Matt. 9:2-8; Mark 2:1-12.

Palsy is a disease in which there is a lack of motor function. It is a disease in which the patient experiences paralysis--some more severely than others. Sometimes it is congenital; sometimes the result of an injury; sometimes the aftermath of some other disease. Often it is progressive, and can be very painful. Just what the condition of this particular man was, we cannot say. It is apparent that he could not walk, and was dependent upon his friends to get him to the Lord Jesus.

One distressing thing which added to this disease, and other diseases as well, in our Lord's day, was the idea that sickness was a judgment from God--that it was due to sin. Cf. John 9:1, 2. It may have been in this case, but it certainly is not always so.

5:19 When they could not get into the house where the Lord was, they went up on the roof, removed the tiling, and lowered the palsied man down into the house where the Lord was.

5:20 The Lord saw that their actions were evidence of their faith--that they believed, and the palsied man believed, that, if they could only get to the Lord, the palsied man would be healed!

But at this point the Lord did a very strange thing. Instead of addressing Himself to the palsied man's disease, He spoke of the palsied man's sin.

What did this mean?

It must have meant that, in this case, the man had palsy as a judgment of God because of his sin. Sometimes we hate the consequences of our sins, but do not hate our sins. But Luke's use of the word "faith" must have indicated that the palsied man not only realized why he was sick, but also that he was repentant concerning his sin. Consequently the Lord was there not only to remove the effect of sin, but the sin itself--its guilt and the consequent punishment which it would bring.

Let us all be reminded here that all sickness is due to sin. If sin had not come, neither would there be sickness, nor death. Such things are to be reminders of the need that we have for the mercy of God. And yet man's heart is so spiritually blinded and hardened that he will not recognize it. A disease like AIDS can suddenly appear, and it appears predominantly among homosexuals, but what an uproar will follow if someone suggests that it is a judgment from God. AND YET THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT IT IS!

I have been amazed over and over again to see people at funeral services, knowing that some day they are going to die (and maybe sooner than they think), and yet show no interest whatsoever in the Gospel, in the need for salvation, or in preparing for eternity.

Undoubtedly the Lord said what He did to bring before that crowd of people, and before the Pharisees in particular, the relationship between sin and sickness and death, and the need for forgiveness.

Note how personal and positive and assuring the words of the Lord Jesus to the paralytic were: "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee." And at that very moment they were forgiven! He was cleansed of his sins! They would be remembered against him no more. He had become a child of God.

5:21 At this point a dialogue began--first among the scribes and the Pharisees. And what they said had an element of truth. It does not seem that they openly discussed this at the first, but . . .

5:22 the Lord knew what they were thinking. And here we have an instance of the omniscience of the Lord. The Greek indicates that He fully knew their thoughts. But He asked them, "What reason ye in your hearts?" Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart. See 1 Sam. 16:7. Some of the people might have misinterpreted the meaning of the presence of the scribes and Pharisees in that home, but the Lord knew their hearts, and He always ministers to people's hearts--both with the religious and the irreligious.

5:23 What is the answer to this question? Why?

It was easier to say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." Why? Because no man could check to determine if they had been forgiven or not.

5:24 But note the grace of the Lord. In order that they might know that the Lord had authority to do what they could not check, He said that which they could check. But there is no evidence that this changed the hearts of the scribes and Pharisees.

Notice: It requires authority, the authority of God, to forgive sins. No man has the right--only God!

5:25 Again, as in the previous miracle, we have the word, "immediately." The healing was no gradual process; it was instantaneous!

He glorified God because it was obvious to him that no one but God could have done such a thing. The next verse tells us that the crowd did the same thing

5:26 although "they were all amazed, . . . and were filled with fear." "Amazed" means that their minds were out of place, i.e., they were beside themselves (Robertson, II, 76). "Strange things" -- the translation of the Greek word from which we get our English word, paradox ( ), that which is beyond what you could expect, or that which is contrary to received opinion or opposed to common sense, and yet which is true!

Lessons: Obviously the main point in this miracle as far as the Lord was concerned was the forgiveness of this man's sins. This was the very reason for which the Lord Jesus Christ had come into the world. Therefore, what does this miracle teach us about that great doctrine which should leave us as it left the man who was healed and the crowd -- glorifying God, and yet beside themselves at the paradox that had taken place right before their eyes! Note the following lessons:

1) The part of the story having to do with the man's friends who brought him to the Lord is an encouragement to us to seek to bring others to Christ. Cf. v. 20, "when he (the Lord) saw their faith."

2) V. 20 also shows us that forgiveness comes through faith, not works. The man's friends worked to bring this man to the Lord, but it was their faith that caused them to work. And the Lord recognized their faith, not their works.

   Cf. Acts 10:43; 13:38, 39; 20:20, 21. What about Acts 2:38, 39?

3) Forgiveness means, lit., a release -- a release from sin's guilt and from the consequences of sin. This is permanent, not temporary. Cf. Heb. 10:17, which is a quotation from Jer. 31:34. Does this not amaze us? Is this not a paradox, and yet it is wonderfully true. There is no greater word in any language than the word forgiveness which it is used of man's relationship to God.

But we must understand that God has a just basis and reason for forgiving sinners. It is not because anyone deserves to be forgiven. Forgiveness is ours by the grace of God. The Word of God makes it very clear that

4) Forgiveness is bestowed because of the death of Christ on the Cross, because of the blood which He shed at Calvary.

   Cf. Eph. 1:7; Rom. 3:25, 26; 1 John 1:7; Rev. 1:5 (loosed).

5) The scribes and Pharisees were right: only God can forgive sins! Cf. Acts 2:39. No preacher, no priest, no rabbi, nor any other man, has that authority. See Rom. 8:28, 30; 9:11, 22-24.

   What does this tell you about the palsied man? Did he just come to the Lord on his own? Was it due to the will of his friends who brought him to Christ that he was not only healed, but forgiven? No, God had called him, and, when God calls us, we come.

   God had specific people in mind when He sent His Son to die for sin. As we serve the Lord, and preach the Gospel, we need to be praying that the Lord would be calling people to come to Christ through the preaching of the Word.

Much more could be said on this glorious subject, but we will have other opportunities in studying Luke's Gospel to speak of forgiveness again. So let us go on.

2. Three additional disputes between the Lord and the scribes and Pharisees (Luke 5:27-6:11).

   a. The call of Levi (Matthew), and the dispute about eating with publicans and sinners (Luke 5:27-39).

      In vv. 36-39 we have the first parable recorded by Luke.

5:27 What is a publican?

Basically he was a tax collector. The people of Israel at this time were living under Roman, and they were required to pay taxes into the treasury, which was call the publicum. This is where the term, publican, comes from.

But they were also customs officers since they checked everything going in and out of the country. They were required to turn over so much money to the Roman government, but could keep everything over and above what the government required. Therefore, the taxes which they set were arbitrary; consequently, the Jewish people hated the publicans, who also were Jews. The publicans were merciless, greedy, and considered by their fellow-Jews as traitors, as collaborators with the Romans.

Note what Luke wrote about the publicans in Luke 3:12, 13 and in the story of Zacchaeus, "the chief among the publicans (Luke 19:2), in Luke 19:8.

Like Zacchaeus (Luke 19:2), the publicans were rich men. They often made false accusations against their own people in the hope that they would receive "hush-money" (Smith, Dictionary of the Bible, p. 560).

The scribes and Pharisees discouraged the payment of taxes wherever it was possible. Note how they tried to trap the Lord in Matt. 22:15-22.

Application: No one likes to pay taxes, but neither can a Christian justify from Scripture not paying taxes. There may be corruption in the system, and tax money may be used for things that we do not approve of, but to fail to meet our obligations to the government is disobedience toward God! Cf. Rom. 13:1-7; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13-17. We have a deadline to meet by April 15, and we had better meet it!

On this section (down to the end of Luke 5) cf. Matt. 9:9-17; Mark 2:14-22.

Most of us would probably have felt that Levi was unreachable. He was covetous, or he would not have had the job he had. He must have been rich, or headed in that direction. He was actually occupied in his work when the Lord Jesus came along. Note what the Lord said about rich men: Mark 10:17-27.

Here we have another example of the authority of the Lord Jesus, and of the call to salvation. Just as the Lord commanded the leprosy to go, and it went; and just as He commanded the palsied man to get up, and he got up; so, when He called Levi, we read that

5:28 "he left all, rose up, and followed him." The Greek indicates that he immediately made a break with his lucrative business, and that he began to follow the Lord. This was the first evidence that he was really saved. Cf. 2 Cor. 5:17. When the Lord calls us, we come to Him, and we can never after that be the same again.

This is what we refer to as an effectual call. Sometimes it is referred to as irresistible grace.

The second evidence we have that he was saved is:

5:29 He wanted his fellow-publicans to know the Lord. He had broken with his business, but he did not forget those with whom he had been associated in his work before.

These men were social outcasts, hated by the Jews, the very personification of wickedness. And where you find "the love of money" (1 Tim. 6:10) you find all other sins. So this was not the kind of a crowd you would want to associate with if you wished to enhance your position with the Jews. But, remember, that the Lord was concerned, not with social standing, but with the will of the Father in the salvation of sinners. See Luke 5:32 and 19:10. This verse indicates that Levi made this "great feast" as a reception in honor of the Lord Jesus. He wanted his friends to meet Jesus!

It seems significant that Levi did not preach, but that he brought his friends to hear the Lord Jesus. Those who are new in the faith need to learn more about the Word before they try to preach.

5:30 What the Lord and His disciples did, of course, infuriated the scribes and Pharisees. And so they asked the Lord the question we have in this verse. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God . . . (1 Cor. 2:14).

"Sinners" -- It is interesting to consider why this term was added to the word, "publicans." It is the most common word used in Scripture to describe man in his fallen state. It applies to all men. See Rom. 3:23; 5:8, 19. Ecc. 7:20,

For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

When Isa. 53:6 says, "We have turned every one to his own way," this is sinning. To be a

sinner is to miss the mark. Luke used this word in Luke 7:37 of an immoral woman. The use of this term in connection with the publicans showed how the scribes and Pharisees despised them. They were considered as the riffraff (the dregs) of society. They wanted to know why the Lord and His disciples would associate on such an occasion, or on any occasion, with them!

5:31 The Lord's answer was not long in coming.

Who had come to the Lord for physical healing? Those who were sick.

Who will come to the Lord for spiritual healing, for forgiveness, and for eternal life? Those who have learned that they are sinners--and no one else. The Gospel makes no sense to anyone else.

Note the two words that the Lord used for the scribes and Pharisees:
1) "Whole."
2) "Righteous" (v. 32).
This is what they considered themselves to be: spiritually healthy, and righteous in God's sight. Therefore, they did not know that they were sin-sick, utterly condemned in God's sight and desperately in need of repentance.

The Pharisees and scribes consoled themselves by their works, not even knowing that the Law was never given to save people, but to guide the lives of those who were saved. In the same way, people today feel no need of Christ because they have never seen themselves as sinners before God, under divine judgment, with no real way to help themselves.

5:32 Here we have another clear statement as to the reason for the first advent of our Lord to earth. He came, not to call those who thought that they were righteous, but to call those who knew that they were sinners--to call them to repentance!

And, just as God calls sinners to Himself and to salvation, so He alone can grant us repentance. Cf. 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Acts 5:31; 11:18; Heb. 12:17. We are called upon to repent, but both the desire and the ability to do it in a manner acceptable from God, comes from God. Cf. Phil. 2:13.

What the Lord did for Levi was just as much a miracle of His grace as the two previous physical healings were, and just as much a work of God alone. In fact, there is no greater miracle than the change that the Lord brings about in the hearts of those whom He calls to Himself, and who believe in Him.

/1/86 5:33 We come now to the third question that was raised by the scribes and Pharisees. (For the first two see vv. 21 and 30.) Matthew said that it was the disciples of John who asked this question; Mark says it was both the disciples of John and the disciples of the Pharisees. Quite evidently it bothered both groups.

The answer is given in two parts. The first is in vv. 34, 35; the second, vv. 36-39.

Luke 18:12 tells us that the Pharisees fasted twice each week, BUT THIS WAS NOT COMMANDED OF THEM IN THE LAW. This was one of their traditions. Thus, this point on which even the Lord left room for differences was being imposed upon the Jewish people as something that they had to do.

5:34 In John 3:29 John the Baptist had called the Lord, the Bridegroom. This is the expression that the Lord used here--of Himself! It brings out the relationship between rituals, sacrifices, and the like, as compared with the reality: the very presence of Christ! Fasting was a time of seeking the Lord. There was no point in fasting when they had the Lord with them. See another figure of speech in Gal. 3:23-25.

"The children of the bridegroom" -- a Hebraism to denote those who are a part of the Kingdom, those who are closely related to the Bridegroom.

5:35 "When the bridegroom shall be taken away" -- referring to the culmination of His work on earth, and His ascension back to the Father. Following that would be their time for fasting.

Thanks to Gary for taking the Class during the month of April: 8, 15, 22, 29.

Thanks, too, for your prayers during my bout with pneumonia. It is good to be back.

We have three classes remaining this Spring: today, May 13 and 20. During this time we will cover, hopefully, the 7th chapter of the Gospel of Luke. Read it as often as you can, and seek to anticipate for yourselves what the lessons will be.

There are three things in chapter 7, and we will take these up on the three days that remain:
1) Today: the two miracles found in vv. 1-17:
   a) The healing of the centurion's servant (Luke 7:1-10).
   b) The raising of the widow's son from the dead in the city of Nain (Luke 7:11-17).
2) Next week -- the section on John the Baptist in Luke 7:11-35.
3) For our last class -- the sinful woman who anointed the feet of the Lord Jesus while He was eating in the home of a Pharisee (Luke 7:36-50).

All of this comes in THE FIRST PERIOD OF JESUS' MINISTRY--IN GALILEE AND ITS VICINITY as recorded by Luke in Luke 4:14-9:50. See the outline.

In this section we are in

D. From the appointment of the twelve apostles to the mission of the twelve apostles (Luke 6:12-8:56).

In chapter 6 Gary taught the two of three disputes that the Lord had with the Pharisees at in this time in vv. 1-11, and then coming to this present section, (The first of the disputes was in 5:27-39.)

1. The appointment of the twelve apostles (Luke 6:12-16).

2. The first major discourse of our Lord which Luke recorded--which appears to be an abbreviated form of Matthew 5-7, the Sermon on the Mount (Luke 6:17-49).

Continuing on in this section we have:

3. <u>Two miracles performed by our Lord</u> (Luke 7:1-17).

   a. In Capernaum: the healing of the centurion's servant (Luke 7:1-10).

   b. In Nain: the raising of the widow's son (Luke 7:11-17).

<u>First of all then, the healing of the centurion's servant</u>. (Read vv. 1-10.) Recorded also in Mt. 8:5-13.

At the time of our Lord's ministry Israel was a land occupied by the Romans. And so the Roman army was very evident. It was there to see that the authority of Rome remained as its rulers intended that it should be.

The army was divided into legions, and each legion contained 60 centuries made up originally, as the name suggests, of 100 men. These centuries were led by centurions--and this centurion was one of them. Therefore, we have the account here of <u>a Gentile</u> and his relationship with the people of Israel, as well as with the Lord Jesus. These contacts with Gentiles were very rare, and we have the reason given in Matt. 10:5, 6.

This expression, "the lost sheep" (Matt. 10:6) is very interesting in the light of our Lord's discourse on "sheep" in John 10 (which see). It refers to the elect within the nation of Israel.

But John 10:16 indicates that the Lord had "other sheep . . . which are not of this fold." This was an evident reference to the fact that the elect did include Gentiles as well as Jews--a ministry which did not begin to expand until Peter went to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles who had gather in the house of another centurion by the name of Cornelius, as we learn from Acts 10.

Now let me remind you of a verse we had several weeks ago: Luke 4:43. The Lord had been in Capernaum before, but had left the city; and now He was back again! Notice the word "must."

We have to believe that the providence of God was evident in the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. He did not randomly move from one place to another. It was not by accident that He came into contact with the people that He met. The hand of God was surely evident in His life. And we need to keep this in mind as we study any of the Gospels.

Now we must also believe that the providence of God, the sovereign hand of God, was evident in the life of the centurion. He could have been in any number of cities in Israel, or he could have been in any of the other nations which were under the control of Rome. But he was in Capernaum at the very time that the Lord Jesus came back to the city. Perhaps he had been there when the Lord was there previously--we do not know. But it is interesting to read in v. 3 of Luke 7, "And when he heard of Jesus . . ."

Notice another thing: what the Lord said in v. 9 about the centurion's faith!

What does this mean? Where does faith come from? Does this not mean that this Roman centurion was a believer, that his heart had been changed, that he was a child of God? And does this not explain why it follows the passage which Gary taught last week at the end of chapter 6 (vv. 39-49)?

Let us examine the evidence.

I want you to see:

1) The love that was in the heart of this centurion:

   a) First of all, toward his servant (v. 2).

   b) Secondly, toward the Jews, whom he obviously considered to be the people of God (v. 5a): The Jews themselves said, "For he loveth our nation."

      We have to allow for his misunderstanding on this point because it is not an uncommon thing for a person who has been recently saved to think that everybody who goes to a church is a Christian.

2) His work: he had built the Jews a synagogue--and this, undoubtedly, at the risk of bringing down upon himself the wrath of his superiors. Not all Roman soldiers were kind like this centurion was.

3) His humility.

   (because he did not feel worthy to go--v. 7a)

   He did not go himself to seek the Lord, but he sent the elders of the Jews. But soon after he regretted what he had done because he did not feel that he was even worthy for the Lord to come to his house--even though the Jews had no hesitation about saying that he was worthy (as they did in v. 4). Obviously they did not understand the nature of man, nor the grace of God.

4) His understanding. He believed in the sovereign, absolute authority of the Lord Jesus Christ--a truth which many Christians today do not really understand. And he believed in the power of Jesus' word. See vv. 7, 8.

   Isn't it interesting to see how he had come to such understanding--by comparing his own authority with that of the Lord, knowing that the Lord was far greater than he was

5) His faith--which the Lord said was greater than He had seen manifestedy by any Jew. See v. 9.

What was the result?

This centurion's servant who had been on his death-bed was brought back to full health and strength!

Listen to what Bishop Ryle (I, 200) wrote about this:

> A greater miracle of healing than this is nowhere recorded in the Gospels. Without even seeing the sufferer, without touch of hand or look of eye, our Lord restores health to a dying man by a single word. He speaks, and the sick man is cured. He commands, and the disease departs. We read of no prophet or apostle who wrought miracles in this manner. We see here the finger of God.

What an encouragement this should be to us, too, for prayer! Distance, great or small, is no hindrance to the Lord.

But let us leave this story, not giving glory to the centurion for his faith, but giving glory to God who gave such faith to a Gentile, and Who manifested His grace to one who knew that he was not worthy. All that the Centurion did and thought and said was pleasing to our Lord. Let us take note, and follow his example.

Now for the second miracle recorded in this chapter:

b. In Nain: the raising of the widow's son (Luke 7:11-17). It was recorded only by Luke.

Nain was located a little to the south and west of Capernaum.

Smith, in his Dictionary of the Bible, says that it is a city even yet which is noted for its sepulchral caves (burial tombs).

This is one of only three instances recorded in the Gospels where the Lord Jesus raised the dead (even though there was many, many more). The other two were Jairus' daughter. This is recorded in all three of the Synoptics (Matt. 9:18, 19, 23-26; Mark 5:22-24, 35-43; Luke 8:41, 42, 49-56). The last, Lazarus, in John 11.

What lessons can we learn here?

A question which very few people seem to ask is, Why do we die?

The answer is to be found in Genesis 2, 3. Also see Heb. 9:27.

Another question is, What happens after death? It is only in the Bible that we have the answer to these questions.

WE DIE BECAUSE OF SIN, AND SIN BRINGS MEN UNDER THE JUDGMENT OF GOD. Never say about a person who is not a Christian, that he is better off after he dies. Regardless of how bad his circumstances may be here, they will immediately be infinitely worse when he dies. The person who commits suicide thinking that he is getting himself out of his troubles will learn that he has plunged himself into inescapable troubles more terrible than anything he has ever imagined.

If man were not so blinded by sin, death and funerals and cemeteries should all remind us of the wages of sin, and sin should make us turn to the Lord as our only hope.

This widow was well-acquainted with death. She had buried her husband, and now she was burying her only begotten son. Death, regardless of how we may try to camouflage it, always brings sorrow, great sorrow, even for those of us who know the Lord. See 1 Thess. 4:13. Sin always brings sorrow. How we ought to hate it! But we treat sin like something good, like something that will bring happiness and joy instead of sorrow. There may be temporary pleasure in sin (Heb. 11:25), but the end is always sorrow. And let us never forget it. Even with friends surrounding her, this widow had still lost her son, and no amount of human sympathy could bring him back.

But the difference was to be seen in the Lord Jesus, Who had "compassion" on her. See v. 13.

This means that He loved her. And His heart was moved with an urgent desire to help her. This is the verb from which we get the word which is often translated bowels in the KJV. Cf. Phil. 1:8. The Hebrews considers the bowels as the source of all kindness and benevolence. See Thayer, p. 584.

Notice that this was an instance in which no request was placed before the Lord; He simply acted from the love that was in his heart. This would also seem to designate this widow woman was one of the elect of God.

The Lord was the only One Who could really help this widow and mother. He was the only On Who could turn her sorrow into joy, Who could dry her tears, Who could say with meaning, "Weep not."

Again notice the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, and notice, too, that His power was manifested through what He said, i.e., through His Word.

And notice, too, that he had to have life before he could hear the Lord, and before he could respond to the Lord's command, "Arise."

You see, here, too, we have a marvelous picture of salvation. Dead people can do nothing. Therefore, God has to do something in them before they can hear, and before they can believe. God's work of regeneration precedes our faith--not by days, but it has to come first.

What was the result?

1) There was evidence of life. He got up. He spoke. He went with his mother.

   Gary spoke to you about this, I believe it was last week. I listened to the tape of the lesson. A person could not be raised from the dead without remarkable changes being evident. The same is true of salvation.

2) The people glorified God--which is what they should have done. And they realized that God was doing some amazing things through the Lord Jesus. See v. 16.

3) The "rumour" (logos, word, report) spread like wildfire throughout Judea and the whole region around Nain. Nain was in Galilee, and Samaria lay between Galilee and Judea. So we can see how widespread the influence of this miracle was.

   This was evidence of the Deity of Christ, and of the power of God. There is no greater miracle than when a person is changed through the redeeming work of our Lord Jesus Christ--evidence, too, of Christ's Deity, and of the power of God. He raises those to spiritual life who have been spiritually dead.

Cf. John 11:25, 26. The widow and her son both eventually died (physically). The person who is believing in Christ may die physically, but will never lose the spiritual life that he or she has in Christ. Cf. John 3:16; 5:24.

This section has to do with John the Baptist. The same account is given, with some additional details, in Matt. 11:2-19.

We have here a very instructive passage for every child of God in which we see three things about John the Baptist:
1) His disillusionment, in vv. 18-23.
2) His distinction, his greatness, in vv. 24-30.
3) His difference (in his ministry from that of the Lord Jesus Christ), in vv. 31-35.

There is one key verse in each of these sections, and we need to make sure that we understand them: vv. 23, 28, 35. (Read.)

Let us consider the first section:

4. John the Baptist (Luke 7:18-35).

a. His disillusionment (Luke 7:18-23).

Many commentators deal with this passage as though it were John's disciples who were disturbed and disillusioned at this time. They may have been, but there is no question but that John the Baptist himself was greatly disturbed in his own soul.

Matthew tells us that he was in prison.

Think of the preaching he had done. Think of the tremendous blessing he had seen. Think of the high hopes he had had for Jesus of Nazareth, and how he had gladly stepped aside to make way for the ministry of the Lord Jesus.

But the Lord had no enjoyed that success. It is true that many people had followed him, but the opposition to his ministry had been fierce. Scribes and Pharisees had come to be baptized by John, but they had become the strongest opponents that our Lord had.

And then, why was John in prison? This seemed like an ignominious end to such a great career. Was it possible, after all, that this was not the Messiah? It seems impossible that such a question could be in the mind of John the Baptist, but it was there! See Luke 11:3.

This is one of the strong arguments for the truthfulness of Scripture: the writers do not seek to hide the weaknesses of even the greatest men and women of God. Think of Abraham. Think of Moses. Think of Elijah. Think of David. Think of Peter. And these are only a few of those who could be mentioned. NOW THINK OF JOHN THE BAPTIST! There were a lot of questions which filled his heart. Perhaps the biggest question was: If Jesus is the Messiah, then why am I where I am?

The Puritans used to speak of such circumstances as God's desertions.

Note the following Scriptures: Isa. 8:11-18; Luke 2:34, 35; Rom. 11:33 (Isa. 55:8, 9); 1 Cor. 1:23-25; 1 Pet. 2:5-10.

Note what John did in his disillusionment: He sent his disciples to the Lord. Our appeal should always be to the Lord. For us this will mean turning to the Word of God rather than depending upon our own wisdom, and seeking the counsel of men who are not acquained with the ways of the Lord. It will mean prayer, and it will call for patience. These are not easy times, but they will prove to be immensely profitable if we do turn to the Lord in our need. The Lord has ordained such times for all of us as a part of conforming us more in the likeness of Christ. AND WE SHOULD REMEMBER THAT OUR LORD EXPERIENCED THIS VERY THING as we can see from His words in Gethsemane, and on the Cross: "If it be possible . . ." and "My God, my God, why . . . ?"

What was the Lord's response?

He continued with His works. And see their significance as John stated it in John 20:30, 31.

Secondly, He told them to go back to John to tell them what they had "seen and heard." Cf. v. 23. At least a part of this is from Isa. 61:1, which the Lord had read, you will remember, in Luke 4:16-22.

Thus, our comfort in our times of desertion are to be found in:
1) The Word of God.
2) The dependability of the Lord Jesus. How easily and how quickly we are inclined to forget all that we have known of the Lord and experienced with Him when things suddenly are not going the way we would like for them to go, or think that they should go!

Finally, we have a beatitude: v. 23. How gracious the Lord is in dealing with His people!

To be "offended" is to stumble. It suggests that an obstacle or a trap has been put in the way, a hurdle that is difficult to get over and to get by. There can be blessedness (happiness) for the person who does not stumble over Christ. The "in me" is the important phrase of the verse.

Always be very careful to guard your thoughts about Christ. He may not deal with you as you expected, even when you are seeking to please Him the most, and when others are not particularly interested in pleasing Him. But He is never wrong. His ways are perfect, and His word can be trusted. Cf. Psa. 18:30, 31 (and that whole Psalm).

b. His (John the Baptist's) distinction (Luke 7:24-30).

The disciples of John probably attracted a considerable amount of attention, and perhaps some were inclined to think less of him because of the question he had sent his disciples to ask the Lord. But the Lord quickly spoke up in defense of His servant.

THE LORD ASKED THE SAME QUESTION THREE TIMES: "What went ye out to see?"

V. 24. Did John minister in the desert places because he was afraid to come into the cities? Was he a reed shaken in the wind? Was he characterized by fear? Did he vacilate, turning first one way and then another, according to the way the wind was blowing.

It is interesting to compare this question with Paul's statement in Eph. 4:14.

John may have had times like the one being discussed here when he looked like a reed, but that was not his true character, AND THE LORD KNOWS THE DIFFERENCE! He was like a tree. Cf. also Peter and John in Acts 4:19, 20 and Paul in Acts 20:24.

V. 25. John the Baptist came as the forerunner of the Messiah, the King of Israel. Did the people go out to him in the desert expecting to find him dressed with all of the finery of a member of the royal court? Was he living "delicately," that is, in the lap of luxury? The Son of man did not have a place to lay His head; would His forerunner fare better than He?

No, neither one of these was the case. What did they go out to see?

V. 26, THEY WENT TO SEE A PROPHET. But he was really "more than a prophet," i.e., greater than any former prophet. Why? For two reasons:
1) His ministry had been prophesied in the OT. Cf. Isa. 40:3.
2) His ministry was that of preparing the way for the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. No other prophet had that distinction.

BUT -- here is an interesting point as we come to the words of the Lord Jesus in v. 28. John had been disillusioned with the Lord's dealings with him, BUT IT WAS ALSO TRUE THAT OTHERS, POSSIBLY THE APOSTLES, WHO WERE INCLINED TO BE DISCOURAGED BECAUSE THEY DID NOT HAVE THE PLACE IN THE WORK OF THE LORD WHICH JOHN THE BAPTIST HAD. HE WAS THE GREATEST!

Have you ever thought thoughts like this?

Illus: I have been reading the autobiography of Charles Spurgeon, man who was greatly used of God. In many respects it is discouraging to read about him and his work because the Lord has not been pleased to use me in a similar way. Often we discourage ourselves by such thoughts. But look at 2 Cor. 10:12. The important thing for all of us is to fit into God's will for our lives. Isn't it interesting to see that at the very time when the apostles would have been inclined to be jealous of John the Baptist, he would have gladly traded place with any of them?

But what did the Lord mean by His words, " . . . but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

What is "the kingdom of God"? It is the company of the redeemed, the people of God.

What did our Lord mean by the word "least"?

He Himself answered that for us. Turn to Luke 9:46-48. See also Matt. 18:1-6, esp. v. 4. What was the Lord teaching? HUMILITY! Our greatness before God is not determined by the place of our service, nor by the numbers who respond to our ministry, nor by the notoriety that we may have in the world, but it is determined by the condition of our hearts, OUR HUMILITY. This is one of the main reasons for God's desertions--to humble us.

Look even at the example of our Lord. Cf. Phil. 2:5-11--His humiliation and His exaltation. Look at what the Apostle Peter said about you ladies in 1 Pet. 3:3, 4. And notice, too, 1 Pet. 5:1-7, esp. v. 5. And here he was really talking to the elders!

We are always inclined to chafe because we do not have a greater place in the work of God. What ought to amaze us is that we have any place at all! We are undoubtedly going to get some real surprises at the judgment seat of Christ when we see who gets the greatest rewards.

Last of all we come to

c. His (John the Baptist's) difference--from the Lord Jesus (Luke 7:31-35).

In most respects we need to be like the Lord, but in some respects there will always be a difference.

Illus: Andrew Bonar's response to Spurgeon when Spurgeon wrote to him asking him for a a picture. See Spurgeon's Autobiography, Vol. II, p. 339.

"Dear Brother,

I cannot refuse what you are so kind to ask. But if you had only waited a little while, it would have been really worth while (i.e., the picture)--for 'we shall be like Him' (I John 3:2). Meanwhile, the enclosed may hint to you that sometimes you should pray for me.

Yours, with all brotherly love,
ANDREW A. BONAR"

The nature of the John's ministry was completely different from the Lord's ministry. The Lord did a lot of socializing; John did none. But people were critical of both of them! How prone we are to criticize! We all have our supporters, and we all have those who are our critics--and sometimes people are one and then another. How blind and fickle the human heart (and the human tongue) are!

What do we criticize?

We criticize things that we think are wrong.

Well, then, we need to ask, Was it wise for John to minister in one way and for the Lord to

minister in one way, and for John to minister in another?

The world would say, "No!" They ought to do things alike.

Have you ever noticed how much conformity there is in the world? You hear one rock singer or one rock group, and you have heard them all. Try to get your children to dress differently from other children, and notice the trouble that you have. Why do so many people have that frame on their license place which say, "My other car is a Porsche"? Because that is a symbol of having arrived--a Porsche, or a Mercedes, or a Chevrolet!

But the Lord is not like that as far as our places of ministry and the nature of our ministry is concerned. He does not use us all in the same way. He does not bless us all to the same extent. We are all to spread the Word, to witness concerning Christ, but the Lord uses us differently to reach different people. Peter and Paul had different ministries. Look at the varied ministries of men and women in the OT--there are great differences. And yet we have men going around conducting seminar or speaking to Christian groups trying to get everybody to do things the way they do them!

This is wrong. God has a special place for each one of us. Never be jealous of anyone else's place nor of their ministry. You cannot fill their place; they cannot fill yours.

Now, who is going to believe all of this?

The Lord told us in v. 35: "But wisdom is justified of all her children."

We can look at this in two ways:
1) That "wisdom" is used here of Christ and of God. We all may have trouble with some of the ways of the Lord, and with the way the Lord may see fit to deal with us, but, when the Lord has finished with us, we always come to the place where we know that He was right and we were wrong. Cf. Job.
2) This word "wisdom" may simply mean the ways of God, or the Word of God. "Justified" means declared righteous, or shown to be righteous. See its use in Luke 7:29.

The wisest people in the world are the people of God! They have access to wisdom that is completely hidden from the greatest minds of unregenerate people. The things of God may be foolish to the world, but the things of the world, the wisdom of the world, is foolish to God! Cf. 1 Cor. 1:18, 25.

Concl: So the Lord has taught us three things through John the Baptist:
1) How to be happy -- in v. 23.
2) How to be great in the eyes of the Lord -- in v. 28: be humble.
3) How to be wise in the things of God -- in v. 35. God never makes any mistakes.

5/20/86 5. Simon the Pharisee and the Sinful Woman (Luke 7:36-50).

This story is recorded only in the Gospel of Luke. There are only three people involved in the story: Simon the Pharisee, our Lord, and the sinful woman. The emphasis is upon what Simon did, and did not do, and upon what he thought and said. With regard to the woman, we see what she did; it is not recorded that she said anything. And, finally, it is the words of our Lord Jesus Christ which are so important.

It is impossible for us to know why Simon (v. 40) had asked the Lord Jesus to come to his house for dinner. Doubtless his interest in the Lord had been aroused by the things that he had seen the Lord do, but it is evident from v. 39 that he was not a believer. "This man" seems to be an expression uttered contemptuously. It probably is an expression that he believed that the Lord Jesus was only a man. And he seemed convinced at that point that Jesus was not even a prophet. (Robertson said that this statement in v. 39 beginning with "if" is second class condition, which assumes that it is not true: "This man, if he were a prophet (and he is not), . . .") He obviously had no understanding of the grace of God.

So, while he was a religious man, he was not a child of God.

V. 37 The woman, on the other hand, was well-known as a prostitute. She had that reputation in the city. According to Jewish custom at the time, she would have had access to the home of the Pharisee. People could come in although they were there more as spectators and did not partake of the meal--although they could converse with the guests. This was probably especially true about the homes of the Pharisees. But it was evident that the Pharisee was very uncomfortable about having her there.

It would hardly have been possible to have two people who were more widely separated in the spectrum of society than these. One was at the top; the other was at the bottom. One was very religious; the other had given herself to a life of disgraceful sin. The religious man wanted to have nothing to do with the sinful woman; the sinful woman seems to have been aware of that. She came to the Pharisee's house, not becuase she wanted to see him, nor because she believed that he could help her, but because she "knew," that is, she was fully assured that the Lord Jesus was there. We must assume from what followed that she had already trusted the Lord and had been forgiven of her many sins, but she needed to be reassured in her heart.

John 8:1-11 gives us a very interesting account of the way scribes and Pharisees felt about a prostitute, or at least one who had committed adultery.

Now we know from the Word of God that both were sinners. They may not have sinned in the same way, but they were sinners--sinners in heart, and therefore sinners in their behavior. We have a tendency to classify sins (and there is no doubt that some sins are worse than others), but sin is sin to God, and any sin condemns us before God. Listen to these verses: Isa. 53:6; Ecc. 7:20; Rom. 3:9-18, 23. We can only understand sin by what we find in the Word of God, and by seeing ourselves in the light of what God is.

We also know that all people are, because they are sinners, under the judgment of God, destined for hell. Cf. Rom. 6:23.

Thirdly, we know that man cannot save himself by his own good works. Cf. Eph. 2:8, 9; Titus 3:5.

Consequently, we are at the mercy of God. If He does not help us, we are hopelessly lost in our sins.

But the good news of the Gospel is that God is merciful toward sinners, and that He had provision for the forgiveness of sins. This is not through anything that we can do. But it is through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. And God has only one way of saving any sinner, great or small, and that is through faith in Christ. How important it is that we understand this!

And we need to understand the actions of this woman whose life had characterized by gross immorality. She came with her precious ointment for the specific purpose of anointing the Lord Jesus with it.

V. 38 She was taking the place of a servant. All that she did had to do with the "feet" of the Lord Jesus. And notice that she washed the Lord's feet with her tears! How precious our tears are to the Lord, especially when we weep over our sins, and when we weep because of our great love for Him. Cf. Psa. 56;8. He puts our tears in His bottle.

V. 39 Time and time again we learn in the Gospels that men could not hide their thoughts from the Lord Jesus. Simon the Pharisee thought that he knew about the woman and about the Lord, but he did not know the need of his own heart. This shows his spiritual blindness.

Here the Lord intervened. Whatever may have been Simon's reason for inviting the Lord to

his home for dinner, we do not know, but we do know that the Lord had a very important purpose for going! The Lord wanted to teach Simon about what salvation really was.

V. 40 Simon agree to listen to the Lord, calling Him, "Master," or Teacher. Perhaps this is a clue, as in the case of Nicodemus, as to why Simon had invited the Lord to his home: he recognized the Lord as a teacher, and had been impressed not only with what he had seen the Lord do, but in the teachings of the Lord. And it seems that Simon must have heard what the Lord had just been saying about John the Baptist, and wanted to hear more, not realizing what the Lord would have to say to Him.

But notice the gentleness of the Lord. What an example of 2 Tim. 2:24-26! He told the Pharisee a very simple and short story.

Vv. 41, 42 There are three people in our text, and there are three people in the parable which the Lord told: a creditor, and two debtors--one who owed his creditor five hundred pence, and the other owed only fifty pence. But the one was just as hopelessly in debt as the other because neither could pay. Consequently the creditor exercised grace toward them in forgiving both of them so that they no longer owed anything. Their debt was so completely cleared up that it was as though neither had owed the creditor anything.

This is a wonderful picture of salvation--and it illustrates the relationship of the three people in our text.
1) The Lord Jesus is the creditor.
2) The one who owed the 500 pence was the woman who was a prostitute.
2) The one who owed the 50 pence was the Pharisee.

Their debt was their sin. They were obligated to the Lord to do something about it, to erase the debt. But they could not. And it was up to the Lord to determine how the obligation should be handled. And so, as the Greek word "forgave" indicates, instead of demanding that they be cast into prison, the creditor exercised his grace and forgave them.

Now notice the question at the end of the parable very carefully.

Neither one of the debtors loved the creditor before they were forgive, but after! "We love (him) because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

Listen to what Bishop Ryle has written about this:

> She had been much forgiven, and so she loved much. Her love was the effect of her forgiveness, not the cause,--the consequence of her forgiveness, not the condition, --the result of her forgiveness, not the reason,--the fruit of her forgiveness, not the root (Luke, Vol. I, p. 237).

A. T. Robertson (II, p. 109) said that what the sinful woman did was the "illustration or proof, not the reason for the forgiveness."

Notice this very great truth regarding salvation.

It is not the dinners that we serve for the Lord (or for his people) that determines whether or not we are His. It is not any nor all of the good works that we do. But it is our personal love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

So the question for all of us to answer today is not,
What church have you joined?
How many offices do you hold, and how high are those offices in the church--even to being the pastor?
How much money have you given?
It is not any of these things. The big question is: Do I love the Lord Jesus Christ? Do I love Him because of what He has done for me, forgiving me of all my sins? The Pharisee could not understand this woman's devotion to the Lord, nor could he understand

why the Lord would let her do what she did.

V. 43 But it is true that the one who has the most sins forgiven will love the Lord the most.

V. 44 Remember that the woman was listening to this whole conversation. And it must have been that she was somewhat disturbed by the attitude of the Pharisee.

But the Lord gently rebuked Simon.

Simon had invited the Lord to his home. He had prepared dinner for the Lord. But these things, like other forms of service done for Christ, may not mean anything in themselves to the Lord. The common courtesies of the household servant had not been extended to our Lord in Simon's home. Perhaps Simon was afraid to do too much for the Lord because of the reproach it would bring upon him from his fellow-Pharisees.

Illus: Walt Bennett and the pastoral committee from Parkrose Methodist examining a prospective pastor, asking him all kinds of questions, when Walt finally asked him, "What about the Christ? What do you believe about Him?" Immediately all of the other committee members tried to silence him.

A mere church member, or a religionist, will go only so far in saying nice things about Jesus Christ. To show love for the Lord is definitely going too far! Such feelings are taboo!

The Lord mentioned (1) water for His feet in v. 44,
(2) a kiss in v. 45,
(3) oil for His head in v. 46.

V. 47 Why did the woman do what Simon had failed to do?

Because she loved Jesus.

And why did she love Him so much? Because He had forgiven her so much! And here the Lord used a different word for forgiveness. This is the word which means released, no longer obligated; the sins were erased.

Vv. 48-50 For the rest of the passage the Lord ministerd to the woman.

He assured her, first of all, that her sins remained forgiven. God does not forgive us, and then change His mind--for any reason! Once sins are forgiven, they are forgiven forever. Religionists may have a different idea, but it is the word of the Lord Jesus Christ that matters. If He said that this woman was forgiven, who were those in v. 49 who had the right to doubt it?

Why was she forgiven? See v. 50. It was because of her faith, not because of her tears, nor because of her sacrifice of the ointment, nor because of her work, but because of her faith--her faith in Jesus Christ, in His work, in what He had come to do, in His blood.

And, when we see that our forgiveness, our justification, is due to what Christ has done for us, then there can be "peace" (v. 50). Cf. Rom. 5:1. The Greek actually needs to be rendered, Go INTO peace. Sinners need to come in faith to Christ, and then go forth into the enjoyment of that peace that can only come from God when our sins are forgiven through faith in the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Cf. Eph. 1:3-7, esp. v. 7. Does this describe you? Religion will not get us to heaven; only Christ can do that. And let us remember that it is only the service for the Lord which is motivated by our love for Him which delights His heart. What a great place for us to come as we dismiss our class for the summer. There is a word here for us all.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE
Chapter 8

The Outline:

I. THE PROLOGUE (Luke 1:1-4).

II. THE PREPARATION FOR JESUS' MINISTRY (1:5-4:13).

III. THE FIRST PERIOD OF JESUS' MINISTRY--IN GALILEE AND ITS VICINITY (Luke 4:14-9:50).

A. Jesus at Nazareth (Luke 4:14-30). This was in the synagogue. During this time the Lord was rising from obscurity to prominence. Cf. 4:14, 15. See also 4:36, 37; 5:15.
1. Reading (4:14-22).
2. Teaching (4:23-27).
3. Opposition (4:28-30).

B. Jesus at Capernaum (Luke 4:31-44).
1. In the synagogue (4:31-37).
   a. Teaching (4:31, 32).
   b. FIRST RECORDED MIRACLE: the demon-possessed man (4:33-37).
2. At Simon Peter's house: MIRACLE #2--the healing of Peter's mother-in-law (4:38, 39).
3. Departure from Capernaum (4:40-44). As He left, there were many healings and deliverance of those who were demon-possessed, and teaching.

C. From the calling of the first disciples to the appointment of the twelve apostles (Luke 5:1-6:11).
1. Three miracles (5:1-26).
   a. MIRACLE #3: the miraculous draught of fishes ((5:1-11).
   b. MIRACLE #4: a leper healed (5:12-15).
   c. MIRACLE #5: a man with palsy healed (5:16-26).
2. Disputations with the scribes and Pharisees (5:27-6:11).
   a. Following the call of Matthew (5:27-39),
   b. Regarding the Sabbath Day (6:1-11).
      1) When the disciples plucked corn (6:1-5).
      2) When the man with the withered hand was healed--MIRACLE #6 (6:6-11).

D. From the appointment of the twelve apostles to the mission of the twelve apostles (Luke 6:12-8:56).
1. The selection of the apostles (6:12-16)
2. Many healings (6:17-19).
3. Luke's account of THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT (6:20-49).
4. Two more miracles:
   a. MIRACLE #7: the centurion's servant (7:1-10).
   b. MIRACLE #8: the raising of the widow's son in Nain (7:11-17).
5. John the Baptist (7:18-35).
6. In the home of Simon the Pharisee (7:36-50). It involved the woman who anointed Jesus' feet.
7. The Lord's continuing ministry (8:1-3).
   a. What he did (8:1a).
   b. Those who were with Him and supported Him (8:1b-3).
8. Two parables (8:4-21).
   a. The parable of the sower ((8:4-15).
   b. The parable of the candle (8:16-21). This concluded with the coming of His mother, Mary, and His brothers.
9. Four more miracles (8:22-56).
   a. MIRACLE #9: the calming of the storm (8:22-25).
   b. MIRACLE #10: the demon-possessed man (8:26-40).
   c. MIRACLES #11, #12: Jairus's daughter raised from the dead, and the woman with the issue of blood healed (8:41-56).

Jesus woman - #11
Jairus' dau. - #12

7. The Lord's continuing ministry (8:1-3).
   a. What He did (8:1a).

Several things are important in this brief part of 8:1:
1) We notice the Lord's continued diligence in doing the work that the Father had sent Him to do. Cf. Luke 1:49. See what He did after He was run out of Nazareth, and went down to Capernaum: Luke 4:28-31. See also John 4:31-35; 9:4. In spite of all of the opposition of His enemies, and even the attempts of His disciples to dissuade Him, He never faltered, but continued to do the work that the Father had sent Him to do.
2) His continued emphasis on preaching and teaching. This is important for us to notice today with the tendency to minimize the importance of both of these ministries.
3) The fact that He went to the cities and villages; He did not wait for them to come to Him.

   b. Those who were with Him, and supported Him (8:1b-3).

The important lessons:
1) The apostles' group was completed, but they were not yet ministering. In Luke's Gospel their ministry begins in chapter 9. But here they are observers, living with the Lord, getting to know Him, learning to walk with Him.
   We are often inclined to want to get into the work without the spiritual preparation that is necessary.
2) The ministry of the women. They obviously had not only been healed physically, but they had been healed spiritually. And they wanted to minister to the Lord with what they had.
   Both Mary Magdalene and Joanna are mentioned in Luke 24:10. It is very unlikely that Joanna's husband was a believer. This is the only place that we read of Susanna. But notice also that there were "many others."
   On giving, cf. 1 Cor. 9:11; Phil. 4:18; Heb. 13:15, 16. What a tragedy it is that we have not taught giving in the Church the way it is taught in the NT.
3) The condescension of the Lord Jesus Christ--the Lord of the universe, accepting support from mere human beings, when He could miraculously have provided for Himself.
   The Lord has chosen to work through His people, to bless them in what they do, and then to reward them for it. Let us never minimize the place that the Lord has given us. Cf. Eph. 2:10.

8. Two parables (Luke 8:4-21).
   a. The parable of the sower (Luke 8:4-15). This parable is also found in Matt. 13:1-23 and Mark 4:1-20. Thus, it is a very important parable. It illustrates one kind of teaching which our Lord did.

It obviously has to do with preaching the Gospel and salvation (see Luke 8:12), and this ties in with what is stated in verse 1 of this chapter, that the Lord was "shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God." Note also that this was a part of the apostles' preparation for their ministries. We will see how different our Lord's teaching was from the predominant methods that are used in our day.

(Read the parable: Luke 8:4-15.) This is the third time that we have had the word, "parable." Cf. Luke 5:36; 6:39. In this chapter we have it in vv. 4, 9, 10, 11. A parable is a simplified way of teaching. It is an account which is placed beside something which it portrays or illustrates. Here the sowing the the seed, which was a familiar sight to our Lord and the people of His day, illustrated both the preaching of the Word, and the hearing of the Word. The Lord gave the interpretation because the disciples did not understand it. This shows that even parables require the interpretation given by the Lord, or by the Spirit. But, with the interpretation, two things are evident:
1) The meaning is clear.
2) The interpretation of this parable helps in interpreting other parables. (This is especially the case in Matt. 13.)

8:10 The use of parables was both to reveal and to conceal. Notice the expression, "Unto

you it is given to know . . ." The knowledge of the Word of God is not dependent upon the intellects of men, but upon God and His sovereign purposes. So in preaching, while we may explain and illustrate and do all that we can to make the Word of God clear, it is still up to the Lord to determine who will hear and understand. The elect will understand.

"The mysteries of the kingdom of God." A NT mystery is a secret hitherto not revealed. Cf. 16:25, 26; 1 Cor. 2:1-16; esp. 4-11. See also Eph. 3:1-12.

This is a very important fact having to do with the preaching of the Word of God. It is possible for people to hear without really hearing; to see, without really seeing. That is, a person can understand a parabolic story, but not get the spiritual significance from it. It is only as the Spirit of God opens the eyes of our understanding that we will really know what the message of the Word of God is.

8:11 The first point in the interpretation is that "the seed is the word of God." The sower could be the Lord, or one of the disciples, or anyone who preaches and teaches the Word of God. There is life, the power or capability in the seed, to produce a crop. But it must be placed in good soil in order to bear fruit.

Be sure to note that the seed was all that the sower had. So God sends forth His servants with only the Word of God, and His purpose for them is to proclaim that Word. This is important in a day when people are trying to force many other things upon the ministry of pastors--things political, things social, things psychological, things entertaining. There are always those who would have the pastor go from one problem to another: abortion, poverty, drugs, racial problems, crimes of various forms, street people, and on and on and on. But the servant of the Lord is sent out with one thing and for one purpose: he is sent with the Word of God, and his job is to proclaim that Word.

Does this ignore the problems of people?

Absolutely not! It indicates what the only real solution is. People's hearts need to be changed, and then their behavior will be changed. And it is only God Who can change the heart. People are ignorant of what they really need, and often will not believe it when they hear it UNLESS "it is given to them to know."

In preaching the Word of God the true servant of the Lord is doing a work which others are not doing, and cannot do.

BUT THE LORD'S PEOPLE MUST NOT EXPECT EVERYONE TO BE SAVED. THAT NEVER HAS BEEN THE WILL OF GOD. IF IT HAD BEEN, THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN SAVED. THIS PARABLE TELLS US ABOUT THE OBSTACLES THAT STAND IN THE WAY.

8:12 Obstacle #1: the Devil.

The Devil hates the preaching of the Word because he knows that this can lead to salvation. He does everything that he possibly can to hinder the preaching of the Word. He will get men to turn aside to other things which seem to be legitimate in order to get them away from the preaching of the Word of God.

Remember what we learned from the temptation of our Lord in Luke 4:1-13, and what the outcome was. However, in spite of all that we do, we will see this happen time and time again. A person's thoughts can be distracted, or they will listen with a critical frame of mind, or careless conversation following a service can be used to snatch the Word of God away. This is the seed sown "by the way side."

8:13 Obstacle #2: "on the rock."

The Lord was teaching us here that we cannot always depend upon a person's first and immediate response to the preaching of the Word of God.

The person pictured here will receive the Word with great joy. It seems that he has really

been saved. But, as time goes on, it is apparent that all that has taken place has been on the surface; nothing in the heart! What makes this apparent? A "time of temptation." That is, trials. This person may have trusted the Lord to have some particular problem settled, not to get everything right with the Lord. And when that problem remains, he gives it all up.

So the problem here is in the person's heart. Persecution will turn him away from the Lord. There is no real repentance. He is not truly humbled before the Lord because of his sin. He may shed tears, or he may shout for joy, but it is all external.

8:14 Obstacle #3: "among thorns."

Here the trouble comes from the world. Note that the first was from the Devil, the second was from the flesh, and this is from the world.

Three things in connection with life in this world are mentioned:
1) "Cares" -- anxious cares, things which divide and distract and distress the mind.
2) "Riches" -- cf. Luke 18:18-30. Also Matt. 6:19-21.
3) "Pleasures of this life" -- people who are more concerned about time than they are eternity, the here than the hereafter

These explain why preaching the Gospel in an affluent society is so difficult. It is interesting to see "cares" put with "riches" and "pleasures." It is through the latter two that people hope to be able to take care of the former, and thus do not see their need for the Lord.

8:15 THE GOOD GROUND!

Matthew's account says 100, 60, and 30-fold. Mark's, 30, 60, 100-fold. Luke's, simply 100-fold. The 100-fold represents the highest degree of fruitfulness.

"Honest and good" do not speak of the spiritual condition of the hearer, because all men are vile and corrupt by nature. But it speaks of how the Lord has made that person teachable, willing to learn and to be responsive. Always beware of the person who comes in to teach rather than to learn.

Thus we have lessons here for the preacher and for the hearer.

Those who present the Gospel should always seek to be clear in presenting the truth. We must preach and teach as though we expected all to be able to understand and to believe.

Those who hear should realize their responsibility to hear and to seek to understand what is being preached.

In connection with both of these the Lord will be at work, overruling in the lives of those whom He has appointed for salvation. But always, the instrument in salvation is the Word of God.

"With patience" would better be translated, with perseverance. As Plummer says,

> . . . the mere receiving of the word is not decisive. Everything depends upon how it is received and how it is retained (ICC, p. 222).

Thus the person who is pictured by the good soil is the person who endures the testings, the cares of the world, and the opposition of the Devil. He does not give up the Word of God for any reason.

These were important truths for the observing apostles to learn.

b. The parable of the candle (Luke 8:16-21). This concludes with the coming of Jesus' mother, Mary, and His brothers.

This parable is obviously related to the one just completed.

8:16 In teaching the apostles the Lord Jesus had been lighting lamps. The purpose of the

lamp is not that it should be hidden or concealed in some way, but it is to be set on a lampstand to give light to all who are in the house. The house would be dark without it.

A light is a familiar figure of speech used in the Scriptures for the people of God, and particularly for those who minister the Word of God. Cf. Matt. 5:14-16; 2 Cor. 4:3-6. And it is through the Word that light is given. Cf. Psa. 119:130, 105. And it is particularly when Christ is preached from the Word that light is given and seen. Cf. John 8:12; 9:5; 12:46. "Light" indicates truth revealed.

We live in a world of spiritual darkness. Cf. Eph. 6:12; Col. 1:13; 1 Pet. 2:9.

See what John the Baptist's ministry was: Luke 1:76-79.

Darkness means sinful ignorance. Therefore, what is needed is the light of God's Word, the truth!

8:17 Vv. 17 and 18 begin with "for" and "therefore" (the third word) respectively, meaning that they are bound together, that the meaning of each is related to the other, and to v. 16.

This verse means that there is nothing which men have no known about salvation which cannot be made known. All of the essentials of the Gospel have been revealed.

8:18 Therefore, the emphasis is upon "how ye hear." This is important for the one who is to proclaim the truth, as it is for those who hear the truth proclaimed.

How are we to hear the Word of God?

Two things need to be said:
1) We must hear in faith. Cf. John 5:24; Rom. 10:9; Heb. 4:2. But we must not look to ourselves for that faith, but to God. Cf. Eph. 2:8, 9. Also Rom. 10:17; Heb. 12:2. It must be received as the Word of God. Cf. 1 Thess. 2:13.
2) The person described in Luke 8:15 not only believes the Word, but continues to believe the Word. The others initially believed, but, for one reason or another, turned from it. Notice the words in Luke 8:15: "an honest and good heart . . . keep it . . . with patience."

Ephesians 1:18 (and most of the recorded prayers of the NT) teaches us that we need to make this continually a matter of prayer--as we read the Word, as we hear it taught in church services, in Bible classes. As the Parable of the Sower shows, the world, the flesh, and the Devil all combine their efforts to make sure that, if we hear the Word, we do not understand it, and soon turn away from it. There is really nothing more important than how we hear the Word of God. Remember what Solomon said,

> Wisdom is the principal thing;
> therefore get wisdom:
> and with all thy getting get understanding.

8:19 Then followed a very tender scene, and yet one in some aspects which was confusing.

Mark gives us a fuller account, showing us what the problem was. See Mark 3:20-35, esp. vv. 20, 21. In Luke 8:19 we are told why the Lord's mother and His brothers could not see Him. "The press" is a translation of the Greek word for crowd, an overwhelming, uncontrollable crowd. His family wanted to save Him from the rigors of His ministry.

8:20 He was told that His family was there.

8:21 His response was not unkind, but it was to show that there is a closer relationship than that of flesh and blood. Those who were His true family were those who "hear the word of God, and do it." This event is definitely related to the Parable of the Sower

The Lord's busy ministry continued. The remainder of the chapter gives us FOUR MIRACLES.

9. Four More Miracles (Luke 8:22-56).

These are: the calming of the storm in vv. 22-25; the deliverance of the demon-possessed man in vv. 26-40; the raising of Jairus' daughter and the healing of the woman with the issue of blood in vv. 41-56.

a. MIRACLE #9: the calming of the storm (Luke 8:22-25).

This miracle is also recorded in Matt. 8:23-27 and Mark 4:36-41.

Remember that the disciples are still in training, and that whatever the Lord does, He does with a purpose.

There are some very interesting and instructive points to be observed in this experience that the apostles had with the Lord:

1) They were in the boat because they were following the Lord. It was the Lord's will for all of them to be there. And they had His word that they were all going to the other side.
2) We have evidence of the humanity of the Lord: "But as they sailed he fell asleep." Cf. Heb. 4:15.
3) A storm arose suddenly, the boat was being filled with water, and they "were in jeopardy," meaning that their lives were in danger of being lost.
   The Lord does not promise that we will have no trials. They can arise just as quickly as a storm on the Sea of Galilee. And they come to us as we are doing the will of God. Trials do not necessarily mean that we are out of the will of God either in our location or in our heart-attitude.
4) But the hardest thing about our trials is to feel that the Lord does not know, or, if He knows, that He does not care. Mark records that they said, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" (Mark 4:38b). The Puritans call such times, God's desertions. Have you experienced them?
5) The important thing is: What do you and I do when such times come upon us? What did the Apostles do? They were in a situation, ordained of God, where they only had one hope: the Lord.
   What did they do? They prayed. Their prayer was a frantic prayer, a prayer of desperation, but it was prayer. There was not even much, if any, faith in the way they cried to the Lord. And this is where we come to the main purpose of this miracle. The Lord was not seeking to destroy their faith, but to strengthen it. However, the only way our faith can be strengthened is by increasing our knowledge of the Lord. Cf. Heb. 12:2.
6) What happened?
   Their prayer, imperfect as it was, was answered, and it was answered immediately. Cf. 2 Tim. 2:13. He does not always answer prayer like this, but He often does this for beginners. The change that took place was amazing. The storm left as quickly as it had had come up.
7) What did the Apostles say after it was over?
   What manner of man is this!
   for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him (Luke 8:25b).
   The Apostles were learning that the Lord Jesus was not only POTENT, but OMNI-POTENT! He could do what they could not do, what no mere man could do. He was not only the Creator, but the Sustainer, of the universe. He is able--"to do exceeding abundantly above . . ." (Eph. 3:20).
   There are deeper lessons in grace to be learned than this. The Lord is able, if necessary, to keep us through the storm, as He did with Daniel in the lions' den. Cf. Dan. 6:20 where King Darius said,
   O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?
   It is a vital part of our spiritual training and understanding that we be brought to the place where we, too, will say, "What manner of man is this! . . ." The greater our understanding of the Lord is, the greater our faith will be!
   Note what Moses and the children of Israel sang after they had been delivered from Pharaoh's army through the Red Sea: Ex. 15:11, "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee . . ."

b. MIRACLE #10: the demon-possessed man (Luke 8:26-40).

8:26 In Luke 8:22 the Lord had told His disciples, "Let us go over unto the other side of the lake." The Lord had three reasons for doing this:

1) To teach the disciples a lesson in faith in the storm (which we have just covered in the preceding miracle).
2) To deliver the demon-possessed man. Matthew says that there were two demon-possessed men. See Matt. 8:28-9:1. The account of one demon-possessed man is also in Mark 5:1-21.
3) To leave a testimony in the country of the Gadarenes (which was in the southeastern area of the Sea of Galilee.

The Lord does nothing by accident or chance, or on the spur of the moment. What He does always has a purpose; the same was true when He was here on earth.

8:27 The Devil was particularly active during the earthly ministry of our Lord--and we can understand why. Matthew Henry said in his commentary that the Devil was not active in that way during his lifetime (back in the 1600's), and Bishop Ryle said the same thing about his generation in England (the 1800's). We can say the same today. This is not to say that the Devil is not active, but it is to say that he is not active in the same way--possessing people. There are many claims about such things, but we live in a day when there are a lot of stupid people who are gullible enough to believe anything.

One reason for the intense activity of the Devil during the lifetime of our Lord had to do with one purpose for our Lord's coming--to overthrow the kingdom of darkness with its rulers. Notice the statement in Luke 8:28. The demons knew the Lord, and they knew that they were doomed to torment. Hell was "prepared for the devil and his angels," the demons (Matt. 25:41b). Thus, they would obviously oppose the Lord with all of their fury, and try to drag as many people into hell as they could.

The passages that we need to be concerned about with reference to the Devil are Eph. 6:10-20; Jas. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8, 9; Col. 1:12, 13; 1 Pet. 2:9. Notice also the call of God to Saul of Tarsus: Acts 26:14-20. Nowhere do we see the true nature of our ministry more than in such passages as these. And along with that, the impossibility of doing it in our own strength. Every child of God has to learn what the disciples were learning at this point in their lives.

First of all, note the miserable condition of those who are under Satan's control. See it in v. 27, and again in v. 29.

While we may not see any cases of actual demon-possession, yet we can see the wreck and ruin which the Devil causes in people's lives. He binds them to self-destroying habits (with drugs and drink and immorality of all kinds. They can be punished for their sins, and yet go right back to the same things. They disregard their loved ones, decent society, and are often consumed with a desire for personal gain. They see others reap the harvest of their sins, and yet they will go and do the same things. They are angry, unhappy people, unable to change themselves, and society does not have the answer either. The build-up of sin is frightening.

8:28 Secondly, the demon's recognition of Jesus, and his fear of the Lord.

Cf. Jas. 2:19,
Thou believest that there is one God (or, that God is one);
thou doest well: the devils (demons) also believe, and tremble.

The Apostle John wrote, " . . . greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4b). Also note Paul's words in Rom. 8:31b, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" See also John 16:11; 12:31; 14:30.

Even when our Lord became Man He was greater in power than all of the forces of the Devil and the demons. All authority in heaven and earth has been given to Him. Cf. Matt. 28:18-20.

This is the second main lesson of this miracle.

8:29 (See under 8:27 above.)

8:30 When the Lord asked what his name was, he responded with the name, "Legion." A legion in the Roman army varied from 3,000 to 6,600 men. It probably is used here for a very large, indefinite number, but we know from Mark's account (Mark 5:13) that there were 2,000 pigs in the herd which the demons entered into, and so that gives us an idea of the demonic power that the Lord was confronted with.

8:31 The demons pleaded with the Lord not to send them "into the deep." This is the Greek word for abyss, or bottomless pit (as it is translated 5 times in Revelation. See Rev. 9:11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3. They did not want to be confined to their final place of torment (as indicated in v. 28b).

The Lord, for the accomplishment of His own purposes, allows the Devil and the demons to continue on with their evil work. It is only a part of the opposition which the people of God face in serving the Lord since we also have the world and the flesh.

8:32, 33 Swine, or pigs, were forbidden to the Jews under the Law. They were unclean. Cf. Lev. 11:7, 8. This undoubtedly was the reason the Lord saw fit to destroy the whole herd.

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8:34 Such an event was real news, startling news! V. 27 tells us that this demon-possessed man had been in this condition a long time. Undoubtedly he had caused a lot of trouble for the people of the area.

8:35 The people who were told about the demon-possessed man had to come to see him for themselves. What they saw made them afraid. Three things are said about the man from whom the demons had been cast:
1) He was sitting at the feet of Jesus.
2) He was clothed.
3) He was in his right mind.

8:36 There was no question as to how this had all happened. There had been many witnessess.

8:37 NOTICE: THE PEOPLE FEARED THE WORK OF GOD MORE THAN THEY DID THE WORK OF THE DEVIL. And so they wanted to get rid of the Lord Jesus.

It is not true that, if such a man were delivered, the masses of the people would turn to Christ. In fact, we see here that just of the opposite was true. The human heart is deceitful and hard, and will choose darkness rather than the light. Cf. John 3:19-21,
> And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world,
> and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.
> For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light,
> lest his deeds should be reproved.
> But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest,
> that they are wrought in God.

8:38 How different was the man who had been delivered from the demons, and what a wonderful picture of salvation! It seems very likely that this man was saved from his sins as well as being delivered from the demons.

What does Luke record about him?
1) In v. 35, he sat at the feet of the Lord Jesus.
2) In v. 38, he wanted to go with the Lord Jesus "that he might be with him."
However,

8:39 3) The Lord did not grant his request. A testimony was needed in this remote area. "Shew" means to tell the whole story from start to finish, and to do it in detail.
4) The man's obedience to the Lord. Cf. 1 John 2:3,
> And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

Note the contrast between "God" in the first part of this verse, and "Jesus" in the last.

Note that what the Lord told the man to do was an act of grace toward the Gadarenes. The Spirit of God did not see fit to do a great work then, but it is possible that He did more later.

Two things need to be pointed out with respect to this man's request, and the Lord's dealings with him:

1) What we want to do is not always what the Lord wants us to do. The place we would choose is not always the place that the Lord has chosen for us. Even when we are seemingly left alone, it will be the greatest place of usefulness for us, and the best place for us to grow in the knowledge of the Lord.

   One commentator has expressed it this way:

   > Let us be fearful of choosing for ourselves in this life without Christ's consent, and moving in this world when the pillar of cloud and fire is not moving before us. Let us ask the Lord to choose everything for us. Let our daily prayer be, "Give me what Thou wilt.
   > "Place me where Thou wilt.
   > "Only let me be Thy disciple, and abide in Thee"
   > (Ryle, Vol. I, p. 277).

2) Note the variety of ways in which the Lord saw fit to deal with different people:
   a) The leper in Mark 1:43, 44 was told not to tell any man, but to go to the priest.
   b) The rich ruler in Mark 10:21 was told to sell all that he had, and to take up the cross, and follow Jesus.
   c) The man in Luke 9:59 was not even permitted to go and bury his father, but was to follow the Lord immediately.

   We make a big mistake, and show our ignorance of the ways of God when we assume that the Lord is going to deal with all of us in exactly the same way.

8:40 The Lord went back across the sea to a place of great acceptance, but this had not kept Him from going to the Gadarene country to minister to one man. It is not only the massive movements of the Spirit of God that we need to concerned about, but we need to do the will of God even when it concerns only a few, or even one!

c. MIRACLES #11, #12: Jairus' daughter raised from the dead, and the woman with the issue of blood healed (Luke 8:41-56).

The second was #11; the first, #12.

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Cf. Matt. 9:18-26; Mark 5:22-43.

Here the record of the two miracles is mingled together. The Lord is asked by Jairus to come to his home to heal his sick daughter, and then is delayed by the crowd and by the woman with the issue of blood from which she had suffered as long as Jairus' daughter had lived: twelve years (vv. 42, 43).

8:41 As "a ruler of the synagogue" Jairus was the leading rabbi of the synagogue (we do not know where). He was responsible for the services, and saw to it that the synagogue was kept in good order, and was open at the proper times. He was also responsible for the orthodoxy of the members, and even had the power to excommunicate members from the synagogue. So he was a respected member of the Jewish community, with considerable power.

His frantic desire to have the Lord come to his home is seen in what he did: "he fell down at Jesus' feet." Undoubtedly this was something that he had never done before. And he "besought" the Lord to come to his house. He was pleading with the Lord to come with him. Note that he did not send someone else, but he went to the Lord Himself--which might have been a threatening thing for his position, but obviously he did not care. And we are told why in v. 42.

8:42 He had only one daughter. She was just twelve years old. But she was sick, and dying!

The Lord agreed to go, but, as He went, two things hindered Him.

The first was the crowd. They "thronged him"--lit., choked Him, i.e., with their pressure.

The second was the woman with the issue of blood. The delay which she caused, along with the crowd, must have caused Jairus additional anxiety.

8:43 The woman's case, like Jairus' daughter, was hopeless. She had sought out all of the human help that she could find, but her condition only got worse. She had "spent all her living upon the physicians."

8:44 Consequently she had nothing to offer to the Lord, nothing to pay Him, but she just wanted to get close enough to Him to touch Him, believing that this would be sufficient for her healing. Perhaps, because she was a woman, she felt that she could not do what Jairus did in making a request for healing.

Three things caused her to come to Jesus:
1) Her realization of her own great need.
2) The knowledge that nobody else could help her.
3) The reports she had heard about the Lord Jesus and His healing power.

The Lord had surely been working in her heart. She had strong faith, stronger faith than Jairus did. And her faith was rewarded. She was healed immediately when she touched the Lord's garment! The flow of blood was "stanched"--the "a" has the sound of ah. It was stopped, dried up--and all without charge!

We are thinking about the apostles and the training that they were receiving. Three things are important for us to notice, which must have impressed the apostles:
1) The fact that this healing was done, and that money was not an issue in it at all. "Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matt. 10:8b).

8:45, 46 2) The fact that the Lord Jesus took notice of her. He knew the difference between those who were merely curious, as compared with one who touched Him in faith. He said, "I perceive that virtue is gone out of me." It was physically exhausting for the Lord to heal.

8:47 3) The testimony that He sought from her--that He might have the glory which was due Him.

At this point she falls before the Lord, like Jairus did previously. And then she gave her testimony so all could hear.

8:48 But now notice something very touching and precious in what the Lord said to this woman. He called her, "Daughter." What did He mean?

The Lord had no children, so we can eliminate that meaning.

He might have meant that she was a daughter of Israel. But that does not seem to be appropriate here.

The third possibility seems to be the correct one. He was addressing her as a "daughter" in the family of God. Cf. 2 Cor. 6:17, 18,

> Wherefore come out from among them, and be separate, saith the Lord,
> and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,
> And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters,
> saith the Lord Almighty.

It seems that our Lord was indicating here that this woman had not only been healed physically, but that she had undergone a spiritual change as well, and that her illness had been the circumstance which God had used to bring her to Christ. She was like many people: she had tried everything else first!

The Lord said to her what He had said to the sinful woman in Luke 7:50, i.e., "thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace," and there very clearly the forgiveness of sins was involved. Cf. Luke 7:47, 48.

8:49 How long all of this took, we do not know, but it took long enough for word to come

that Jairus' daughter was dead! And so the feeling was that they should not bother the Lord any longer. To "trouble" Him means to annoy, or vex, Him.

This raises some questions:
1) Is the Lord a respecter of persons?
2) Are there times when the needs of one person keep Him from meeting the needs of another person?
3) Can people hinder the work of the Lord?

There are some parallels between this situation and the case of Lazarus in John 11 when Mary and Martha sent for the Lord, but He purposely delayed His coming until Lazarus died. Often when we pray about a matter things get worse before they get better. Sometimes family members can be a discouragement if a situation becomes worse, as it did when Jairus' daughter died. Jairus asked the Lord to come to heal her, but her death was a much greater problem. What can be the purpose for such action on the part of the Lord?

Remember what the Lord told His disciples when word came that Lazarus was dead:
> I am glad for your sakes that I was not there,
> to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him (John 11:15).

Remember that the disciples were involved here with the case of Jairus' daughter. There was something for them to learn from this, which is also a point that we need to keep in mind. The Lord is teaching others as well as us.

8:50 The Lord nurtures faith by His Word, by His promise.

8:51 Five people went in to the body of the dead girl: Peter, James, John, Jairus, and his wife.

8:52, 53 The Lord gave His Word to the people who were there, but they scorned Him. This means that they laughed Him down. They ridiculed Him. They did not know that raising the dead is to the Lord as simple as awaking a person from sleep.

8:54 So He put the others out, and told the girl to arise.

8:55 Note the order of what happened:
1) Life was restored.
2) She arose.
3) He told them to give her something to eat.

This is a picture of salvation. It is life out of death. But, as in the case of Lazarus, he had to have life before he could come out of the tomb, so with this girl. The Lord works first in salvation, and then the evidence of life follows--including faith.

8:56 The parents were "astonished," lit., beside themselves with joy and with amazement.

We can only speculate as to why the parents were told not to talk about what had been done for their daughter:
1) The Lord does not always deal with every person in the same way.
2) The Lord never sought to capitalize on the things which men would count as spectacular.
3) The people there had already rejected Him.

There are three incidents recorded in the Gospels when Jesus Christ raised someone from the dead:
1) The son of the widow in Nain (Luke 7:11-18--and only in Luke).
2) Jairus' daughter--in all three of the Synoptics.
3) Lazarus, in John 11--and only in John.

What are some of the lessons for the apostles?
1) Human needs cover the whole strata of society--the high and the low
2) The Lord intends for us to learn from His work with others.
3) The Lord did not seek to profit from the way people needed His help.
4) The Lord did not seek publicity; He worked for the glory of God and for the good of people.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Chapter 9

The Outline:

I. THE PROLOGUE (Luke 1:1-4).

II. THE PREPARATION FOR JESUS' MINISTRY (Luke 1:5-4:13).

III. THE FIRST PERIOD OF JESUS' MINISTRY--IN GALILEE AND ITS VICINITY (Luke 4:14-9:50).

A. Jesus at Nazareth (Luke 4:14-30).

B. Jesus at Capernaum (Luke 4:31-44).

C. From the calling of the first disciples to the appointment of the twelve apostles (Luke 5:1-6:11).

D. From the appointment of the twelve apostles to the mission of the twelve apostles (Luke 6:12-8:56).

** E. The mission of the twelve apostles and the final days of ministry in Galilee (Luke 9:1-50).

1. The apostles' first mission (Luke 9:1-6).

2. Parenthesis: Herod's perplexity about Jesus (Luke 9:7-9).

3. The return of the apostles and the Lord's ministry continued (Luke 9:10-50).

a. The report of the apostles and the feeding of the five thousand--MIRACLE #13 (Luke 9:10-17).

b. Peter's confession and the first announcement of the Cross (Luke 9:18-27).

c. The transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36).

d. The demon-possessed son delivered (MIRACLE #14) after the disciples failed (Luke 9:37-42).

4. Three special lessons for the apostles (Luke 9:43-50).

a. The second announcement of the Cross (Luke 9:43-45).

b. Who is the greatest? (Luke 9:46-48).

c. What about other miracle workers? (Luke 9:49, 50).

E. The mission of the twelve apostles and the final days of ministry in Galilee (Luke 9:1-50).

1. The apostles' first mission (Luke 9:1-6).

Matthew gives the most complete account of this in Matt. 10. Cf. Mark 6:7-13.

9:1 The Lord had chosen the twelve. Now we see how He equipped them for their work. He gave them "power" (δύναμις) and "authority" (ἐξουσία). The first is the power of God which was placed within them; the second was the right to use that power in delivering the

demon-possessed and in healing the sick. To be endued with the power of God does not give His servants the right to use that power any way that they want to. The power of God is the power of God, but it is always exercised by the servants of the Lord within the limits designated by the Lord. Cf. Acts 1:8. Also Matt. 28:18. The power to accomplish the work of the Lord always comes from God, is given as He chooses, and is used according to His will. Thus, submission to the Lord is all-important in seeing the power of God displayed.

9:2 The Lord's servants must always put high priority on preaching. The Lord did. See Matt. 8:1. See Paul's statements on preaching in 1 Cor. 1:17-25; 2:1-5.

It is through preaching that the blessing of the Lord comes--not through musicals, films, plays, etc. The Church of the 20th century has turned against preaching. In many churches rituals, ceremonies, etc. have replaced the pulpit. We need to get back to preaching.

Ryle said (Vol. I, p. 292),

> A preaching ministry is absolutely essential to the health and prosperity of a visible Church. The pulpit is the place where the chief victorires of the Gospel have always been won, and no Church has ever done much for the advancement of true religion in which the pulpit has been neglected. . . The preacher who exalts the sacraments, or forms of the Church, above preaching, may be a zealous, earnest, conscientious, respectable minister; but his zeal is not according to knowledge.

The giving of testimonies by celebrities is usually deemed more influential than the preaching of the Word. Counselling, too, has been substituted for preaching. One reason we see so many counsellors is because there are so few who are really preaching.

Let us make sure that we notice this emphasis on preaching in the Gospels.

However, the apostles were to be concerned for the physical needs of people as well as their spiritual needs. While our ministry to the sick today is different, yet the servant of the Lord who ignores the importance of ministering to his people in times of sickness, is missing a great opportunity for spiritual work.

When we put v. 6 with v. 2 we can see that to preach the kingdom of God is to preach the Gospel.

9:3 The point of the instructions which our Lord gave in this and the next two verses are stated briefly by Luke, but their meaning becomes clear as we compare what we find here with what Matthew and Mark have also written.

Two things can be said about this verse:

1) The apostles were to trust the Lord to take care of their material needs as they went on their mission. Their work was a work of faith. Cf. Luke 22:35. The Lord was faithful.
2) They were to be simple and content regarding material things. They were to guard against the spirit of the world where it is thought that life consists in the abundance of things which we possess (cf. Luke 12:15). They were to "beware of covetousness." The spiritual power and blessing has gone out of many a ministry because of a greedy, worldly, self-seeking attitude.

9:4 Faith is also emphasized in this verse: They were to trust the Lord to provide for them a place to stay. This means that they would find those who would accept them and hear their message.

But the Lord was also teaching contentment. The apostles were not just to take whatever they could find until they found something better. This could have been offensive to those who originally received them. They were not to be men seeking the comforts of life. Cf. what Paul wrote to the Philippians in Phil. 4:10-20.

(Recommended reading: The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment, by Jeremiah Burroughs.)

Neither were they to despise a small beginning. Many churches got started in houses. Cf. Rom. 16:3-5a; (also 1 Cor. 16:19;) Ph. 1, 2.

9:5 The Lord also prepared them for opposition. Naturally you would think that people would welcome those who brought the message of salvation, and who did works of healing, but such is not the case. Cf. 1 Cor. 2:14. Remember what had happened to the Lord in the country of the Gadarenes (see Luke 8:37). Note also that we have in this chapter (ch. 9) the first two announcements of the crucifixion of our Lord.

Here, again, their faith was to be exercised. They would have to trust the Lord to open the hearts of people to make them receptive to the Gospel message, or their work would be in vain.

We, too, must realize that not all will believe. But the servant of the Lord is to be faithful and patient in preaching the Word. We need the grace of God to be faithful; it is up to the Lord to determine what fruit we shall have. God alone can give the increase. Cf. 1 Cor. 3:6, 7.

9:6 The obedience of the apostles. Nothing more commendable could be said about them. They went where the Lord told them to go, and they did what the Lord told them to do.

2. Parenthesis: Herod's perplexity about Jesus (Luke 9:7-9).

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9:7 This is an interesting side light taken from the life of Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great, about whom we have read in Luke Luke 3:1 and 19. It is his father who is mentioned in Luke 1:5, Herod the Great. Luke does not record the execution of John the Baptist, but both Matthew and Mark follow there account of Herod's fear with the account of John's death as the reason for that fear. Cf. Matt. 14:1-12; Mark 6:14-29.

Herod Antipas was a schemer. He was immoral. He was power-hungry. He was a Gentile, but a follower of the Jewish religion (when it did not interfere with what he wanted to do). He had been greatly impressed with John the Baptist, and even feared him. But he showed how completely lacking he was in moral courage when he had John the Baptist beheaded at the request of Herodias, his wife, who had been the wife of his brother Philip until he seduced her. He remained in power until after the death of Christ, but was later banished to ancient Gaul, and evidently died a very miserable death. Although he had numerous contacts with the people of God, and eventually with Christ Himself, yet he never turned to the Lord.

Herod is evidently mentioned here because of the influence of the ministries of the Apostles. And here is a remarkable testimony to the work that they did. In their preaching, and in their miracle-working, they exalted CHRIST! They gave the Lord the glory for the power that they had. Note the statement: "Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done BY HIM," i.e., by Christ. It is like what Mark recorded in the last verse of his Gospel about the work of the apostles after the ascension of the Lord Jesus:

> And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen (Mark 16:20).

The apostles were not trying to make names for themselves. They were not in competition to see who could perform the greatest miracle, or the largest number of miracles. They were out preaching Christ, seeking to exalt Him, and doing their works in His Name.

What an example for us to follow!

It ought to be that we, too, serve the Lord so that people will not glorify us, or praise us, but they will know that what we do we do for the glory of God and in the power of the Lord. It is a great tragedy when the work of the Lord becomes anything else.

But let us think also about Herod, and his troubled conscience. TETRARCH - here it means one who ruled by the authority of Caesar.

He had heard several different reports concerning who Jesus might be. Some said that it was

John the Baptist who had been raised from the dead. This was particularly distressing to Herod. He did not stop to remember that the Lord was ministering before John was put to death.

9:8 These were the names which the Apostles gave to the Lord when He asked them the question, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" (Matt. 16:13, 14).

9:9 This is the account of a man with a troubled conscience. Many would consider this to be the conviction of the Spirit, BUT THERE IS A DIFFERENCE!

In v. 7 Luke changed tenses of the verbs "heard" and "was perplexed." He "heard" once for all, but he continued to be "perplexed"--he remained utterly at a loss. He was literally unable to find a way out of his distress. He would have been relieved to find out that Jesus was not John, but he could not be sure. And so, as we read here, "he desired to see him," lit., he continued seeking to see Him (so, Plummer, p. 242).

Ryle made this statement:

> Conscience is a most powerful part of our natural constitution. It cannot save our souls. It never leads a man to Christ. It is often blind, and ignorant, and misdirected. Yet conscience often raises a mighty testimony against sin in the sinner's heart, and makes him feel a "it is an evil and a bitter thing" to depart from God. Young persons ought especially to remember this, and remembering it, to take heed to their ways. Let them not flatter themselves that all is right when their sins are past and done and forgotten by the world. Let them know that conscience can bring up each sin before the eyes of their minds, and make it bite like a serpent. Millions will testify at the last day that Herod's experience was their own. Conscience called old sins from their graves, and made them walk up and down in their hearts. In the midst of seeming happiness and prosperity they were inwardly miserable and distressed. Happy are they who have found the only cure for a bad conscience! Nothing will ever heal it but the blood of Christ (Vol. I, pp. 296, 297).

Obviously Herod did not do all that he could have done to see Jesus. In this he was like his father. Cf. Matt. 2:1-18. They were both troubled by what they had heard about Jesus, and while they said that they wanted to see Him, yet they did not go themselves. And in the case before us here in Luke 9, Herod Antipas did not command that Jesus come to see him. He was like the person who is always promising you that he will come to church, but he never comes. Or the person who has a Bible, and says that he knows he should read it, but he never does. How different it is when a man is under the convicting work of the Spirit! Cf. Nicodemus.

Cf. Luke 23:7-12 where Herod's desire was finally granted. He wanted to see a miracle performed, but he never considered what those miracles indicated about who the Lord was.

With this, Luke turned from Herod, and picked up the story concerning the Lord Jesus.

3. The return of the Apostles and the Lord's ministry continued (Luke 9:10-50).

A. The report of the Apostles and the feeding of the five thousand--MIRACLE #13 (Luke 9:10-17).

This account is found in all four Gospels: Matt. 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; John 6:1-14.

9:10a The verb "told" means "to carry a narrative through to the end" (Robertson, II, 125). The Apostles gave the Lord a complete report. Some day we shall all give an account to God. Cf. Rom. 14:12. It is good for us to do the same now--day by day. We are responsible to the Lord for our service, not to men.

9:10b Mark has given us more information about what was going on here, and why. Cf. Mark 6:30-32.

The Lord is not just concerned about the work, but He is concerned about the worker. Every

child of God, and especially every servant of the Lord, needs time alone with the Lord for the nurturing of his own soul. To be diligent in serving the Lord is good and commendable, but to be always engaged in serving others often has tragic results. When a servant of the Lord is suddenly disgraced by some sin, it is an indication that he has, possibly for a long time, been neglecting his personal fellowship with the Lord. Vacation times should not just be times of travel, of being with loved ones, fishing, swimming, golfing, etc. But they should be times when we can take special time for the reading of the Word, prayer, meditation, and reflection upon one's life and service.

Bethsaida was at the northern end of the Sea of Galilee.

9:11 John tells us (6:2) that the people came to the Lord, not to hear Him preach and teach, but because they had seen His miracles and obviously wanted to see more. Nevertheless, the Lord "received them," welcomed them, and healed those who had need, BUT HE ALSO TAUGHT THEM. The people were concerned about temporal matters; He set before them the eternal truths of the Gospel. He would have told them why He was there, what their greatest need was.

Let us follow the Lord in His gracious dealings with the people, even when He knew that they were not there for the right reason, and they had intruded upon His time with the Apostles. But let us make sure that even the pressure of the people does not turn us aside from the main work that the Lord has called us to do: the preaching of the Word of God, the Gospel of the grace of God.

9:12 Evidently the Lord's time with the people was long. The Apostles had not yet learned to wait and see what the Lord would do about the people. Their solution was to send them away so that they could get food. John tells us that the Lord raised the question with Philip as to what they should do. The Apostles judged more by where they were and what they had than they did Who they were with.

We have here a lesson in ministry.

9:13 What the Lord intended to do for the multitude had never occurred to the Apostles. The Lord's will was expressed in the words, "Give ye them to eat."

Immediately they were forced to consider how this could be done. They did not have the money to buy food for such a large crowd. Matthew tells us that there were 5,000 men plus the women and children. See Matt. 14:21. This means that there could have been between 10,000 and 15,000 people--and possibly even more!

All they had that they knew about was the young boy's lunch which Andrew knew about, but it even sounded ridiculous to mention it. And so Andrew added, " . . . but what are these among so many?" (John 6:9b).

It was a hopeless task for the Apostles. And they needed to realize this. We are learning what it means to serve the Lord when we learn that we are not sufficient for the task in ourselves. Cf. 2 Cor. 2:14-3:6; 4:5-7.

But nothing is impossible with God. Cf. Luke 18:27.

9:14, 15 Notice the lesson here that the Lord is not only concerned about WHAT we do, but HOW we do it. Two verses in 1 Cor. 14 are important here:

1) 1 Cor. 14:33 -- "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."
2) 1 Cor. 14:40 -- "Let all things be done decently and in order."

We need to learn the ways of God. Cf. Isa. 55:8, 9 -- "For my thoughts are not . . ."

Ordinarily God works with what we have, as our Lord did in taking this lad's lunch. Cf. what the Lord said to Moses in Ex. 4:2, "What is that in thine hand?"

9:16 After getting the people to sit down in an orderly fashion, what the Lord did is of special importance when we think of ministering to others.

1) After taking the lunch, he looked up to heaven, and prayed.

This is where we are continually failing--by our prayerlessness, or by the little time that we give to prayer. Remember that they had just been involved in a special time of fellowship with the Lord, and with the Father.

"Blessed" -- means that He was really doing two things:
First, He was thanking God for what they had.
Second, He was asking God to bless and use what they had.

Thus, the Lord taught His disciples that they should pray before they ate, thanking God for their food (from Whom their food came), and asking Him to bless the food for His own glory.

When we think of our preaching and teaching where we are distributing the Bread of Life, then, too, we need to realize that whatever we know, whatever we have to give, we have received from the Lord. And what we have will only be blessed to meet the needs of those who hear as God is pleased to bless it, and use it.

2) He gave the multiplied bread and fish to the disciples to give to the people.

Remember the Lord's words, "Freely ye have received, freely give"? (Matt. 10:8b). All we have to give to people is what we have received from Him. Thus, we see the importance of our times with Him. Every time of ministry we have should be an illustration of our Lord feeding the 5,000+.

3) The disciples gave to the people.

We give to people what we have received from the Lord--and we need to be continually looking to Him for that which He gives for us to give to the people.

9:17 4) Two things are said about the meal:
a) Everybody had all that they could eat.
b) There were twelve baskets' full left over--one for each Apostle!

Thus we see the sufficiency of Christ--Who not only fed the multitude of people until they wanted no more, but He ministered to those who ministered to the people. The servant of the Lord will always profit from what he ministers to others, sometimes in the very act of ministering his eyes are open to see things in the Word that he had not seen before.

In addition to what we have seen, the importance of this miracle is brought out by our Lord's discourse on THE BREAD OF LIFE which is recorded for us only in John 6.

What an encouragement we have here to serve the Lord! Listen to these words from Prov. 11: 24-26:

There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth;
and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.
The liberal soul shall be made fat:
and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.
He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him:
but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it.

b. Peter's confession and the first announcement of the Cross (Luke 9:18-27).

This section is found in its most complete form in Matthew's Gospel, Matt. 16:13-28. Mark's account is very similar to that of Luke. See Mark 8:27-9:1.

9:18 Luke alone mentioned that the Lord Jesus was "praying." We know from both Matthew and Mark that this took place in Caesarea Philippi--in the northern part of Israel. The Lord had taken His disciples there to rest, it seems, after their initial ministry.

What was the Lord praying about?

We can only speculate at this point because we are not told here. But Luke stresses the fact that our Lord did a lot of praying. We had an example in v. 16. As a Man, He was continually showing His dependence upon the Father. The work that the Father had given Him to do was always on His heart (as v. 22 shows). And this was especially true in connection with those who were called by Him into the work: the disciples. Cf. John 17:6-19.

In connection with the question found here, and the question which we have in v. 20, we can see that the Lord was emphasizing with His disciples, both for people in general, and then for themselves, what was the main issue: Actually who was the Son of man?

This shows that Christ is to be the focal point of all ministry. People need to know Who He is. We need to know that. This is the main issue that we need to be concerned about in our ministry to others. A question like this is an excellent way to introduce the Gospel to people who do not know the Lord. It is also an excellent way to find out where believers are in their comprehension of the truth.

Who Christ is, making this known, was behind what Christ did during His earthly ministry. See John 20:30, 31.

But we must also realize that people will never comprehend, nor appreciate, what Christ did in His death until they know Who He is.

This shows the importance of doctrine, and especially the doctrine of Christ. In theology it is called, Christology.

9:19 What were the people saying? How did the people answer this question? (See also vv. 7-9.)

This means that Christ was practically unknown as to His true identity.

Any of these responses would have been complimentary to us, but they revealed that, while the people generally thought that Christ was a great man, one of the prophets, even one who had been raised from the dead, yet every answer indicated that the prevailing idea about Jesus Christ was that he was merely a man!

But John the Baptist could not provide salvation for us. He preached Christ as "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Elijah cannot save us. Nor could Jeremiah, nor any of the other prophets. How important it is for us to be able to distinguish between Christ and everyone else who came before in this world, and all who came, or will come, afterwards!

9:20 Then the Lord turned the same question to the Apostles. "Ye" is emphatic.

No one can preach the Gospel who is not clear on this point. How would you answer it?

Peter answered by saying, "The Christ of God." Cf. Luke 2:25-32 for another man who knew the right answer. Thus the expression means, God's Christ, the One anointed by God the Father to be the Saviour of men. Peter knew the right answer.

Luke did not tell us, as Matthew did, how Peter came to an understanding of Christ. See Matt. 16:17. Nor did Luke mention the church. Luke's record stresses the simplicity and

importance of the answer. In the Greek it is also just four words.

9:21 The connection between vv. 21 and 22 seems to give the reason as to why the Lord "charged" and "commanded" His disciples not to tell anyone that He was the Christ. The work of the Messiah was misunderstood by the masses of Israel. People wanted to make Him King, and the Lord wanted to avoid any further difficulties along this line. He had come to fulfill the messages of the prophets, and that meant that He was going to die. And so here we have . . .

9:22 Our Lord's first announcement of the Cross. This was to be followed by another one in v. 44.

Note the word, "must." This points to that which was absolutely essential, and inescapable, if the Lord Jesus were to perform all that the Father gave Him to do.

is a most important NT word. It speaks of that which is necessary because it was so decreed by God. Cf. John 3:7, 14, 30; 4:4, 24; Acts 4:12; 1 Cor. 15:53; Luke 24:46.

Note how Peter related the death of Christ to the decretive will of God in Acts 2:22ff.

And so we see that it was the will of God that Christ suffer,
be rejected,
be slain,
and be raised the third day.

Notice how the Lord was being systematic in His teaching, building the doctrine of the work of Christ upon the doctrine of the Person of Christ. Until we understand Who Christ is, we will not understand what Christ did. But once we know Who He is, then we see that His work would have to be of infinite value--and it was.

And notice also: At this point the purpose of His death is not mentioned, just the necessity of it, and the reality of it. Anyone who denies the doctrines of the death and resurrection of Christ, i.e., that they really took place, does not believe the Bible.

These are the foundational truths of the Word of God. The men of the Sanhedrin did not understand it, or they would not have done what they did. Cf. 1 Cor. 2:7-10. Spiritual truth must be spiritually discerned, and that is only possible as the Holy Spirit teaches each one of us. We do not learn truths as churches, nor as families, but as individuals.

9:23 What connection do vv. 23-27 have with what we have just been considering?

Well, the Lord had been talking about His Cross; next He went on to talk about their crosses.

The Lord's initial call to His disciples was, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19).

What does it mean to follow Christ? Three things according to what the Lord said here:
1) "Deny himself."
2) "Take up his cross daily."
3) "Follow me."

1) Self-denial means humbling one's self. Cf. Phil. 2:5ff. The Lord said this to "them all." And the clause should be translated, If any one wills to come after me, let him deny himself . . ." "It is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

In the eyes of men it is no great honor to be a follower, a servant, of the Lord Jesus Christ. One of the reasons is that it calls for humility, self-denial--so different from what is looked upon as great in the world. The Lord's servant needs to be well-acquainted with what humility is, and practise it as a way of life.

2) "Take up his cross daily."

This is the first mention of the word "cross" in Luke. Cf. also Luke 14:27. The disciples knew that the cross stood for suffering and death. This is what Paul had in mind when he said, "I die daily" (1 Cor. 15:31b). This was the depth to which our Lord's obedience went. Cf. Phil. 2:8. And remember what He said in John 15:18-21.

To take it up is to accept it, and to do it daily is to expect it to be a way of life. Quesnal, quoted by Ryle (I, 313) said,

> Of what, therefore, do those think, and to what do they aspire, who make every day a day of pleasure, luxury, and diversion? Who has a right to shake off the yoke of the cross, but only he who designs to have a right to nothing but hell?

3) "And follow me." The only way we can follow the Lord is by being obedient to the Word of God.

These words were not just for the Apostles, but they are for us as well. We have a distorted view in this 20th century of what it means to be a Christian, and to live for the Lord. This is the true view. The Lord said in John 5:44,

> How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another,
> and seek not the honour that cometh from God only? (Or, from the only God.)

9:24 Notice that this verse, and the two which follow all begin with the word, "For." This means that each explains the verse which goes before.

It seems that the Lord was speaking here with reference to the Gospel.

People who keep their lives for themselves, to live as they want to live, are those who really lose their lives.

9:25 The value of a person--worth more than if he should gain the whole world.

9:26 Christ despised the shame (cf. Heb. 12:2). Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel (Rom. 1:16). Onesiphorus was not ashamed of Paul (2 Tim. 1:16).

To be ashamed not to want to bear the reproach of belonging to Christ, and doing His will.

9:27 This ~~is probably~~ could be a reference to the Transfiguration which followed in a few days.
(See other views on P. 10 under 9:27.)

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9:25 Matthew's account uses the word "soul" where this verse uses "himself," showing that "soul" means the whole person, and yet recognizing that man is more than a body with physical needs.

"Advantaged" means helped, benefited, profited. How is a man better off if he gains the whole world (which none has ever done, but which many would like to do), but loses himself? The world offers riches, position and power, pleasures, honors of various kinds, etc. These must be compared with the cross involved in following the Lord Jesus Christ with its goal of pleasing the Lord, and finally being honored and rewarded by Him.

The sovereignty of God does not deny the responsibility of man. Every person must desire which way he is going to go. No man can go both ways. The person who is out to gain the world is the person who is either ignorant of eternity, or who does not care. Money cannot buy salvation. Position does not give us preference with God because He is no respecter of persons.

No person gains anything by seeking what the world has to offer. If pursued to the end, it will only result in eternal loss, in hell!

9:26 We have a natural aversion to that which can cause us shame, and men would avoid that which ultimately causes shame if they knew that their actions would end that way. But what will it mean to be put to shame before God, and Christ, and the angels, and the saints of God? There is nothing that can compare with that--ending in the eternal judgment of hell!

Christ is not popular on earth, and He never was. Most of the world stands against Him. Thus the pressure is on every man to do the same. And so millions continue to be ashamed of Him.

But the attitude of the Christian was beautifully expressed by Joseph Grigg back in 1765 (1720-1768) three years before his death when he wrote (Trinity Hymnal, #425),

Jesus, and shall it ever be, A mortal man ashamed of thee?
Ashamed of thee whom angels praise, Whose glories shine through endless days!

Ashamed of Jesus! sooner far Let evening blush to own a star:
He sheds the beams of light Divine O'er this benighted soul of mine.

Ashamed of Jesus! just as soon Let midnight be ashamed of noon:
'Tis midnight with my soul till he, Bright Morning Star, bid darkness flee.

Ashamed of Jesus, that dear Friend On whom my hopes of heav'n depend!
No; when I blush, be this my shame, That I no more revere his Name.

Ashamed of Jesus! yes, I may When I've no guilt to wash away,
No tear to wipe, no good to crave, No fears to quell, no soul to save.

Till then--nor is my boasting vain--Till then I boast a Saviour slain;
And O may this my glory be, That Christ is not ashamed of me.

If we are going to deny ourselves, take up whatever cross may be ours, and walk in obedience to Him and His word, then we cannot be ashamed of Him, or of his words--probably a reference here in v. 26 to the Gospel.

Another hymn which reflects the truth of this passage is that grand old hymn by Isaac Watts, written back in 1724:

Trinity #481

Am I a soldier of the cross, a follower of the Lamb,
And shall I fear to own his cause, or blush to speak his Name?

Must I be carried to the skies on flow'ry beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize, and sailed through bloody seas?

Are there no foes for me to face? Must I not stem the flood?
Is this vile world a friend to grace, To help me on to God?

Cf. Peter's denial - Luke 22:54-62

Sure I must fight if I would reign: Increase my courage, Lord;
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain, supported by thy Word.

Thy saints, in all this glorious war, shall conquer, though they die;
They view the triumph from afar, and seize it with their eye.

When that illustrious day shall rise, and all thine armies shine
In robes of vict'ry through the skies, the glory shall be thine.

9:27 One problem with relating this to the Transfiguration is Mark's statement in Mark 9:1, " . . . till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." It was a powerful event, but not powerful in its effect except on the minds and hearts of Peter, James, and John.

Others relate this statement to the second coming of Christ. But He has not come yet, and those who were present when the Lord said this have been dead for almost 2,000 years.

The best interpretation seems to be that the Lord was predicting what would happen on the Day of Pentecost when the power of the Gospel was displayed as never before, and which was eventually to go to the Gentile world "with power"--the effect of which was witnessed by many who were with the Lord on this occasion. AND THESE GREAT EVENTS WERE ALL TRACEABLE TO

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD. Cf. Rom. 1:1-4, 16.

"Taste of death" means to die.

Our Lord surely did not mean that there was no kingdom of God before this, that is, no work of God going on in the world. But He was speaking of the most powerful manifestation of that kingdom which had to await the death and resurrection of Christ.

c. The transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36).

This is also recorded in Matthew 17:1-9 and Mark 9:2-10.

9:28 Matthew and Mark say that this took place "six days" after the Lord uttered these sayings, but they probably were not including the day the Lord said them, nor the day that He was transfigured. Luke included both, and so said that it was "eight days after."

"After these sayings" would connect the significance of the Transfiguration with the Lord's first announcement of His death, which Peter objected to so strenuously. Cf. Matt. 17:22. And it is well to remember the Lord's rebuke of Peter in v. 23 of Matt. 17.

WE LEARN FROM THIS THAT WE NEED TO VIEW THE PRESENT IN THE LIGHT OF THE ULTIMATE PURPOSES OF GOD. IF WE DO NOT, WE CAN BE OVERWHELMED AS PETER WAS WHEN THE LORD SPOKE OF HIS DEATH.

"He took" -- evidence of the Lord's sovereignty. It was not that they volunteered, nor that the others did not want to go, but the Lord had a specific reason for taking "Peter and James and John." They were the only Apostles with the Lord when Jairus was raised from the dead (Luke 8:51), and also when the Lord went into the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:33).

We can only speculate as to why these three were chosen by the Lord to see Him in His glory. All three were leaders in the work of the Lord. We see how Peter was used with the Jews in Acts 2 and following, and that he was the one to open the door for the Gospel to the Gentiles in Acts 10. John outlived all of the Apostles, and thus continued his testimony to the next generation. James was killed by Herod (see Acts 12:1, 2). It is interesting to remember in connection with John's death what the Lord said in Matt. 20:20-28 when the mother of James and John requested that they be seated at His right hand and left hand when He came in His kingdom. But the cup and the baptism came earlier for James.

They went up "to pray." Luke says that this was the reason that the Lord went, and we can assume that He had the same purpose for His three Apostles. This was true also later in Gethsemane.

THE LORD MOVES UPON OUR HEARTS TO PRAY, AND WE DO WELL TO PRAY WHEN WE FEEL CONSTRAINED TO PRAY (AS WELL AS PRAYING AT OUR REGULAR TIMES).

IT IS THE PRAYING CHRISTIAN WHO KNOWS THE LORD THE BEST.

9:29 Luke does not use the word transfigured, but He describes it.

"The fashion of his countenance was altered" lit. means that his face was changed. Matthew said that His face shone as the sun. Even His clothing was affected. There is no "and" in the Greek between "white" and "glistering," and so we should put them together: "white glistering," or white radiant, or white dazzling. (So said Robertson, II, 130.)

John and Peter both wrote of this experience: John 1:14; 2 Pet. 1:16-18. And it is interesting that neither of them mentioned Moses or Elijah.

The Lord was being seen in His glory, that glory which had thus far been veiled since His incarnation. His outward appearance was made to be like His inward nature. This was evidence of His Deity. Cf. the appearance of the Lord in the cloud when the Tabernacle and then the Temple were finished. See also Heb. 1:1-3.

9:30 Moses and Elijah appeared with the Lord.

We see an additional reason why three of the Apostles saw what they were seeing--" . . . at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witness, shall the matter be established" (Deut. 19:15b; also Matt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1).

Here we have a uniting of the OT and the NT--Moses representing the Law; Elijah the prophets; Our Lord, "grace and truth" (John 1:17). Both Moses and Elijah had unusual and mysterious circumstances connected with their departures from this world. The Lord would join them in this since there were the most unusual circumstances of all connected with our Lord's death, resurrection, and ascension. Both here, and at the time of the ascension, only believers were permitted to see what happened. But enough saw each event to establish the fact that they really happened.

Moses lived about 1500 years B.C. Elijah lived about 850 B.C. And yet here they are together, friends, both interested in the same Lord Jesus Christ, AND BOTH IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZED BY PETER AND JAMES AND JOHN! This is evidence that we will know each other in heaven.

Christ (the Messiah) was anticipated by the Law. And He was the subject of the messages of the prophets. Cf. Luke 24:27, 44. And, in both instances, it was His saving work. Thus, v. 31 says that they were talking to the Lord "of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem."

9:31 Both of these men were "the two most zealous and powerful servants of God under the Old Covenant" (Godet, I, p. 427). And yet both were men who experienced the depth of discouragement while they were living on earth. When they did, the Lord ministered to them. SHOULD WE NOT THINK THAT AT THIS POINT IN OUR LORD'S EARTHLY LIFE, AS HE WAS PREPARING TO GO TO JERUSALEM TO DIE, THAT THEY WOULD APPEAR TO BE THE MEANS OF ENCOURAGING AND STRENGTHENING THE SON OF GOD IN THE FLESH?

They "appeared in glory"--as they would eventually be, but could not permanently be until Christ had been glorified following His death. But here they appeared like the Lord, dressed in glory like His--which is the ultimate purpose of our redemption. Cf. Phil. 3:20, 20; 1 John 3:2. Such glory would never have been Moses and Elijah's apart from Christ's death. The OT saints in heaven were quite obviously still waiting for the final confirmation of their salvation in the Saviour's death.

Note its application to us in 2 Cor. 3:18--viewing His glory (in the Word), and being even now transformed into that glory. This is our transfiguration because Paul used the same word in 2 Cor. 3:18 that Matthew used of the transfiguration of Christ in Matt. 17:2. We, too, are different within from what we appear to be outwardly, but what we are within should become more and more evident as we live and walk with the Lord, beholding His glory each day in the Word.

Peter used this word of his own death in 1 Pet. 1:15 + then went on to speak of the transfiguration.

"His decease" -- lit., His exodus. This would include His resurrection and His ascension as well as His death. Death was not the end for Him, nor is it for us--any of us. It is a departure from this life into another life. Without His decease according to the will of God there would have been no hope for Moses nor Elijah, nor for Peter or James or John. Perhaps we can say that Moses and Elijah were not only encouraging our Lord, but that they were still learning about the great redemptive work of God and of Christ.

"Accomplish" is a very instructive work with reference to the death and resurrection of Christ. It means to perform fully, This speaks of a completed work--that the Lord did not merely provide for the salvation of any who might want to be saved; He guaranteed the salvation of all of those for whom He died. He did this by His death, His resurrection, and His ascension to the right hand of the Father.

We take from the Lord the glory which rightfully belongs to Him if we do not understand this. If we believe Him to be the Son of God, then we must also believe that His work for the salvation of sinners was just that--a finished, guaranteed, absolutely certain work.

David Brown has this very interesting comment on this verse:

> What now may be gathered from this statement? First, That a dying Messiah is the great article of the true Jewish Theology. For a long time Israel (Brown said, the Church) had fallen clean away from the faith of this article, and even from a preparedness to receive it. But here we have that jewel brought forth from the heap of Jewish traditions, and by the true representatives of Israel (again Brown said, the Church) of old made the one subject of talk with Christ Himself. Next The adoring gratitude of glorified men for His undertaking to accomplish such a decease; the felt dependence upon it for the glory in which they appeared; their profound interest in the progress of it; their humble solaces and encouragements to go through with it; and their sense of its peerless and overwhelming glory. 'Go, matchless, adored One, a Lamb to the slaughter! rejected of men, but chosen of God and precious; dishonoured, abhorred, and soon to be slain by men, but worshipped by cherubim, ready to be greeted by all heaven! In virtue of that decease we are here; our all is suspended on it and wrapt up in it. Thine every step is watched by us with ineffable interest; and though it were too high an honour to us to be permitted to drop a word of cheer into that precious but now clouded spirit, yet, as ourselves the first-fruits of harvest, the very joy set before Him, we cannot choose but tell Him that what is the depth of shame to Him is covered with glory in the eyes of heaven, that the Cross to Him is the Crown to us, that that "decease" is all our salvation and all our desire.' And who can doubt that such a scene did minister deep cheer to that spirit? 'Tis said they "talked" not to Him, but "with Him"; and if they told Him how glorious His decease was, might He not fitly reply, 'I know it all, but your voice, as the messengers from heaven come down to tell it me, is music in mine ears (JFB, V, 260).

What weight this gives to the words of v. 51 concerning our Lord, that "he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem."

9:32 The Apostles had the same problem here that they had later in Gethsemane: drowsiness. The word which Luke used here does not necessarily mean that they went to sleep, but that they fought off sleep. And when they were fully awake "they saw his glory." So it was not a vision, but an actual experience which they had. John reported later, "We beheld his glory" (John 1:14). The frailty of the flesh.

9:33 Mark said that Peter did not know what to say; Luke said that he did not know what he was saying. How prone we are to talk when we should be listening! Solomon said,

> Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise:
> and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding (Prov. 17:28).

At least it seems that Peter waited until Moses and Elijah had finished talking with the Lord, and were in the process of leaving. Peter wanted to hold them back, like Mary Magdalene wanted to retain the Lord when she found Him after His resurrection. See John 20:17.

The Apostles' drowsiness in v. 32 shows their physical weakness; Peter's comment in this verse showed his lack of understanding.

"Master" -- recognizing the Lord's authority--a term used only by Luke: Epistata.

"It is good for us to be here." Even though it was an experience which made him fearful, Peter was glad to be there, and he wanted to stay. THIS IS AN INDICATION OF HOW THE PEOPLE OF GOD FEEL WHEN THEY GET TO HEAVEN. They do not want to come back. Paul said that it was "far better" (Phil. 1:23b).

Then notice that Peter wanted to do something. Matthew tells us (the reading in the Gk) that Peter wanted to do this by himself, although Luke says that he suggested that the three of them build the three booths, or tabernacles. Peter did not want Moses and Elijah to leave.

A couple of things are wrong here in addition to the fact that Peter was talking when he should have been looking and listening:

1) He called the Lord, "Master," and then proceeded to take charge. The Lord had said

nothing about building booths there on the mount (probably Mt. Hermon because it was near to Caesarea Philippi, and from which one can view the whole land of Israel). Peter was like we are: he had his own ideas about what he should do to serve the Lord.

2) He was going to treat Moses and Elijah just like he was going to treat the Lord. But neither OT saints, even in their glory, nor angels, can be honored and worshipped as we need to honor and worship the Lord.

So, in what Peter said, he was both right and wrong: it was good to be there, but that was not the time for building booths, nor for honoring Moses and Elijah as he might honor the Lord.

But it was wrong for him even to be speaking, as we learn in the next verse.

9:34 While Peter was speaking, "a cloud" appeared, which Peter later called, "from the excellent glory" (2 Pet. 1:17)--magnificent glory! This was "the visible splendor of the divine majesty" (Thayer, p. 394)--"the majesty of God" (Ibid.).

9:35 And God spoke: "This is my beloved Son: hear him." You see it is the Person of Christ which gives value to the words of Christ.

This was a word of rebuke to Peter. They were not in the mount to hear him, nor to hear even Moses and Elijah (or their words would have been recorded). They were there to hear the Lord, and forever after to be listening especially to HIM! And, when we listen to Him, we should never question or be in doubt as to what He has to say.

"My beloved Son"--uniquely God's Son, His "beloved Son." The NASB has it correctly according to the best MSS: "This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!" Some MSS of Luke have "beloved," as Matthew and Mark do. Christ is both Beloved and Chosen by the Father. He sent Moses and Elijah in their ministries, but He sent no one else to do what He sent His Son to do. Thus the Apostles were to listen to Him, reverently, implicitly, and continually.

Beware of people who are more concerned about teaching than they are listening and learning. Peter wanted to talk and work; the Lord wanted him to see and learn.

It is interesting that the only words which are recorded that the Lord spoke on the mount are the words, "Arise, and be not afraid," in Matthew 17:7. What the Lord said to them about not telling anyone about the Transfiguration, was spoken as they went down from the mount.

Let our prayer be that we may see and learn all that the Lord would teach us as we come to the Word. Cf. Matt. 11:28-30 -- "learn of me."

9:36 When the Father had spoken, and the manifestation of His presence withdrawn, Moses and Elijah were gone too, and they were alone with the Lord. Matthew said, "they saw no man, save Jesus only." Cf. Matt. 17:8b.

And they kept silent about their experiences in the mount until after the Lord was raised from the dead because, as Matthew and Mark both have recorded, the Lord commanded them not to tell. Mark adds that, as they came down from the mount, they questioned among themselves what the Lord meant when He spoke of rising from the dead.

Application: There are many wonderful lessons in this passage, but one thing stands out above everything else: the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. Moses and Elijah were great men of God, but not to be compared with the Lord Jesus. Peter and James and John were to occupy an important place in the work of God, but their place was not to be compared with the place given to our Lord, the place He was chosen by God to fill. There were many times when Moses and Elijah and Peter and James and John spoke the Word of the Lord, but there were other times when what they said was wrong, times when they were not speaking by the inspiration of the Spirit. But the Lord's words were never wrong. We need to hear preachers as long as they agree with Christ. Everything that the greatest of the Lord's servants say must be tested by the Word of God. Let us listen to Him. If we do, we will never be misled. If we listen to Him first, then what we say and what we do are more likely to be right in God's eyes.

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d. The demon-possessed son delivered (MIRACLE #14) after the disciples failed (Luke 9:37-42).

This miracle is also recorded in Matt. 17:14-21 and Mark 9:14-29.

The last four events which Luke mentioned (down to v. 51) in our Lord's Galilean ministry reflect upon the disciples and their spiritual condition at this time.
1) With regard to this demon-possessed son, the disciples had NO POWER.
2) With regard to what the Lord said about His approaching death, the disciples had NO UNDERSTANDING.
3) In their argument about who was the greatest, the disciples manifested NO HUMILITY.
4) In their opposition to the one who was casting out demons in the Lord's Name, the disciples showed NO FORBEARANCE--no patience or tolerance.

And yet these are all essential qualities for those who are to serve the Lord.

Let us see how their needs were made known.

9:37 Luke alone mentioned that the Lord and the three Apostles came down from the mount "on the next day." Mark is the only one who mentioned the scribes who were "questioning with" the nine disciples (cf. Mark 9:14). The crowd was greatly agitated, and came running to the Lord. Mark is the one who tells us this also in Mark 9:15. When the Lord asked the scribes what they were discussing with the disciples (see Mark 9:16), before an answer was given, the father of the demon-possessed son interrupted them with his appeal to the Lord for help.

Why the crowd was agitated, and why they rushed to the Lord, we do not know. They may have been dismayed at the failure of the Apostles to deliver the demon-possessed boy, or they may have been bothered by the discussion which followed. It may have been that the scribes were taking advantage of the Apostles and ridiculing them for their failure. There are a lot of questions which we cannot answer positively. It may have been that they were discussing theological matters. Again, we do not know. But there are a lot of preachers and teachers who are ready to dispute over doctrinal matters who do not have the power of God upon them.

9:38 The widow of Nain was going out to bury her only son. See Luke 7:12. Jairus' daughter, who was raised from the dead, was his only daughter. Presumably in both cases it meant their only child. Cf. Luke 8:42. This man's son was, lit., his only begotten son.

9:39 The father described for the Lord the dreadful condition of his son. The devil's design is to destroy, if he can.

9:40 He had "besought" the disciples (the same as the word "bessech" in v. 38). This means to plead for help, to supplicate. He had begged them to do something.

Here is a good illustration of what Paul wrote in Eph. 6:12,
> For 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.

What a condemning and shameful word: "And they could not"! They should have been able to because Luke 9:1 tells us that the Lord gave all of His disciples "power and authority over all devils," or better, demons.

Lesson: It is good to have the example of Jairus and this father in Luke 9 who went to the Lord when they were concerned about their children. Are we doing the same about their spiritual needs? And how often pastors and elders and deacons and churches seem to be powerless to meet the needs of those who come to them for help. Perhaps this is one of the main reasons that the counselling business is flourishing--but the counselling that is usually given is not from the Word of God.

9:41 To whom was the Lord speaking? He was speaking to His "generation," and thus it must

have included the father, the crowd, the scribes (mentioned by Mark), and the disciples. It was a "faithless and perverse generation." This is how our Lord described the day in which He was living on the earth.

"Faithless" -- unbelieving. This shows the hardness of man's heart. And even believers, like the apostles struggle with it. You and I struggle with it. Faith in God is not a human trait. We must look to God for faith, or we will never have it. And God ministers faith to us by the Word, and it is the Spirit of God Who teaches us the Word.

"Perverse" -- the Gk word means to be distorted, twisted, turned away (or we might say, turned off). This is what sin has done to us, and why faith is impossible to us. The human heart is warped by sin, unable to comprehend the truth of God or the ways of God.

Paul used this word with the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:30 when he said,

> Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

See it again in Paul's writing in Phil. 2:15,

> That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation (generation), among whom ye shine as lights in the world.

"Crooked" means morally perverse and distorted.

Notice the "I" and "you."

"How long . . . ? The Lord separated Himself for their generation. He asked them how long He should offer Himself to them, and put up with them. Our problem is that we do not know God; we do not know the Lord. Just because things look impossible to us is no reason to think that they look impossible to the Lord!

Then the Lord called for the son.

9:42 The Devil and the demons put up a fight to the very last. They do not want people to come to Christ, and they will do all that they can to hinder them.

But the worst that they can do is not enough. The Lord Jesus Christ is far greater. Cf. 1 John 4:4.

The demon "threw him down," an expression in the Gk often used for the knockout blow of a boxer. The demon was trying to kill him. Then he tore his body physically--to finish the job. But the Lord "rebuked the unclean spirit," healed the child, and gave him back to his father.

Mark gives us the words of the rebuke:

> Thou deaf and dumb spirit, I charge thee to come out of him, and enter no more into him (Mark 9:25b).

Mark added that the spirit left the boy "as one dead." Perhaps he was. But the Lord raised him up, if that were the case, and healed him!

Luke does not give us the sequel, nor does he give the sequel to the next three events with which this section is concluded. Perhaps we are to be left with the impression these accounts give us of the great need of the Apostles. But both Matthew and Mark tell us what happened afterwards.

The disciples wanted to know why they could not cast the demon out of the boy--and that was an excellent question to ask.

Matthew tells us that it was because of their unbelief. Both Matthew and Mark relate that the Lord said that it was only possible "by prayer and fasting." Cf. Matt. 17:19-21; Mark 9:28, 29.

What can we learn from the Lord's answer? Let me suggest two things:

1) They had been so busy with the work of the Lord that they had failed to take time with the Lord. They had been so busy with the needs of others that they had failed to make sure that their own needs were met.
   You see, the fact that we have power at one time does not assure that we will continue to enjoy the power and blessing of God upon our work, or upon our lives. Daily, continual fellowship with the Lord is essential for spiritual growth and a useful ministry.
   From our Lord's emphasis on fasting we can see that food is usually more important to us than prayer.
2) The Lord rebuked them for their unbelief, and then for their prayerlessness. This would mean that our faith is strengthened by prayer, and by the time we spend alone with the Lord. A busy servant of the Lord may do a lot of things, but whether or not the work he is doing will remain is the big question if he is neglecting his time with the Lord in order do all that he is doing.
   Note how prayer figures in to our Lord's words in John 15:16. Fruit that remains comes in answer to prayer. In prayer we acknowledge our dependence upon God. And whether we like it or not, prayerlessness speaks of self-confidence, not trust in the Lord.

The first part of v. 43 really gives us Luke's conclusion to this miracle--the effect that all of our service should have:
   And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God.
The Gk word means majesty. It also can mean magnificence--the magnificence of God!

The events which follow (down to v. 50) seem to indicate that the disciples at this stage in their ministries were more concerned about their own glory then they were about the glory of God. Our generation, too, is "faithless and perverse." "God is not in all their thoughts" (Psa. 10:4). The Lord desires to use His servants to put HIM there. That should be our greatest desire, and our constant prayer.

4. Three special lessons for the apostles (Luke 9:43-50).

We have just concluded one, a very important one. Now we see that Luke has given us three more.

a. The second announcement of the Cross (Luke 9:43-45).

In the previous one they demonstrated that they had NO POWER; here we see that they had NO UNDERSTANDING.

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9:43 While it is true that the people were amazed at the majesty of God, yet they were more inclined to be occupied with the sensational and the temporal than they were with the purpose for which our Lord had come. And His disciples were in danger of doing the same thing . . .

9:44 There is an emphasis here upon the disciples--as for you, etc. There is no word for "sink" here; it is the Gk verb, to put--Put these words in your ears.

Lesson: We need to make sure that we hear the Word of God clearly even though we do not fully understand what we are hearing. It is often as we think about the Word of God that the Holy Spirit causes us to understand it.

What did He want them to store away in their memories? It was this: "For the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men."

This is light given in addition to what the Lord had told them in v. 22. If the Lord had simply meant that men would kill Him, He would not have spoken of being "delivered into" their hands. Who would give Him over to men? The answer is to be found in Peter's words on the

Day of Pentecost, Acts 2:23,

> Him (Christ), being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,
> ye have taken,
> and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.

Cf. also John 19:10, 11. The Lord was not speaking in our text about what Judas would do, nor the Jews, nor the Romans, but about the will of God. As I have said many times before, we cannot understand what happened when Christ died unless we understand this!

9:45 Luke does not say that they did not believe, but simply that they did not know; they did not comprehend. Why? Because, while the Lord was pleased to reveal the fact, He was not yet ready for them to understand what it meant.

We see this often in Scripture, and experience it often ourselves. But in such cases we need to be like Mary, the mother of our Lord, who "kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19). Truth, and the meaning of the truth, are revealed to us as the Lord sees fit. And we need to await His time.

One reason the Lord did not reveal the meaning of His spoken word to them at this time has been stated in John 14:29,

> And now I have told you before it come to pass, that,
> when it is come to pass, ye might believe.

Also, John 16:4a,

> But these things have I told you,
> that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them.

Again, earlier in John 13:19,

> Now I tell you before it come, that, when it come to pass,
> ye may believe that I am he.

This would all serve to strengthen their faith by realizing that the Lord knew what the final outcome of His ministry would be, and that, when it happened, it would not be because He had been unable to escape from His enemies, but that He had willingly submitted Himself to the sovereign will of the Father Who would deliver Him into the hands of men.

Let us make sure that we understand this.

b. Who is the greatest? (Luke 9:46-48).

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Cf. Matt. 18:1-5; Mark 9:33-37.

9:46 Mark tells us that this discussion took place after they got back to Capernaum from their time in Caesarea Philippi. But Luke tells us that the Lord knew what they were thinking before it was ever discussed among themselves, or before He discussed it with them.

They were discussing "which of them should be greatest."

This was the first of three times that this was to come up. Cf. Matt. 20:20-29 (Mark 10: 34-45) and Luke 22:24-30 (although some feel that this account in Luke is the same as those given in the preceding passages from Matthew and Mark).

Whatever may have prompted such a discussion, the problem was PRIDE!

Ryle wrote this:

> There is something very instructive in this fact. It ought to sink down deeply into the heart of every Christian reader. Of all sins there is none against which we have such need to watch and pray, as pride. It is a pestilence that walketh in darkness, and a sickness that destroyeth at noon-day.--No sin is so deeply rooted in our nature. It cleaves to us like our skin. Its roots never entirely die.

> They are ready , at any moment, to spring up, and exhibit a most pernicious vitality. --No sin is so specious and deceitful. It can wear the garb of humility itself. It can lurk in the hearts of the ignorant, the ungifted, and the poor, as well as in the minds of the great, the learned, and the rich. It is a quaint and homely saying, but only too true, that no Pope has ever received such honour as Pope "Self" (I, 327).

Of the seven things which the Lord hates and which are an abomination to him, the first mentioned is, "a proud look" (Prov. 6:17). Prov. 8:13 says, "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the froward mouth, do I hate." Prov. 13:10, "Only by pride cometh contention . . ." Prov. 16:18, 19, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud." Paul told Timothy that a bishop (an elder) should not be "a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil" (1 Tim. 3:6).

To be humble is to have a low self image, to have a low estimate of one's self--BECAUSE IT IS THE TRUE ONE! It is a characteristic which means that we recognize our sinfulness, our creatureliness, "of absolute dependence, of having nothing, but receiving all things from God"(Trench, Synonyms, p. 150). Even our Lord, in His humanity, was "meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11:29). Jacob was manifesting a humble spirit when he prayed on his way home to meet Esau, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto they servant . . ." (Gen. 32:10). The Hebrew from "not worthy" is I am less than.

When the Lord spoke of His death in the preceding section, it was evident that the disciples were very slow in comprehending spiritual truth--the doctrine of the Cross. Here, we see that they had failed to grasp the basic characteristic of the Christian life: humility. Poole wrote,

> How prone are we to seek great things for ourselves, neglecting our higher spiritual and eternal concerns! . . . even the best of men are subject to earthly-mindedness, ambition, emulation, and (are) hardly brought truly to understand, believe, and seek the things which are above" (Vol. III, p. 83).

The Lord "knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust" (Psa. 103:14), but are prone to forget it!

9:47 "And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart . . ."

We cannot hide anything from the Lord--even in our thoughts. David said of the Lord, "Thou understandest my thought afar off" (Psa. 139:2b). The writer of Hebrews wrote, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13). The Word of God "is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

This is a solemn fact.

But just as solemn is the statement concerning man in Prov. 23:7a, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he . . ." I read some place in the past that we are not what we think we are, but what we think, we are! Prov. 4:23 says, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." " . . . the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7--spoken by the Lord to Samuel about Eliab, David's oldest brother).

And it is interesting to see that what we are thinking will, sooner or later, come out in our talk and show up in our lives. How we need to pray that we may have such an understanding of God and of Christ, and Their work in our behalf, that we will walk before the Lord with humble hearts. Micah wrote long ago, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8).

Paul wrote to the Philippians,

Let nothing be done through stribe or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind
let each esteem other better than themselves.
Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

How did the Lord teach the disciples what He wanted to see in them? He "took a child, and set him by him, and said unto them . . .

9:48 "Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me . . ." "Me" in both instances in v. 37 is intensive.

What does it mean to receive a little child in the Lord's Name?

It means to show an interest in them, in their salvation and spiritual blessing, rather than seeking a position of authority over adults. The person who is thinking about being the greatest is not thinking about ministering, but about being ministered to.

Mark said that the Lord took this child in his arms (cf. Mark 9:36). The Lord loved children. See Luke 18:15-17. We must not neglect the children in our ministering. To receive a child is to receive the Lord's will concerning His servants and their work, and the same is true with regard to God. Christ was "sent" to do the Father's will.

If we want the blessing of the Lord, and of the Father, we must serve even the lowest, not seek the place of the greatest honor and authority as the world does. Here again is a confirmation of Isa. 55:8, 9. The disciples had much to learn concerning the ways of the Lord.

c. What about other miracle workers? (Luke 9:49, 50).

Cf. Mark 9:38-40.

9:49 The attitude that is expressed here is certainly consistent with the discussion about who was the greatest in the preceding verses. If we want to be the greatest with our own fellow-workers, it is certain that we are not going to want to tolerate those who are in some other group.

Here again, we have PRIDE. They felt that everyone who served the Lord should follow them, or else not serve the Lord.

First of all, it shows that the work of God is not perfect. There are divisions, and these divisions are always harmful to the work of the Lord.

Secondly, it shows that there are those who are not with us who, nevertheless, know the Lord, and serve Him.

There are questions surrounding who this man was. We do not know. How he got such power, we do not know that either. But a passage like John 4:38 shows that even in our Lord's day there were things going on which were not in the "main stream," so to speak:

I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour:
other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

Who those "other men" were, we do not know. The work of God is greater than just our church, or our group of churches.

Thirdly, "forbad" means that they did this more than once, over and over again, and still the man did not stop. We have no right to tell others that they cannot serve the Lord.

We have two good examples, one in the OT, and one in the NT, to give us guidance in a situation like this:
1) Moses, in Num. 11:29. Also, John the Baptist - Jn. 3:26.
2) Paul, in Phil. 1:14-18.

We may not be able to work together, but we must not deny that others serve the Lord and even see

the blessing of God even though they may not agree on every point with us. Remember, we do not rejoice in false teaching. But we do rejoice when the Gospel is preached, and in the blessing of God upon it.

9:50 Other Christians may not be with us in the sense of belonging to our group, but they are with us is they are seeking to exalt the same Lord, and seeking the blessing of men through His power.

And so this section of Luke is concluded. How important that we in our day take to heart the very same lessons to which the Apostles were exposed as the Lord prepared to go to Jerusalem to accomplish the work that His Father sent Him to do.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Luke 9:51-62

The Outline:

I. THE PROLOGUE (Luke 1:1-4).
II. THE PREPARATION FOR JESUS' MINISTRY (Luke 1:5-4:13).
III. THE FIRST PERIOD OF JESUS' MINISTRY--IN GALILEE AND ITS VICINITY (Luke 4:14-9:50).
IV. JESUS' MINISTRY TOWARD JERUSALEM (Luke 9:51-19:27). It is at this point in the Gospel of Luke that our Lord and His disciples left Judea and headed for Jerusalem where the Lord would suffer and die, and be raised again. This had been mentioned twice by the Lord in Luke 9--in vv. 22, 44.

A. The first part (Luke 9:51-13:21).
B. The second part (Luke 13-22-17:10).
C. The third part (Luke 17:11-19:27).

We are now ready to look at "the first part."

IV. JESUS' MINISTRY TOWARD JERUSALEM (Luke 9:51-19:27).

A. The first part (Luke 9:51-13:21).

1. Trouble in Samaria (Luke 9:51-56).

9:51 The words of David in Psa. 37:23a apply to no one more than they did to our Lord Jesus Christ: "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord."

Luke here sounds like the Apostle John in his reference to the Lord's "time," and that it had come.

In the earthly life of the Lord Jesus Christ we see the outworking, in every detail, of the plan that the Father had ordained for Him. Godet says that v. 51 speaks of

> the gradual filling up of a series of days which form a complete period, and extend to a goal determined beforehand (II, 9).

The same is true of Luke 2:21, 22 and Acts 2:1.

Godet added:

> The period here is that of the days of the departing of Jesus from this world; it began with the first announcement of His sufferings, and it had now reached one of its marked epochs, the departure from Galilee (Ibid.).

"Received up" has to do with His ascension. So we look at the goal before we pass through the terrible time of our Lord's sufferings in order that we may keep the outcome before us, and thus be strengthened in our faith.

"Set" means that the Lord was immoveable in His intention to do what He had come to do--the carrying out of His Father's will in His sufferings and death. To set one's face is a Hebrew expression (a Hebraism). Cf. Jer. 21:10; 44:11. The Lord was determined in His purpose even though He knew what it would mean to Himself. This is emphatic.

Brown says of this verse,

> It is a sublime expression, taking the sweep of His whole career, as if at one bound He was about to vault into glory. It divides the work of Christ in the flesh into two great stages; all that preceded this belonging to the one, and all that follows it to the other (JFB, V, 263).

9:52 The Lord previously had given no such order. Brown (JFB) felt that the Lord was no

longer avoiding publicity. Such preparation was also necessary because of the large group travelling with Him, and the fact that they were going through territory that was not favorable to the Jews. They permitted the Jews going to Jerusalem to go through their territory, but for the Samaritans to provide hospitality for the Jews was another thing! The Lord evidently expected to spend some time in Samaria. This was a change from what He told His disciples when He sent them out. See Matt. 10:5, 6. It anticipated what He would tell His disciples in Acts 1:8.

9:53 The Samaritans tolerated the Lord, but did not welcome Him. Cf. John 4:20 (which probably took place several months before). Cf. Prov. 1:20-32 – Bridges, pp. 8-10.

Note what the Lord was to tell His disciples in Luke 10:10-12. What a solemn time it is for any person or city when it is exposed to the Gospel. Second opportunities do not always come.

9:54 It is interesting to trace the work of grace in the hearts and lives of James and John, "the sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17). At this point they showed very little understanding of the ways of the Lord, as had already been demonstrated in v. 49 by John.

Often the servants of the Lord feel this way. And John had a Scriptural precedent for wanting to do this, and it came from the life of Elijah whom he and James and Peter had seen just a short time before this on the mount of transfiguration. And what Elijah did was even done in Samaria. Cf. 2 Kings 1:10-12. And he did it twice!

The redeeming feature about what John and James said was that they asked if this was what the Lord wanted them to do: "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire . . . ?" Although we may have a Scriptural precedent for a certain thing, we always need to seek the Lord's guidance for ourselves (except for those things which are clearly declared to be the will of God at all times). The Lord does not always lead the same person to repeat his action even when faced with similar circumstances.

James and John were zealous for the Lord, but it was not according to knowledge. See what Paul said in Rom. 10:2. This is a common mistake for the people of God to make. Abraham and Sarah did it when Abraham had a child by Hagar. Rebekah did it when she prepared the food for Jacob to take in to his father, Isaac. Moses did it when he killed the Egyptian. Peter did it when he cut off the ear of Malchus. Often we as Christians react toward something bad in the Church by doing something equally bad, OR WORSE! Someone else's sin never gives us the right to sin in return--and we need to be careful that that is not what we are doing.

Bishop Ryle said,

> It is possible to have much zeal for Christ, and yet to exhibit it in most unholy and unchristian ways. It is possible to mean well and have good intentions, and yet to make most grievous mistakes in our actions. It is possible to fancy that we have Scripture on our side, and to support our conduct by Scriptural quotations, and yet to commit serious errors. It is clear as daylight, from this and other cases related in the Bible, that it is not enough to be zealous and well-meaning. Very grave faults are frequently committed with good intentions. From no quarter has the Church received so much injury as from ignorant but well-meaning men (italics mine; Luke, I, pp. 333, 334).

9:55 If we will only listen to the Lord, He will tell us when we are right and when we are wrong.

"But he turned" -- They were following Him. "And rebuked them" -- the same word as in v. 42. It carries with it the idea of restraint as well as admonishing them because they were wrong in what they wanted to do.

Ryle likened zeal without knowledge to an army without a general, or to a ship without a rudder.

"Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." This was not the way of the Holy Spirit. This

was from the flesh. This is the way the Devil would like for us to operate. This is the spirit of the world. It was not of God., or the Spirit of God. Cf. Jas. 1:20.

9:56 We must never forget the object of our Lord's ministry, and, therefore, of our own ministry: not to destroy men, but to save them! The fact that men do not want to be saved does not nullify our purpose. Cf. Luke 19:10 for a similar statement.

"And they went to another village." Cf. Matt. 10:23. This probably means another Samaritan village. A closed door in one village does not mean a closed door in all of them. If the Lord had left Samaria because of this one incident, it would seem to have contradicted what He said to His disciples, rebuking them.

It is interesting to note that later Peter and John were in Samaria "and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans" (Acts 8:25b; see vv. 14-25. We need to remember that it is the Lord Who opens and closes doors.

2. Three prospective disciples warned and taught (Luke 9:57-62).

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Matthew mentions the first two of these three incidents (see Matt. 8:18-22); neither Mark nor John mentioned any of them.

All three of these incidents have to do with serving the Lord. We do not know who these three men were, nor what happened afterwards--whether they actually followed the Lord, or not. It is probably best to assume that they did not.

Spurgeon did not feel that these men were even true believers. He felt that they had been impressed by the Lord and His miracles, but that they had other reasons for following Him.

Whatever the circumstances may have been, the Spirit of God, it would seem, at least two reasons for including these events in Holy Scripture:

1) An encouragement to those who are serving the Lord.
   One of the most discouraging things in the Lord's work is to see those fall away who at first seem to be true believers, and who enter into the Lord's work with great zeal (as was the case with the first of these three men), but eventually turn away and walk with Him no more.
   The Lord had this kind of discouragement. Cf. John 6:66. And so we need to realize that, if the Lord's ministry did not produce results of 100%, neither will ours--and we should not be surprised when the same thing happens to us. It is never easy to experience, but these things are to be expected. It is one of the trials of the ministry.
2) These events are instructive to those who serve the Lord as to how we should deal with people who appear to want to serve Him, too.
   It has always been true, and always will be, that "the labourers are few" (Matt. 9:37). Therefore, we are inclined to take all who offer themselves without putting them to any kind of a test. Not every one who professes to be a Christian is a Christian, and not every one who at first wants to serve Christ, continues to serve Him. WHAT WE NEED TO DO was mentioned by our Lord in Matt. 9:38: "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that HE will send forth labourers into his harvest."

But let us see what we can learn from our Lord's dealings with these three men.

a. The first man (Luke 9:57, 58).

Matthew said that he was a scribe. He is the kind of a man we would have been especially eager to get--one right out of the Enemy's camp! We are inclined to feel that some would be most effective in serving the Lord because of who they are, or because of the position that they have held. Obviously the Lord was not deceived in that way as we often are.

This man was a volunteer. Luke does not say that he was called (even in the sense that the

unconditionally offered himself of his own accord.

the second and third were called).

The man's words "breathed a blind confidence in his own strength" (Godet, II, 13). He obviously did not know what it would mean to serve the Lord. He did not know, apparently, that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12), nor was he prepared to "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2:3). He did not know that "men shall hate you, and . . . shall separate you from they company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake" (Luke 6:22).

And so the Lord called upon him to examine his own heart, and He did so by mentioning one of the lesser problems that he would face. Even with our Lord, He did not even as the Creator always have the comfort of knowing, when He got up in the morning, where He would sleep that night. (I am speaking now of our Lord in His experience as a Man.) Foxes do. The birds of the air do. But the Son of man did not!

Would this man be willing to follow such a Master--and then continue to follow Him?

We like to know ahead where we are going to be at night. The heavenly Father saw fit to deal with His Son "one day at a time." We all need to learn to live like that.

Notice the self-confidence that this man manifested: "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." ("Lord" is not in all MSS, but it is in the TR.) He put no restrictions upon the Lord whatever. He said, " . . . whithersoever thou goest"! And yet the Lord knew that this man could not tolerate not knowing where he would be staying at the end of each day--and that it would be suitable to him.

Some people feel that the life of faith is a life in which all we need to do is to pray, and the provision will be there--that the Lord will produce loaves and fish whenever we need them. Spurgeon said,

> If you take him (Christ) to be your Leader, you will have to travel over a rough road. Oh, may none of you ever profess Christianity for the sake of what you can get! I can assure you that , in these days, those who follow Christ for loaves and fishes will find the loaves very small and the fishes very full of bone (Vol. 38, p. 436).

Spurgeon also referred to Pliable in Pilgrim's Progress who, when he fell into the Slough of Despond said that the Celestial City might be a very wonderful place, but that he would not go plodding through the mire to get there. And Spurgeon added,

> Many a man, when he has found that there is a cross as well as a crown, has foregone the crown because he could not bear the cross (Ibid.).

The Lord will be faithful, far more faithful than we deserve, or than we will be, meeting our needs on every hand. But the Lord's work is not what we at first think that it will be. There are many trials, many tests. There are many tears to be shed, many works that appear to be fruitless. In fact, there are times when it seems that it would have been better if we had not be involved at all because things have gotten worse than they were before. But the Lord has ordained it all as it is, has placed this treasure "in earthen vessels," that our confidence may be in Him, and not in ourselves.

The Lord was always gracious in His dealings with men, but He was also truthful. And He did not want this scribe to be under any illusion as to what would be involved in following Him.

b. The second man (Luke 9:59, 60).

What lesson do we have here?

This man was called. However, he is more cautious than the first man. He did not say that that his father had died. Possibly he had. But there is also the possibility that he wanted to wait until his father did die, and then he would follow the Lord. Thus, we have a conflict here our natural, human responsibilities, as compared with eternal things.

Also the man to whom the Lord was speaking was questioning the timing of the Lord's call. And if he would begin to follow the Lord with this attitude, what would keep him from passing

judgment upon the leading of the Lord, and upon His wisdom in the future.

If a man is going to be a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, a servant of God and of Christ, preaching the Gospel must have priority over everything else. The work of the Lord must come first.

Every servant of the Lord faces pressure from people from time to time to get involved in different things that are going on: politics, social action, entertainment. We are seeing this on a major scale today.

But the servant of the Lord is called to preach the Gospel.

Dead bodies need to be buried--there is no question about that! Parents need to be taken care of. But when the call of God is upon a man, nothing is take precedence over that! There are those who have not had their eyes opened to spiritual truth who can bury the dead, but they cannot preach the Gospel.

There is no more important, more urgent, work that men are called to do than that of preaching the Gospel! If a man is not prepared to give it priority over every other task, he is not one to be involved in the work of the Lord at all.

Even under the Law the high priests and the Nazarites were not to interrupt their duties to bury their parents. Cf. Lev. 21:11; Num. 6:6, 7. See also Num. 19:14; Hosea 9:4. The burial of parents always has the greatest priority in every culture. Our servicemen were temporarily relieved of duty even during wartime to go home for the funerals of family members. How great then must the work of God be!

In addition, the Lord seemed to be impressing upon this second man the need to obey the Lord immediately. We can never tell if the same impressions will be upon our hearts twenty-four hours later! The servant of the Lord needs to be one who will redeem the time, "because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:16).

c. The third man (Luke 9:61, 62).

We have seen that the work of the Lord is not an easy work, but that it must have precedence over every other responsibility because of the eternal consequences which rest upon the preaching of the Gospel. When a person has died, there is no more that we can do for him but to bury the body. But, while people live, there is always the hope that they will be saved.

Now we see a man who was not wholehearted in his devotion to the Lord. Notice the contrast between "thee," referring to the Lord, and "them . . . which are at home." And those at home came "first."

He just wanted to tell his family "good-by." There does not seem to be any harm in that. But the actual fact was that he would not really be telling them "good-by." His heart was still with them. The Lord was not first in his affections and in his life. He was a double minded man, and consequently would be "unstable in all his ways" (Jas. 1:8). He has put his hand to the plow, but he keeps re-thinking his decision, wondering if he has done the right thing. The person who looks back usually goes back.

Cf. Luke 14:25-33. Also, Matt. 22:34-40. It is only as Christ is first in our hearts that His work will be first in our lives. His work does not come first; He does! Then we will be working with great anticipation of blessing, seeking to please Him, and to bring glory to His holy Name.

Thus it is important to keep these matters in mind as we think about what it means to be a follower, a servant, of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A VERY HEART-SEARCHING PASSAGE!

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Luke 10:1-24

The Outline:

I. THE PROLOGUE (Luke 1:1-4).
II. THE PREPARATION FOR JESUS' MINISTRY (LUke 1:5-4:13).
III. THE FIRST PERIOD OF JESUS' MINISTRY--IN GALILEE AND ITS VICINITY (Luke 4:14-9:50).
IV. JESUS' MINISTRY TOWARD JERUSALEM (Luke 9:51-19:27).
This section can be divided into three parts:
A. The first part (Luke 9:51-13:21).
1. Trouble in Samaria (Luke 9:51-56).
2. Three prospective disciples warned and taught (Luke 9:57-62).
3. The mission of the seventy disciples (Luke 10:1-24).

Gary taught Luke 10:1-16 on 1/20 and 27. These verses contain the instructions which the Lord gave the 70 concerning their mission. It was to be a mission of healing and of preaching the kingdom of God, i.e., the Gospel. See Luke 10:9, 11.

We are now ready to go on with the last part of this section: vv. 17-24. It is divided into three parts:
1) The joy of "the 70" (as they returned from their mission) (vv. 17-20).
2) The rejoicing of the Lord (vv. 21, 22).
3) The blessing of the disciples (probably the 70) (vv. 23, 24).

So we have . . .

3. The mission of the seventy disciples (Luke 10:1-24).

a. The Lord's instructions for them (Luke 10:1-16).

b. The Lord's words for them after their return (Luke 10:17-24).

(1) The joy of "the 70" (Luke 10:17-20).

10:17 We do not know how long they were gone. Since they went out "two and two" (v. 1), it is doubtful that they all returned at one time. But Luke gives us the consensus of what their attitude was, and what they said, when they returned. They were happy, but, as the Lord pointed out to them, they were happy about the wrong thing.

Their mission had been a time of great success. The devil had been routed from many lives. And this seems to have been an unexpected blessing since, in the first 16 verses of this chapter the Lord had said nothing about casting out demons. The Lord often gives blessings which we were not expecting. But, anyway, the disciples were jubilant!

10:18 The Lord agreed that it was true. He had seen something which they had not seen which was the result of their ministry; He had seen Satan fall as lightning from heaven. There is no need to make this Satan's original fall, nor his final fall. This definitely was what happened as a result of the ministry of the 70. It had been a sudden, major defeat for the Enemy--and the Lord had seen it, had seen what the disciples had not seen.

10:19 But the Lord reminded them where their power had come from; it had come from Him. And He reminded them how carefully He had protected them so that they were not "hurt" by the Enemy--which would have been a very real possibility since he is much wiser and much stronger then they were. So really, the victory was the Lord's; He was the One Who had given it to the disciples. The disciples needed to remember this.

10:20 And the Lord followed this with another word of rebuke and reproof.

They were not to rejoice in the fact that "the spirits" (the demons) were "subject" to them,

"but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

This means that they were to rejoice more over spiritual deliverances than they were to rejoice over physical deliverances, because no deliverance can even begin to compare with that which the Lord brings about as a result of having our names written in heaven.

What does it mean that their names were written in heaven?

It means that:
1) They were among the elect. Physical healing does not have that meaning.
2) They were saved.
3) Their sins were forgiven.
4) They had become the children of God.
5) They had eternal life.
6) They had a sure hope of heaven.
And it meant many other things as well--all having to do with salvation!

But who had written their names in heaven? Had they? No! God had written their names in the book of life. He is the One Who had chosen them, and appointed them for salvation.

Why had He written their names, and not everyone's name? Was it because they were better? Was it because He was rewarding them for good things that they had done? Was it because He needed them because of some special abilities that they had? No, no, no!

God had written their names in pure grace--the undeserved favor of God! There is no other explanation. But behind God's grace is God's love.

The lesson is very obvious: Regardless of the blessings that God gives us, or how greatly He may use us, nothing should ever mean more to us than our own salvation. We must never get over being saved; we must never cease to marvel at the fact that God would save us, and that He continues to keep us.

But how is He able to do it?

It all goes back to what Christ at this point in His life was getting ready to do--to go to Jerusalem, to be killed, and to be raised again on the third day.

This is why Paul wrote what he did in Gal. 6:14 and 1 Cor. 2:2.

Cf. also Eph. 1:3ff. And 1 Pet. 1:3ff. And Rev. 1:5,6.

And, going back into the OT, notice what Moses said in his prayer to God for the Israelites in Ex. 32:31, 32. There is nothing that Moses could have said that would have been a greater sacrifice! This was the ultimate! To give up salvation (which was what he was willing to do) would have been the supreme sacrifice on his part.

IT IS THIS CONTINUAL REJOICING IN OUR OWN SALVATION THAT IS OUR CHIEF NECESSITY IN ORDER TO BE FAITHFUL AND, IF GOD WILLS, EFFECTIVE SERVANTS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Is this where we are today? Or what do you have that you are more thankful for than this? Does it thrill you to hear the Gospel? Do you really love the Lord because He died for your sins? If your heart is cold because the Lord has not done some other things for you that you think He should have done, the way out of your discouragement is to remember what He did for you when He died on the Cross, and to remember that you are saved forever because He is at the right hand of the Father interceding for you--and for me! There are no spiritual problems which cannot be solved immediately if we will only get back to this one, basic point of truth: REJOICE THAT YOUR NAME IS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE, WRITTEN IN HEAVEN, AND IT WILL NEVER BE BLOTTED OUT.

Take steps today to get your life back in order if you have other things that mean more to you than just the fact that you are saved.

But now, before we leave vv. 17-20, let us look a little farther into what happened here, and what the Lord said to the disciples.

The conflict into which the 70 had entered was not primarily with men; IT WAS WITH THE FORCES OF SATAN. Cf. Eph. 6:10-18.

Thus it was amazing, truly amazing, that they could return victorious. It was only because the LORD was on their side, working in them and through them and for them. As the Apostle John would write later, "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4b). The more we realize this, the more we will know that we have to trust the Lord if we are to see any blessing at all. It will not make us work any less, but it will make us pray all the more.

WE ALL WANT TO BE SUCCESSFUL. WE WANT TO SEE BELIEVERS BUILT UP AND STRENGTHENED IN THEIR FAITH. WE WANT TO SEE (or should want to see) PEOPLE SAVED--PEOPLE'S LIVES CHANGED, TRANSFORMED.

BUT . . . herein lies one of our greatest dangers.

When God gives blessing, and lives are changed, there is a very strong possibility that our hearts will be filled with pride. Look at what the 70 were saying: "Lord, even the demons are subject unto us (and then they sought to justify their words by adding) through thy name." It probably would have suggested less of a problem if they had put "through thy name" earlier in their sentence.

Bishop Ryle wrote many years ago, "The time of success is a time of danger to a Christian's soul" (Vol. I, p. 359).

Here are some other quotes from Bishop Ryle:

"Few men are like Samson, and can kill a lion without telling others of it" (p. 359).

Judges 14:6 says,

> And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done.

"There are few Christians who can carry a full cup with a steady hand" (pp. 359, 360).

"Most of Christ's labourers probably have as much success as their souls can bear" (p. 359).

"There are few souls who prosper in their days of uninterrupted success" (p. 360).

Think about these statements, and let them be a warning to you, as they have been to me.

When God gives blessing we begin to think about our abilities,
our power,
our knowledge,
our diligence,
and perhaps even of our prayers.

We begin to glory in ourselves. We are like Peter walking on the water--we get our eyes off of the Lord, and then we begin to sink! Cf. Matt. 14:28-31.

What is the best safeguard against such damaging pride? It is to be found in Luke 10:20. This would be a good verse for all of us to memorize--and to repeat it to ourselves every day for the rest of our lives. When you and I are inclined to think too highly of ourselves, we need to remember the Cross of Christ and what He had to do in order to save us. We need to remember the election of God, and that we would never have trusted Christ if God had not chosen us, bought us, sought us, and brought us to Himself and to Christ. Pray that you will never get over being saved, never get over what God has done for you in Christ. Then you will marvel at the very least of the blessings of the Lord, knowing, like Jacob said, that he was not worthy of any of them. See Gen. 32:10.

But let us go on to the next point.

(2) The rejoicing of the Lord (Luke 10:21, 22).

See Matthew's account of these verses in Matt. 11:25-27.

This is a very unique couple of verses because it marks the only time mentioned in the Gospels that the Lord "rejoiced." He had just rebuked the 70 because they were rejoicing in the wrong thing; what did He rejoice in?

There are several answers to that question--all to be seen in these two verses.

He obviously was rejoicing in the Father, as "the Lord of heaven and earth," Who, because of Who He is, could have done anything about salvation that He wanted to do, but the Lord was rejoicing that He had done what He had done.

What was it that God had done?

Three things which caused the Lord to rejoice. The first will surprise you. The second and third we are more familiar with.

1) He rejoiced that the Lord had hidden the truth of the Gospel "from the wise and the prudent."
2) He rejoiced that the Lord, the Father, had revealed the truth of the Gospel "unto babes" --a reference to the 70, in the first place, but to all of us, as well, who are His people.
3) He rejoiced (v. 22) in the unique place that the Father had given Him in the work of salvation--that no one could possibly know the Father (in salvation) except those to whom the Father was revealed by the Son.

Take that first point . . .

We are concerned in all three of these points with the ways of the Lord, but the first is a point which usually gives us the most trouble.

The Father does not deal with all men in the same way. He reveals His truth to some; He hides the truth from others. And those from whom He keeps His truth, the Gospel, are "the wise and the prudent." The Lord was not here scorning the value of wisdom and prudence which is commended in many other parts of Scripture, but He was speaking here of the person who is naturally wise, and who knows how to put his wisdom to good use("prudent"). This has to do, of course, with human wisdom. This is the person who is so wise that he does not need God. He has things figured out without God. But it is all earthly, human wisdom. He may be an educated man, or very uneducated. You find people like this in all walks of life. God has no place in their thinking.

It is from people like this that God hides the truth of the Gospel. You can tell them about Christ, but it will mean nothing to them. And so the wiser and more prudent a person may be in the wisdom of this world, the less likely it is that they will ever understand and accept the Gospel.

Spiritual truth has to be communicated to human hearts by the Holy Spirit. It is spiritually discerned, not merely learned by human ability and effort. Let us be reminded of what Paul wrote to the Corinthians, in 1 Cor. 1:17-25; 2:4-16.

But remember that we have it from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself: There are some, there are many, from whom the Lord actually hides His truth, the truth of the Gospel. They cannot believe because they do not have that capacity, but it is also true that they cannot believe because God keeps the truth from them. This may not seem fair to you and to me, but it is how God has chosen to act, it is what pleases Him, and so it cannot be wrong! And the Lord Jesus actually rejoiced over this. Cf. 1 Peter 2:7, 8. NEVER REJECT ANY TRUTH THAT YOU FIND IN SCRIPTURE JUST BECAUSE IT IS NOT WHAT YOU WOULD DO, OR BECAUSE IT DOES NOT SEEM RIGHT TO YOU. THE WORD OF GOD STANDS FOREVER INFALLIBLY TRUE.

What about the second point, 2), above?

2/10/87

We are discussing Luke 10:21, 22. If the Father hides the word from the wise and the prudent, to whom does He make His Word known? This was the second thing that the Lord Jesus rejoiced in--that the Father has seen fit to reveal the truth unto "babes."

Turn again to 1 Cor. 1--this time to vv. 26-31.

Paul did not say, Not any wise men after the flesh . . . are called, but "not many." It is not God's usual way to go after the Ph. D.'s, the educated, or those who are in powerful, influential positions, those who are prominent, those of noble blood, the rich, the Hollywood crowd, the athletes, and so on and on! This is man's way. But God's way is just the opposite! Why? See 1 Cor. 1:29: "That no flesh should glory in his presence." And then read v. 31: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

This is why the Lord rejoiced in the ways of the Father in salvation--because this is the way the Father gets the greatest glory. That was what the Lord Jesus was concerned about--the glory of the Father--and that is what you and I should be pre-eminently concerned about. The higher a person is in the eyes of the world, the harder it is going to be for him to give the Father the glory for his salvation.

Now, this is what the Lord did when He called the twelve. They were "nobodies"! And do we know who "the seventy" were? No.

This is what the Lord did when He saved most of us. There may be some exceptions, but I certainly am not. I'm still a "nobody." Just last week I called to order some materials, and I talked to a girl from whom I had ordered some things a couple of weeks before, and she still said to me,"Please spell your name for me." If you will keep your ears open you will usually hear a number of things every day that will remind you of your nothingness.

What a tragedy that the Church tries to copy the world in its ways rather than to follow the ways of the Lord! God has seen fit to start with the "babes"--those who in the eyes of the world are nothing. God gets the greatest glory in this way because, humanly speaking, there is no reason, from a worldly standpoint, why He should choose and save those whom He has chosen and saved.

LET US REMEMBER THIS. And even if you are from a prominent, well-to-do, well-known, highly regarded family, this is not why the Lord has chosen you. You have even more reason to praise the Lord because you are the exception to the divine rule. ALL OF US MUST GLORY IN THE LORD, AND IN HIM ALONE, BECAUSE OUR SALVATION IS DEPENDENT ENTIRELY UPON THE LOVE AND GRACE OF GOD.

Why are things the way they are in the divine economy? " . . . even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

But what else seemed good to the Father? What was the third reason for the rejoicing of the Lord Jesus? You have it there in Luke 10:22.

One of our men was telling me just last Sunday about a friend of his, one who regularly attends a church here in Portland, and this friend has said repeatedly that he believes in God, but he does not believe in Jesus Christ. He does not believe in the Deity of Jesus Christ. He does not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. What would you say to such a man, or about him (if you were not able to talk to him). You would have to tell him that he does not really believe in God, or know God, because you cannot know God and by-pass Jesus Christ, the crucified, risen, glorified, eternal Son of God!

The salvation of sinners is in the hands of Christ. The person to whom Christ reveals the Father is a person who can never be the same again, and he comes to the Father through Christ, knowing that there is no other way to God. Cf. John 14:6 and Acts 4:12. Notice, too, what the Lord said to the Father in His prayer in John 17, v. 6. See also v. 26 in the same prayer.

The "all things" that have been delivered to Christ from God are the "all things" that have to

do with salvation. No one is going to be saved except those to whom Christ reveals God, and those who come to God through Christ.

Why did the Lord rejoice in this? Because He could be certain that those would be saved whom the Father intended to save. If even the elect of God were left to themselves, they would never know God, or Christ, or come to God through Christ. Christ makes sure that the will of God is done, and that His own work on the Cross is not in vain.

Now we come to the last two verses which have to do with . . .

3. The mission of the seventy disciples (Luke 10:1-24).

It has to do with . . .

b. The Lord's words for them after their return (Luke 10:17-24).

These two verses tell us . . .

(3) The blessing of the disciples (probably the 70) (Luke 10:23, 24).

The officers of the chief priests and scribes were right when they said, "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46). No patriarch, no prophet, no king, no apostle ever said about himself what Jesus Christ said about Himself. No one ever gave himself the place in the redemptive plan of God that our Lord claimed for Himself.

Cf. John 17:2; 14:9-11.

But what in particular had the 70 seen?

They had seen Christ. They knew Who He was. They knew why He had come. They knew that the promises given to the prophets and kings of the OT were being fulfilled. They understood all of this--things which many of the people of God before them had wanted to see, but had not seen.

Cf. 1 Pet. 1:10-12. Heb. 10:13, and vv. 39, 40.

The promises were not given in vain. Christ did come. And through Him salvation has been provided for all who will believe in Him. How blessed they were to be the ones to "see" Him, and how blessed we are to have the record before us, written by those who were eyewitnesses of Christ and by those who were well-acquainted with those who saw Him and knew Him.

Do you have this blessing? Do you know Christ? Is He your Saviour?

Next:

IV. JESUS' MINISTRY TOWARD JERUSALEM (Luke 9:51-19:27).
A. The first part (Luke 9:51-13:21).

4. The tricky lawyer (scribe) and the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

This account is recorded for us only by Luke. The event seems to have followed immediately from what our Lord had been saying to the 70. This lawyer (scribe) and other had doubtless gathered around to hear what the Lord was saying to them. The lawyer was quite evidently one of the "wise and prudent" that the Lord had been speaking of because he knew more than most about the Scriptures--the two most important commandments of Scripture. And yet he was not sincere in his question. He was tempting, or testing, the Lord, probably hoping that the Lord would say something which would make it possible for this lawyer to go back to the other Jewish leaders with an accusation against the Lord.

But this is a very instructive passage. Let us note carefully what it teaches us.

10:25 Note first, the important question which this lawyer raised: "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

We might question the question, i.e., the words which this lawyer used--such as doing something to inherit eternal life, and even the word "inherit," although we know that a major part of our salvation is our heavenly inheritance, such as Peter spoke of in 1 Peter 1:3-5.

But the Lord let the question stand. He answered according to what he knew the lawyer meant by his question.

Thayer has this to say about the word inherit after pointing out that frequently the occupation of the land of Canaan is spoken of in the OT as inheriting the land:

> But as the Israelites after taking possession of the land were harassed almost perpetually by their hostile neighbors, and even driven out of the country for a considerable period, it came to pass that the phrase was transferred to denote the tranquil and stable possession of the holy land crowned with all divine blessings, an experience which pious Israelites were to expect under the Messiah (p. 349).

And then he referred to Psa. 25:13; 37:9, 11, 22, 29, 34, after which Thayer added:

> . . . hence it became a formula denoting to partake of eternal salvation in the Messiah's kingdom (Ibid.).

And so the lawyer was using it to mean, to obtain, to become a partaker of, to receive as one's own, to come into the possession of.

Oh, that more people would ask this question! People have a lot of questions about this life, things that they want, etc., but who is asking questions today about heaven, or salvation, or God? Very few.

Secondly, note that the Lord responded to the question even though he knew that the man was not sincere.

We ought to deal with others the same way. They may ask a question to trap us, or to scorn us, but we never can tell where the Word may bear fruit, and so we need to take advantage of every opportunity we have to tell others about the Gospel. The Apostle Paul is a good example of one who hated Christ, and yet was to become one of the most devoted followers of our Lord that He has ever had.

Third, notice that the Lord put the lawyer on the defensive by asking him a question. And it was a question which directed the lawyer right to the Word of God, indicating that the answer was there.

Fourth, the answer of the Lawyer was very perceptive. He mentioned the two commandments which the Lord was to say later were the greatest of all of the commandments--one having to do with God; the second, with man.

But his answer showed that, although he knew the truth of the OT Scriptures, yet they had not done anything to his heart--or he would have been a follower of Christ.

Finally, note how the Lord responded to him: "Thou has answered right: this do, and thou shalt live."

Would you have answered the lawyer that way? I thought that salvation was by faith, not by obedience to the Law, nor by any other act of obedience or good work. How can we explain our Lord's answer. Surely He was not trying to deceive the lawyer just because the lawyer was trying to deceive Him!

There were probably two things that the Lord was doing here--both are true, and both are very important doctrines of Scripture:

1) "By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20b). This man needed to be convicted of

his sin, and that is one way the Spirit of God uses the Word. When this man learned that he did not love God the way the Word said that he should, then he would know that he needed a Saviour, not a lawyer!

2) The Lord may also have been teaching here that "by their fruits ye shall know them." Cf. Matt. 7:15-20--a very, very important passage.

But how do we demonstrate that we really love the Lord, that we know Him and are trusting in Christ for salvation. The Lord said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). The Apostle John wrote,

> He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him (1 John 2:4, 5).

The Bible knows nothing of a Christian who ignores the Word of God in his daily life. Let us make sure that we understand this because it is being ignored in churches today.

Illus: the sad situation at Westminster Chapel today. Cf. the Banner of Truth magazine for January, 1987, p. 21.

Things were getting a little uncomfortable for the Lawyer by that time, and so he said . . .

10:29 "And who is my neighbor?"

Alford points out that "the Jews interpreted very narrowly and technically" this word neighbor "as excluding Samaritans and Gentiles" (quoted by Brown in JFB, V, p. 267). This makes the parable of the Good Samaritan that much more interesting since . . .

1) The robbers were probably Jews.
2) The man who got robbed was a Jew.
3) The priest was undoubtedly a Jew.
4) And so was the Levite.

2/16/87

10:30 The Lord responded to the lawyer's question with THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

There is no reason for us not to think that the man who fell among thieves was a Jew. Therefore, this should have stirred the hearts of the priest and the Levite, who also were Jews.

Matthew Henry believed that this had actually happened since the Lord mentioned Jerusalem and Jericho. Perhaps the lawyer himself was well-acquainted with the circumstances which our Lord was describing. The man probably was on business, and may have been carrying with him considerable wealth. They not only took his possessions, but also his clothing, and then beat him up to the point that he was almost dead.

10:31 The words "by chance" mean that it happened. This lawyer, being a scribe, would have been very familiar with priests and Levites, and so he knew what they were like. The priest saw the man, knew that he was in real trouble, but passed by on the other side and wanted to have nothing to do with him.

10:32 The Levite even came over and looked at the man, and then did what the priest did.

These men were looked upon as religious leaders in the Jews' religion, and should have had compassionate hearts, especially for their own people, and, even beyond that, it seems that they would have wanted to be an example to their people. But they were both cold and heartless in their response, and probably felt that someone else would come along to help the man so that they would not have to be bothered.

10:33 The next one to come by was a despised Samaritan.

Originally Samaritans were inhabitants of Samaria, and were of the northern tribes of Israel. But about 721 B.C. the Assyrians took the inhabitants of Israel out of the cities of Samaria, and replaced them, as 2 Kings 17:24 says, with men from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim. So the cities of Samaria then became Gentile cities. This started a long history of conflict between the Jews and the Samaritans, some renegade Jews eventually lived among

them, intermarried with them, and so the Samaritans became a people of mixed blood--part Gentile, and part Jew. So they were greatly despised in our Lord's day, and yet this particular Jew, in the parable (assuming it was a true story), showed compassion toward the Jew, and helped him as it is described in this verse . . .

and in 10:34

and in 10:35.

He not only helped the Jewish man at the scene of the crime, but took him where he could be cared for, and agreed to assume the full cost of his care until he was well again.

This parable answers the question: "And who is my neighbour?" (v. 29).

We are not told that the Samaritan was a believer in Christ. He may not have been. But he was acting as that priest and Levite who professed to be of God's people should have acted. Often unbelievers act more like Christians than Christians, or professing Christians, do.

What the Lord was seeking to bring out was a twofold lesson:
1) That those who profess to be the people of God show by their actions that they are not! It is not the position that we hold that shows what we are, but the reaction we have when we see those who are in need.
2) Our neighbor is anyone in need when we are in a position to help them. It crosses racial barriers, and religious barriers, and cultural barriers. The life of Christ in us will move us to do good works that God may be glorified.
   The Samaritan acted more like a man of God than the priest and the Levite did, even though he may not have been a child of God either.

10:36 The Lord's question.

10:37 The lawyer did not have the grace to say, "The Samaritan," but he said, "He that shewed mercy on him."

And then the Lord told him to go and do the same (remember the subject) so that he could be sure that he would inherit eternal life. Obviously if the lawyer were to do so, he would have to have a change of heart, and only the Lord could do that for him.

The Law makes us see our need; only Christ can meet it.

The story pictures the Gospel. Sinners are like the wounded man. Satan is the attacker. The Law, represented by the Priest and the Levite, could not and would not help. But the despised Saviour came along bound up our wounds, poured in oil and wine, and sees us to full health--all at His expense. What a marvelous picture of the grace of God!

5. Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42.

2/17/87

THE THEME OF THIS CHAPTER SEEMS TO BE SERVING THE LORD. That is what the 70 were doing, and the Lord had to straighten them out in their thinking when they came back rejoicing that the demons had been subject to them.

This also was what was in the mind of the lawyer. He wanted to know what he could DO to inherit eternal life. To him, it was a matter of service. And this would have been the main idea, not only with him, but also with the priest and the Levite in the story of the GOOD SAMARITAN. Here the Lord put service in its rightful place. We do not earn salvation by our service, but we show that we are saved by our service, by our lives.

Now we come to the wonderful story of two very wonderful women: MARY AND MARTHA. Here again, the emphasis is upon SERVICE. See v. 40: "But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him (the Lord), and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to

serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me."

But let us notice the details of this story, so rich in its significance, a story which can be of great help to all of us.

10:38 The "certain village" was Bethany. Martha and Mary were the sisters of Lazarus. See John 11:1. They all were very dear to the Lord--believers. See John 11:5.

Martha may have been the older of the two sisters, and so it is said that she "received" the Lord "into her house."

10:39 But the word "also" in this verse seems to indicate that Mary did two things:
1) She also welcomed the Lord.
2) But in addition she "sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word."

I do not believe that the point of this story is that we have two women of different temperament: Martha, outgoing, industrious, active; Mary, quiet, contemplative, and maybe lazy. The Word of God has no encouragement for those who are slothful, and neither did the Lord Jesus have any encouragement for those who did not do their duty.

10:40 This verse tells us the problem. Martha "was cumbered about much serving." She was distracted, drawn at this time in two directions. She looked and acted like a woman in great turmoil, not only outwardly, but inwardly--in her soul!

The words "also" in v. 39 and "hath left me" in v. 40 indicate, as Godet pointed out that Mary began by serving as well as Martha; but that, having completed her task, she also sat to listen, rightly considering that, with such a guest, the essential thing was not serving, but above all being herself served (italics mine, Vol. II, p. 44).

The big question facing both women at that moment was, Which should have the greatest priority, serving the Lord with food, or sitting at His feet to hear His Word? Martha evidently wanted to hear the Lord, too, but she felt that she ought to serve Him first, and then let Him serve her with His teaching.

We ought to note that the three times that Mary of Bethany is mentioned in the Bible, she was always at the Lord's feet:
1) John 11:32.
2) John 12:3.
And this was not true of very many people, according to what we read in the Gospel records.

But notice the consequences of Martha's distraction. In her heart she was turned against both the Lord and Mary.

To the Lord she said, "Lord, dost thou not care . . . ?" That is, Does it not make any difference to you, aren't you concerned for me enough to see what Mary has done? She has left me to get everything ready all by myself!"

Let me ask you a question: DOES IT EVER BOTHER YOU THAT YOU HAVE SO MUCH TO DO, AND OTHERS SEEM TO GET BY WITH SO LITTLE TO DO? Or, DOES IT BOTHER YOU THAT THINGS SEEM TO GO SO WELL FOR OTHERS, BUT YOU ARE HAVING A TOUGH TIME? Martha's words were very emphatic, Lord, you of all people, doesn't it matter to you? We would love to tell the Lord what to do about some of the people we know, wouldn't we?

The Lord and Mary were both in trouble with Martha. Sometimes it seems that the Lord is more concerned about others than He is about us--and that is the way it seemed to Martha.

How did the Lord respond?

10:41 How gracious the Lord is? I wish I could read this verse the way the Lord spoke these words: "Martha, Martha, . . ." And then He told her what the trouble was, and where it was. The fault was not with the Lord, nor with Mary, but in her own heart. She was "care-

ful and troubled about many things."

"Careful" meant two things:
1) She was looking out for herself,
and, in doing so,
2) She was doing that which was really the Lord's work--to care for her. And as long as she was doing it, it looked to her like the Lord was not doing it.

"Troubled" is the result of looking out for ourselves. The first word speaks of her inward feeling; "troubled" speaks of how it had affected her outward behavior. She was in a turmoil, all torn up! Our Lord's words indicate that Martha was thinking too much about the importance of her work, of her efforts. Her turmoil brought out that her motives were not altogether pure.

10:42 After sifting through many of the translations of this expression, the KJV seems to be the best. The Lord was speaking of that which was the most important, that which should always have priority with us--not our service for the Lord, but His ministry to us through His Word. When that is right, everything else seems to fit into its proper place.

Concl: Taking the whole chapter into consideration, let us answer the following questions:
1) Going back to v. 20--is the one thing we delight in more than anything else, the fact that we are saved, that our names are written in heaven?
2) Going back to the story of the Good Samaritan, are the evidences of salvation to be seen in my life, or do I think of salvation as a reward for my good works?
3) What has the greatest priority in my life: the things that I do for the Lord, or what He does for me as daily I sit at His feet to hear His Word?

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Luke 11

Outline:

IV. JESUS' MINISTRY TOWARD JERUSALEM (Luke 9:51-19:27).

A. The first part (of three parts) (Luke 9:51-13:21).

6. The disciples instructed concerning prayer (Luke 11:1-13).

Intro: It is fitting that this account on prayer should follow the story of the Lord Jesus in the home of Mary and Martha where Mary sat at the Lord's feet to hear His Word. There are no two things that are of any greater importance in a Christian's relationship with His Lord than the Word of God and prayer. We read that the Apostles in the early church said, "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word" (Acts 6:4). Many are the examples and teachings set before us in the OT regarding prayer. The book of Psalms was the hymn book of Israel, but it was also a book of prayers. Every child of God should spend much time in the Psalms in learning to pray. There used to be a saying among Chinese Christians, "If you want to know how to talk to God, read the Psalms."

Perhaps you will remember that there is a special emphasis in the Gospel of Luke on prayer. Plummer says in his commentary on Luke, "More than any of the other Evangelists (Matthew, Mark, and John) S. Luke brings before his readers the subject of Prayer (p. xlv). Let me review some of the teachings for you before we begin this important passage in chapter 11.

First of all, Luke tells us much about the praying which the Lord Jesus did. If anything should impress upon our minds the great importance of prayer, it should be that our Lord prayed--prayed often, and it was not unusual for Him to spend long periods of time in prayer. As many have said, "If the Lord prayed, and in His humanity needed to pray, how much more should we pray because we need it much more than He did."

1) The first mention of our Lord's praying is Luke 3:21, when He was baptized.
2) Luke 5:15, 16 tells about how the Lord deliberately withdrew from a time of very busy ministry, to pray. What a rebuke this ought to be to us because that is often our excuse for not praying.
3) Luke 6:12 tells us that the Lord prayed all night before He chose the twelve men who were to be His Apostles. What a difference it would make in the Lord's work today if we prayed over every decision before those decisions were made.
4) Luke does not mention the place, Caesarea Philippi, but he does record the event when the Lord took His disciples away by themselves for a time of fellowship and instruction, where also He announced to them His coming death and resurrection, and we are told in Luke 9:18 that He prayed alone. Perhaps those we teach would be more influenced by our teaching if we prayed for them more than we do--even our children in our families.
5) Look at Luke 9:28, 29. Here the Lord prayed before His transfiguration. He loved the secluded spots where He could pray.
6) In the chapter which we have just concluded, we have one of the prayers of our Lord: Luke 9:21.
7) And then in the chapter before us, chapter 11, verse 1, we are told of the Lord's praying. And this is what led to this wonderful section on prayer which we will consider together.

But in order that you might have a complete picture of our Lord's praying in the Gospel of Luke, let me also give you the last two passages:

8) Our Lord's prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:39-46.
9) Our Lord's on the Cross. There are two of them:
   a) Luke 23:34. b) Luke 23:46.

It is very apparent that the Lord gave Himself continually to prayer. It is very possible that verses like Luke 4:42 refer to our Lord's praying although prayer as such is not mentioned there.

But, secondly, He also did much teaching regarding prayer. There is much more in this Gospel from chapter 11 on, but we have had Luke 6:28, "Pray for them that despitefully use you," and Luke 10:2, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest."

We have more teaching here in chapter 11--the first thirteen verses. And this is followed by an equally wonderful passage in Luke 18:1-14.

Add to these our Lord's words to Peter, James, and John in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:40).

These are the main passages dealing with prayer in the Gospel of Luke, and we would do well to consult them frequently that they might be impressed more and more upon our hearts so that we would do more praying, and the right kind of praying, than we do.

But now let us return to chapter 11--THE DISCIPLES INSTRUCTED CONCERNING PRAYER.

11:1 What a verse this is! The Lord was praying, and then one of the disciples prayed. Their prayer was, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." What a wonderful thing to see (1) the recognition of this need by one of the disciples, and, hopefully this expressed what was in all of their hearts. And (2) the recognition that, if they were to learn to pray, the Lord was the One to teach them. What an example the disciples are for us!

We do not have any evidence in Scripture of the teachings of John the Baptist on the subject of prayer, but it is interesting to note that this is one of the things that he taught his disciples. Prayer is common among people of all religions. Even the Jews in our Lord's day took three times each day for prayers. But not all prayer is true prayer. We as the Lord's people need to be taught to pray. It used to be that Bible schools and seminaries had courses on prayer, but they have become very rare, almost non-existent in our day. The people of God want to learn a lot of different things, usually having to do with methods of work, but how rare it is for someone to ask to be taught to pray. Perhaps it is because there are so few who really know how to pray.

11:2 The Lord gave here in vv. 2-4 what we commonly call, the Lord's prayer. This is one of the best known passages of Scripture. People usually know something about the 23rd Psalm and the Lord's prayer. We have this also in Matt. 6:9-13, where the Lord said, "After this manner therefore pray ye." Thus we should not think that, every time we pray, we should pray these very words, but the Lord was giving His disciples the basic elements of true prayer. Actually this cannot be the Lord's prayer, if we mean by that the prayer that He prayed. He would not pray, "And forgive us our sins" (v. 4a) because He never sinned. His prayer in the sense of being the prayer that He prayed is John 17--a prayer which only He could pray.

What are the main points in this model of prayer?

There are four:
1) The worship of God.
2) The work of God.
3) Our physical and material needs.
4) Our spiritual needs--especially with regard to sin.

We might feel, from our study of other prayers that we find in the Bible that there are others things that enter into praying, but the more you think about what the Lord gave here, the more you will realize that everything is here. Any one of these sections can be enlarged, but it was not the Lord's purpose to give the details, but to teach the basics of

true prayer. Let us examine them. First, with regard to WORSHIP.

To address God as "Father" was truly something new--an innovation. God is seldom spoken of as "Father" in the OT, but usually it is with reference to the nation, and not to the individual. We do have the case of Psa. 103:13,

> Like as a father pitieth his children,
> so the Lord pitieth them that fear him,

but the main passages are Deut. 32:6; Isa. 63:16; Jer. 3:4, 19; 31:9; Mal. 1:6; 2:10, 17. God, of course, can be addressed in other ways, but there is probably no way that delights Him more than for us to call Him, "Father"--"Our Father." We are His children, members of His family--born into that family. Cf. John 1:11-13.

In the light of this, what a tender and loving word it was that the Lord gave to Mary Magdalene when he said,

> Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father:
> but go to my brethren, and say unto them,
> I ascend unto my Father, and your Father;
> and to my God, and your God.

What simplicity, what tenderness, what trust, in those words, "Our Father"!

Notice, too, that in this expression, "Our," is the thought that there is a special place for us to pray with each other. We pray alone to be sure, but not always. We pray with each other as the children of God, as members of His family. We have fellowship with each other as together we come to "our Father" in prayer. Any man who is a father knows how delightful it is to hear this word from his children--or its equivalent. Do you parents remember how much fun you had trying to get your children to say, "Da-da," or "Ma-ma," and which they would say first? Our Frank and Carolyn were going through that while we were back in Philadelphia visiting them recently. Carolyn would lean over to Allison as she was feeding Allison, and say, "Ma-ma." And mischievous little Allison would respond with, "Da-da."

Romans 8:15, 16 tells us that this is the first work of the Holy Spirit when He indwells the newly born child of God:

> For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear;
> but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.
> The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

"Which art in heaven." He is not an earthly Father; He is our heavenly Father. That is where He is. This phrase may be omitted in some of your translations because it is not in all of the MSS of Luke's Gospel, but it is in some, and it is in Matt. 6:9. So we can consider it here.

How unworthy of our God and Father are those expressions which obviously forget or minimize His exalted position over us. If heaven is His dwelling place, the earth is His footstool, and so, as the Lord said to His people through the prophet Isaiah in Isa. 66:1, 2,

> Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool:
> Where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?
> For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been,
> saith the Lord:
> but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit,
> and trembleth at my word.

Something more of the idea of this phrase is to be seen in Psa. 103:19,

> The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens;
> and his kingdom ruleth over all.

For God "our Father" to be in heaven is an expression of His majesty, His glory, the sovereign position which He holds over all the universe, and over all of the details of our lives. As such He, too, is the all-sufficient One, the One Who can without any question

meet every need which we have. What a wonderful things to be able to say, "Our Father which art in heaven"!

3/2/87

We continue with the worship: "Hallowed be thy name." This is the first petition in the prayer. God's Name speaks of His character, and His character as He has been pleased to reveal Himself. "Hallowed" means to make holy, or to acknowledge His Name to be holy. Holiness has been called "the attribute of attributes" because it sums up in one attribute all that God is. His name is set apart from all other names. There is none like He is. And the petition (being in the aorist, so Robertson says) sounds a note of urgency.

But the point is that in praying we begin with God, recognizing His position over us and over all others, even over the universe, and that He is infinite in His perfections. We miss a great deal of blessing because we do not spend more time contemplating the greatness and majesty of our God.

The second part of the prayer has to do with the work of God.

"Thy kingdom come" -- This is a prayer for the coming of the Lord because the kingdom will not come until the Lord comes. Only then will Satan be finally cast into the lake of fire, and his evil influence on earth will be over. Rev. 11:15 speaks of the time when "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

When that happens, what will the earth be like? The next petition gives the answer: "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth." Obviously that time has not come--but in God's time it will come! What a day that will be! Today very few care about the will of God. The will of God is treated as something which men can successfully oppose. But that is because they are ignorant of the power and majesty of the God of heaven.

The work of God will not finally prosper through the influence of the Church, but through the personal appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God's work at any period in the history of the world is dependent upon God alone, and therefore we need to pray for His blessing. Without His blessing, all of our efforts will be in vain.

And so, to this point in the prayer, we have God's Name, God's kingdom, and God's will.

11:3 Here we are to recognize that it is the Lord who cares for our daily physical needs. The Lord would have us trust Him day by day. Plummer says that the request means, "Continually give us day by day our bread for the coming day" (p. 296). Ryle gives what appears to be a better translation: "Give us for the day, or day by day the bread which is sufficient for our subsistence" (II, 8).

This certainly emphasizes the providence of God. Psa. 145:15, 16 says*

> The eyes of all wait upon thee;
> and thou givest them their meat in due season.
> Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.

This is why we bow our heads, or should do so, and give thanks for the food that is daily set before us. He gives it to us. We glorify Him when we recognize this, and we are humbled to realize that we really are dependent upon Him for each day's food.

Why "daily"? Cf. Prov. 30:7-9. See also Jacob's vow at Bethel in Gen. 28:20-22. This request is probably also a prayer against being covetous. Cf. 1 Tim. 6:6-10. "Bread" would not mean just bread, but the necessary essentials for life without the extras. We should eat to live, not live to eat. Cf. Prov. 23:1-8.

11:4 But we have another set of needs: spiritual needs--"And forgive us our sins."

3/3/87

Are we this sensitive to the things in our lives that are sinful. We need "daily bread" for our bodies, and we need daily forgiveness for our souls. Surely if anything should remind us of our sins it would be coming into the presence of Him Who is in heaven and whose Name is "hallowed," holy! Hab. 1:13a says,

> Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil,
> and canst not look on iniquity . . .

Sin is also the great hindrance to prayer itself. Cf. Psa. 66:18:

> If I regard iniquity in my heart,
> the Lord will not hear me.

To "regard" is to be aiming at sin, intending to sin. A person who prays and yet intends to go on sinning, or is planning to do something sinful, perhaps through the answer to prayer--that person will not be heard. Even "the thought of foolishness is sin" (Prov. 24:9. Sin and prayer do not go hand in hand. Cf. 1 Pet. 3:7.

Reviewing our sins is not intended to make us morbid, but it is intended to make and keep us humble. It is also a great preventive against future sinning.

This is a prayer that we will always need to pray. How important it is, then, that we pray that the Lord keep us from sinning--as follows in the next petition.

How thankful we should be for 1 John 1:9! To be forgiven is to be released from the punishment which that sin deserves. Our forgiveness is only through the blood of Christ. And when God forgives, He forgets! Cf. Heb. 10:17, "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

Can we make the next statement? " . . . for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us." Do we? We say, "We will if they ask us to, and if they are sincerely sorry." But that is not what it says. How wonderful it is to be able to tell people when they do come asking us to forgive them for something to be able to tell them that we already have! Notice the words, "every one." Their sins against us may be very great, but our sins against the Lord have been even greater. Joseph, the son of Jacob in the book of Genesis, is a good example of one who forgave before he was asked to. We need to remember Eph. 4: 30, 31:

> And let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking,
> be put away from you, with all malice;
> And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, **forgiving one another,**
> even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

An unforgiving spirit poisons our own souls, and grieves the Holy Spirit. See Eph. 4:30.

The last petition in this verse and in the prayer is, " . . . And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." The last part of the request is not in some of the MSS, and that is why it is missing in some of the modern translations. But it is in Matt. 6:13, and probably belongs here.

"Lead" is lit. to bring into. Man is often inclined to blame God for his sins, but James 1:13-15 tells us that God does not tempt us. As David said in Psalm 23, "He leadeth me in **the paths of righteousness** for his name's sake." He is never responsible for our sin. But such a verse teaches us that we need to use the teachings of Scripture in our prayers, as well as the promises.

"And deliver us from evil," lit., from the Evil One. We have a very real, a very evil and treacherous Enemy: the Devil, Satan. Peter has told us about him in 1 Pet. 8, 9. Paul has instructed us in Eph. 6:10-18 that we have two weapons to use against the Evil One: the Word of God, and prayer. Here the Lord was showing His disciples how to pray against

the Devil--"deliver us from the Evil One."

Do you see how prayer is to produce in us a constant humility?

We are to be humbled by the glory and holiness of God.
We are to be humbled by the magnificance of His work in the world.
We are to be humbled by our constant, daily, dependence upon Him.
We are to be humbled by our sins.
We are to be humbled by the way we have treated those who have sinned against us.
We are to be humbled by the danger we live in because of the Evil One.

Pray the words of this prayer if the Lord so leads. It is a wonderful prayer. But do not let this be the only way you pray. The Lord never intended for it to become a mere ritual, a formality. This is the only way a lot of people know how to pray. But if you can pray it from the heart, dwelling on each part and each petition, you can do no better. Whole books have been written on this prayer, and so we cannot exhaust its meaning in a few minutes. But, using your own words, or these words, let our prayers be characterized by what the Lord said when His disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray.

Before we leave this prayer . . .

Please turn to the conclusion to the prayer which is given to us in Matthew's Gospel: Matt. 6:13b, but it is even missing in some of the MSS of Matthew's Gospel:

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

We can say that the prayer ends as it began: with worship. Notice how our personal needs have been mingled together in the prayer with the grandeur of the purposes of God in the world--His kingdom, and His will, throughout the whole earth. We must keep both of these continually before our own hearts, and in our prayers. Matthew's conclusion to the prayer does this.

1) "Thine is the kingdom" -- It is God's work, God's will, that is to be done, and that will be done.
2) "And the power" --inherent in God Himself are all of the resources necessary for the accomplishment of His purposes, His will, the bringing about of His reign over all the earth, with all that that requires.
3) "And the glory" -- This is His purpose. He does all things for His own glory, to show the glory of His Person, but also that He might be glorified now and then in the hearts of His people. The glory is never ours, and we should never take it.

THE SECOND PART OF OUR LORD'S TEACHING ON PRAYER, AND ITS APPLICATION which together give us great encouragements to pray (Luke 11:5-13). The parable is in vv. 5-8; the application is in vv. 9-13.

11:5 Even "a friend" does not appreciate a visit at "midnight," and especially for such a request. Could not the one who went to his "friend . . . at midnight" have waited until the morning? The Lord had taught his disciples that they were to pray for bread, but should they try to get it at such an hour?

11:6 It is true that the friend who had come to the man's house was weary from his journey, and needed food, but still the request was unreasonable at such an hour.

11:7 The response to the request. The friend and his family were in bed, and he did not want to be disturbed himself, nor to disturb his children. Often when children are awakened at night, it is difficult to get them back to sleep again.

11:7 But what did the man who needed the bread do; did he give up in his request? No! He kept asking and asking until his "friend" got up, and gave him the bread. Did he do it because of their friendship? No! Nobody is willing to admit that he has any friends at midnight--if it means getting out of bed to help them.

I have been reading a chapter in Proverbs every day for the past seven months, and some of the truth of that wonderful book is getting to me. As I studied this I was reminded of Prov. 25:17,

> Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house;
> lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee.

This man in the parable was certainly running the risk of putting an end to what had been a perfectly good friendship. What made his "friend" give him as much bread as he needed? It was the realization that neither he nor his family would get any rest until the request was granted! Look at . . .

11:8 The key word here is "importunity." What does it mean?

Listen to what Matthew Poole (III, 229) says about this word:

> This in the Greek is called _____, **impudence**, which though in our language it is generally taken in an ill sense, yet here signifieth no more than a holy boldness, or pursuing our petitions notwithstanding delays or denials.

What an illustration for Paul's words in Col. 4:2, "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving." This is "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto **with all perseverance . . .**"

We all know that a Christian should pray. And it is fairly simple to set out to pray, and to keep it up for a time. And then, when we pray for several days, or even weeks, without seeing any visible answer to our prayers, it is easy to quit! We all seem to have a natural tendency to keep up with things with which we feel that we are accomplishing something. But to keep praying without receiving answers is something that we cannot keep up.

Why does the Lord not answer our prayers immediately?

One reason is, because, if He did, we would not keep coming to Him. He loves for us to seek His face continually.

Another reason is that He wants to strengthen our faith. We might think that just the opposite is true. We usually think just the opposite from the Lord in most things anyway. We feel that our faith is being destroyed. But it will actually be stronger if we have to pray longer.

A third reason is this: We need to realize that, in prayer, as well as in anything else that has to do with our obedience to the Lord, we cannot do it in our own strength. This is why we need to pay attention to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in connection with our prayers. See Eph. 6:18 and Jude 20b.

A fourth ~~and final~~ reason (although there are others that could be mentioned), the answers are delayed to make us realize how seriously we want what we are asking the Lord to do. For the man in the parable to go to his friend at midnight, and then refuse to take no for an answer, shows that he was desperate about his request; HE REALLY WANTED WHAT HE WAS ASKING FOR.

Fifth, unanswered prayer causes us to search our hearts to see if there is anything amiss in us!

And then, FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE DISCIPLES, AND FOR OUR ENCOURAGEMENT AS WELL, we have a series of commands and promises, emphasized with rhetorical questions, questions that you and I should answer as we read them.

11:9 We have a series of present tense commands here which are meant to convey the idea to us of asking, and continuing to ask; seeking, and continuing to seek; knocking (as in the parable), and continuing to knock.

And with each one there is a promise:

1) "And it shall be given you."

2) "And ye shall find."
3) "And it shall be opened unto you."
Note the certainty of these promises, and that there are no exceptions. Of course our prayers have to be according to the Word of God, but when you are asking for bread, THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD!

11:10 Here the promises are repeated--to show that they are absolutely certain. Cf. Gen. 41:32 where Joseph was explaining to Pharaoh why he had had two dreams which meant the same thing.

NOW THE QUESTIONS.

Vv. 11, 12 are questions about what we would do in certain situations, and it is being asked of fathers since we are dealing in prayer with our heavenly Father. V. 13, then, has to do with the truth that we should deduct from what God, our heavenly Father, would do. Would He be less compassionate toward us than earthly fathers are to their children?

11:11, 12 Answer the questions.

If your son would come to you, would you, instead of giving him something necessary, if you gave him anything at all, would it be something worthless like a stone, or something even harmful, like a serpent or a scorpion?

11:13 The deduction--in the light of what you earthly fathers would do, what would you expect of God--anything else, or less?

This verse has been greatly misunderstood, and misinterpreted, and so many of the Lord's people have been injured and confused by their understanding of it.

We read it as though it is saying, "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him for the Holy Spirit." But the Lord was not speaking here about asking for the Holy Spirit. He was talking about asking for bread.

The Apostles and early Christians tarried in the upper room in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit to come, but we do not read that they asked for the Holy Spirit.

There is nothing in the NT that tells us that we do not have the Holy Spirit until we ask for Him.

What, then, does it mean that the Father will "give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him"?

Let me answer that question by asking you another question. Please turn to Rom. 8:32.

What did Paul mean here when he said, "How shall He (God) not with him (Christ) freely give us all things"? Does God satisfy every want that we have, or our needs? This verse needs to be interpreted in the light of Rom. 8:28. God gives us all things in the sense of making them work for our good and His glory. We are helped by the all things that touch our lives, not hurt by them, because God is seeing to it that they do "work together for good." Cf. 2 Cor. 4:17, 18 - "worketh for us." Also 1 Cor. 3:21-23.
So, in this matter of prayer, where we need not only to pray, but to persevere in prayer, the Father charges the Holy Spirit with the responsibility to help us, to strengthen us, to lead us to pray for the right things, and to keep us praying until the request is granted, this is the what it means that the Holy Spirit is given to us. It has nothing to do with the indwelling presence of the Spirit, but with the work of the Spirit in our behalf as we pray. When God, the Father, blesses us in this way with the ministry of the Spirit, then we are praying in the Holy Spirit. So God even gets the glory when we persevere in prayer because we would never do it on our own. The Holy Spirit causes us to persevere.

3/17/87

We turn now to a new section. Let us review the outline.

I. THE PROLOGUE (Luke 1:1-4).
II. THE PREPARATION FOR JESUS' MINISTRY (Luke 1:5-4:13).
III. THE FIRST PERIOD OF JESUS' MINISTRY--IN GALILEE AND ITS VICINITY (Luke 4:14-9:50).

IV. JESUS' MINISTRY TOWARD JERUSALEM (Luke 9:51-19:27).
A. The first part (Luke 9:51-13:21).
7. A demoniac delivered (Miracle #15), the blasphemy of the Pharisees (see Matt. 12:24), and the Lord's warning to the people (Luke 11:14-36).

11:14 The parallel passages for this (vv. 14-36) are found in Matt. 12:22-45 and Mark 3:22-35.

Matthew stated that this man was "blind" as well as "dumb." He was obviously afflicted by a demon. Thus, this was a special affliction imposed by Satanic forces. The Lord was demonstrating here that His power was superior to that of Satan, which, following from the section on prayer, would have been a great encouragement to the people to pray.

But just taking Luke's account, let us ask the question, Why would the demon want to silence the voice of this man?

The answer is to be found in what the Bible has to say about the tongue. It is an instrument of great evil, and their are many passages which warn against the improper use of the tongue (e.g., 1 Pet. 2:1), yet the tongue can also be an instrument of great usefulness and blessing. Think of these uses:

1) To praise and glorify God. Sometimes we read of the mouth or the lips, but the emphasis is the same. Cf. Psa. 63:3, 4. See also Psa. 50:23. It is with our mouths that we offer to God "the sacrifice of praise" (Heb. 13:15). Satan does not want God to be worshipped, or glorified.
2) To confess sin. Cf. Psa. 51:1-9.
3) To call upon the Lord for help, esp. for salvation. Cf. Rom. 10:13.
4) To bear witness to the world of the power and saving grace of God. Cf. Acts 1:8; 1 Pet. 3:15.

The Devil does not want any of this, and so he afflicted people in our Lord's day with dumbness.

Just yesterday I read the Epistle of Paul to Philemon, and was blessed especially with vv. 4-6. Paul was praying for Philemon that his mouth would be open to speak of Christ.

And so we can see that the tongue can be an instrument of great glory for God and great blessing for man--neither of which does the Devil desire.

Notice how simple it was for the Lord Jesus to do this. The people were probably amazed both by the fact that He could do this as well as by the fact that it was so easy for Him. And so Luke recorded, "And the people wondered," i.e., marvelled! Matthew (12:23) said that this made them ask, "Is not this the son of David?"--i.e., the Messiah?

11:15 Matthew also said that the Pharisees said the words that are recorded in this verse. They were attributing the work of the Lord to the Devil.

There has been much discussion about this name, "Beelzebub." The true spelling is probably Baal-zebul which was a take-off from the god of the Philistines, Baalzebub, mentioned in 2 Kings 1:2, who was worshipped in Ekron, the god of the flies--a god so-named to protect the land from the kind of a plague with which the Egyptians were afflicted in Moses' day. Baal-zebul would mean the god of dung, a name to show their contempt for the Devil. At

least this is the explanation given by several reliable commentators.

Whatever the etymology of the word might be, what the Pharisees were saying is perfectly clear. They were guilty of blasphemy.

11:16 Show an unbeliever one evidence of divine power, and his hardened heart will lead him to disregard it by asking for another. Cf. 1 Cor. 1:22. But see also Luke 16:31, " . . . neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." Men are not even persuaded that Jesus is the Christ by His own resurrection.

Note: They were "tempting him." This means that they were not sincere in their question; they were people filled with guile.

11:17 From this verse on down to v. 26 the Lord answered the blasphemy of the Pharisees.

The Lord knew the thoughts which prompted their words, that they were not really an indication of a desire to know whether or not He was the Messiah. And he wanted the Pharisees to see how illogical their explanation was. It is interesting to have this additional example of the fact that the Lord answered questions even when He knew that the hearts of those who asked them were insincere.

The Lord stated an obvious truth here. In v. 18 He applied this truth to what the Pharisees had said about His alliance with the Devil, or Satan.

11:18 "Satan," the adversary, has a kingdom. He is "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4). He is "the prince of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). See also what Paul wrote in Eph. 2:1-3. If the Devil is divided against himself, his kingdom cannot survive. That is very clear!

11:19 There are two prominent interpretations of this verse, and the problem has to do with to whom the Lord was referring when He said, "By whom do **your sons** cast them out?"

The first is that He was referring to His own apostles, indicating that they would have been more gracious with them than they were with Him.

The second is that He was referring to certain exorcists. Cf. e.g., Acts 19:13, where they were actually using the Name of the Lord. There probably were those in our Lord's day who were not using His Name, but who claimed to be able to cast out demons.

Add to this statements like we have in Matt. 7:21-23. Also, Matt. 24:24.

Whether or not their "sons" were actually able to do this is not necessarily confirmed, but this is what they claimed that they were able to do. Like the magicians in Egypt.

This latter interpretation seems the most likely. Amazing powers of the Devil and of God were at work during the earthly ministry of our Lord, and in the days which immediately followed.

11:20 In place of "the finger of God" Matthew used "the Spirit of God" (Matt. 12:28). This gives us a clue to the meaning of "the finger of God."

This term, "the finger of God," was first used in the Bible by the Egyptian magicians in Ex. 8:19. See also Ex. 31:18. Cf. Psa. 8:3; Dan. 5:5.

So our Lord was saying, "If I am doing this by the power of God, God's finger, God's Spirit, then . . ." The coming of the kingdom of God may have been a reference by our Lord to the statement made in Dan. 2:44. This would have meant that these signs truly meant

that the promised Messiah had come--which was the case. And so, instead of fighting the truth, they should have submitted themselves gladly to the Lord.

HAVING MADE HIS POINT THAT HIS WORK COULD NOT BE THE WORK OF SATAN, THE LORD WENT ON TO POINT OUT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FACT THAT HIS POWER WAS DEMONSTRATED TO BE GREATER THAN THAT OF THE DEMONS, AND OF SATAN.

11:21 Satan would be represented by this "strong man."

Satan's "palace" would be the place where men are held in bondage by him. They are Satan's "goods." Everything seems peaceful--but it is a false peace.

11:22 The One Who is "stronger than he" portrays our Lord.

The work of our Lord in casting out the demon foretold the eventual overthrow of the rule of Satan, and his complete downfall. Cf. Rev. 11:15 where we see that

> . . . there were great voices in heaven, saying,
> The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord,
> and of his Christ;
> and he shall reign for ever and ever.

See also Rev. 20:1-3, and then v. 10.

Thus 1 John 4:1-4 (esp. v. 4) is filled with comfort for us as believers in Christ.

11:23 Jesus Christ is the ultimate Victor. No man can remain neutral in this conflict. If a man is not actually and positively for the Lord, he is against Him, and ultimately doomed to eternal perdition.

BUT THE LORD THEN GAVE A FURTHER WORD OF WARNING.

11:24 It is not enough to be delivered from the demon. If this is all that there is to what was going on with the man who was demon-possessed. Why? Because the demons would be back if they find that the house is not inhabited by someone else--namely, our Lord.

11:25 This is the meaning of our Lord's words in this verse.

11:26 And so the demon would go and get seven other demons, "more wicked then himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first."

This illustrates our Lord's words in Matt. 6:23b,

> If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness,
> how great is that darkness!

Peter said in 2 Pet. 2:20, 21,

> For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world
> through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
> they are again entangled therein, and overcome,
> the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.
> For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness,
> than, after they have known it,
> to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.
> But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb,
> The dog is turned to his own vomit again;
> and the sow to her wallowing in the mire.

CONCLUSION: What are some of the lessons the Lord was seeking to teach the people who heard him on that day? There are several.

1) The Lord was teaching that, in the final analysis, there are only two kingdoms--the kingdom of Satan, and the kingdom of God. There is no third, no middle ground. We are either in one or the other. There is no neutral ground.

2) Those who are held by Satan are hopelessly in bondage. Other people cannot help them. They cannot help themselves. Man's only hope of deliverance from the bondage of Satan is in Jesus Christ.

3) It is not enough to be delivered from our troubles--drinking, marriage problems, drugs, immorality of any kind. If the Lord does not come in to assure permanent deliverance, "the last state of that man is worse than the first.

4) Consequently, as Bishop Ryle has well pointed out, man must not stop short of what he calls, "entire conversion to God." We need reformation, but reformation alone is not enough. We need regeneration!

   It is not enough to stop doing what we have been doing. It is not even enough to start going to church, or giving our money, or to get involved in helping other people. This is often recommended as therapy to keep us free. But nothing but a complete change of heart brought about by the Holy Spirit, will finally meet our need before God.

5) The Lord certainly indicated that there can be no delay in seeing that our house has another Inhabitant--the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The need is urgent. Cf. Prov. 29:1; 2 Cor. 6:2.

3/23/87

We come now to the last part of the section which began with the deliverance of the demoniac in 11:14. That miracle was followed by the blasphemous remarks of the Pharisees (so Matt. 12:24 identifies them). And at this point, 11:27, the Lord turned His attention to the people and spoke to them.

11:27 The phrase, "as he spake these things," ties this verse with the preceding statements of our Lord. It may be that the theme which Luke now develops was connected with what had just happened, or it may simply mean that this "certain woman" made this remark after hearing the Lord speak, and that that was what caused the Lord to say what He did.

It is really wonderful to read the words of this woman just after we have been considering what the Pharisees had said about the Lord Jesus, linking Him to Beelzebub! She spoke with what the commentator David Brown called, "true womanly feeling" (V, p. 271). She must have felt very deeply about this because Luke said that she "lifted up her voice." All of the people around her heard what she said. She, as a woman, could think of nothing more wonderful than to have been the mother of such a Teacher. Whether or not she had actually recognized the Lord Jesus as the Messiah, we do not know. But she had been greatly impressed by His teaching. This was her beatitude. She was calling Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus, "Blessed."

Before we are too hard on her, let us turn to Luke 1 and review some of the things which we considered in that chapter.

First, note what the angel said to the virgin Mary in Luke 1:30.

Second, look at Luke 1:42--the words of Elisabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. The word she used is a different word from what the woman in Luke 11 used, but the meaning is the same.

Third, see what Mary herself said in Luke 1:46-49 (esp. v. 48).

So Mary was blessed, greatly blessed of the Lord, blessed, we could say more than any other woman ever has been. See Luke 1:46, 47. Women are usually happy when they give birth to a child, but no joy ever surpassed the joy that Mary had in being the mother of the Lord Jesus. So what this woman in Luke 11 said was true, very true!

11:28 And the Lord agreed with her! "Here Jesus does not deny the woman's statement, but He points out how inadequate it is" (Plummer, p. 306). It was as though He said, "That may be true, but . . ." Cf. a similar statement in Luke 8:21. The woman chosen of God was truly blessed of God and happy above all others on the human realm, but there is a greater joy than that--and the Lord, who always made the most out of every occasion, told the woman what that greater joy is:

> Ye rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God,
> and keep it.

If the Lord had intended to set Mary apart to be worshipped by the people of succeeding generations, this would have been the time for Him to do so. But He did not. Instead He pointed out that the greatest joy a person can experience in this life is not the joy of having a certain place in life, nor of possessing everything one might desire. Cf. Luke 12:15:

> Take heed, and beware of covetousness,
> For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of thing which he possesseth.

The greatest joy, the greatest happiness has to do with spiritual things, with the Bible, the Word of God. That is where the greatest joy is--in hearing the Word of God, and then keeping it.

Cf. Psalm 1. See also Rev. 1:3; 22:7.

Note what Jeremiah said in Jer. 15:16. Also Psa. 119:97, 111, 162. Note the words of Job in Job 23:12.

For the person who is concerned about what it means to have a happy life, there are no more important words to be found anywhere in the Word of God. The secret of true happiness is right here!

What does it mean to "hear the word of God"?

It means to listen to the Word of God, to learn what it has to say. Our Lord linked hearing and understanding in Luke 8:10. Paul used it in the same way in Gal. 4:21 where he wrote, "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? It is that attitude of heart which was manifested by the Thessalonians which brought such delight to the heart of the Apostle Paul, as he mentioned in 1 Thess. 2:13. (Read.) And so it means to receive it as the authoritative Word of God. It means to hear it with the intention of believing what it teaches, and doing what it says.

What does it mean to "keep" the Word of God?

It speaks of guarding the Word in the sense of taking great care not to violate it, to observe its teachings, to live by it. This, in essence, is what it means to fear the Lord.

So the more we understand the Word, and live according to the Word, the greater our joy will be.

An important passage along this line is found in James 1:19-25. After saying that we have been begotten by the will of God "with the word of truth," James said that we are to hear the Word, but not let it stop there; we need to do what it says. And always keep in mind that it is God's Word!

Application: This means that when we read the Word, or hear it preached, or even read a book in which the writer is seeking to explain the Word, we need to be concerned about these two things:

1) Am I understanding what I am hearing? Our faith is strengthened, not just by reading the words of Scripture, or listening to a message, spoken or written, but when I actually understand what the Word says. Solomon said,

> Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom:
> and with all thy getting get understanding (Prov. 4:7).

For this we have to depend upon the Lord. See what He did for Lydia in Acts 16:14. Luke spoke of her as one who

> . . . heard us: whose heart the Lord opened,
> that she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul.

This is also spoken of in Scripture as the work of the Holy Spirit. Cf. 1 Cor. 2:12, 13.

The second thing that we need to be concerned about is:

2) What is there in this passage that the Lord wants me to do?

One thing more before we leave these two verses (27, 28): "Hear" and "keep" in v. 28 are both present participles. Well, you say, what does that mean? It means that we could translate v. 28 in this way:

> Yea rather, blessed are they that are continually hearing the word of God,
> and continually keeping it.

We do not just hear the Word of God once, or even once in a while, or once a week, but we are hearing it and keeping it all of the time! Daily, and even several times a day, we need to seek a greater understanding of the Word, and then obey it. This is the way to live in a continual state of joy. This is the way to make every day a good day.

Now let us go on to see what the Lord said afterwards.

11:29 The words here describe a crowd which continued to grow. And so here the Lord was speaking to the people--a large number of people.

He called them "an evil generation." It was (and ours is the same) is "evil" in nature, and its influence upon the people of such a generation is "evil." A "generation" has to do with the people who are living on the earth at a particular time. We are members of this present "generation." It is evil because it does not help anyone move toward God, only away from Him.

And it is interesting to see that the Lord said "an evil generation" is one that seeks "a sign." They did that in v. 16 of this chapter. The Lord had just given them a sign in delivering the demoniac, but they wanted more. Men always want more.

But the particular point that the Lord was making here was that they were not satisfied with the Word of God. They did not believe the Word of God, and, as Paul wrote later in Rom. 14:23, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." In asking for a sign they were saying, "I will not believe unless I can see." In Matthew's account we have the additional word, "adulterous" (Matt. 12:39).

But the Lord said that the only sign they would have was the sign of the prophet Jonah--and being called a "prophet" means that he was a spokesman for God. On this passage we need to see what Matthew wrote in Matt. 12:38-42.

The sign was that Jonah's time in the whale's belly, three days, was a type of the time that our Lord would spend in the grave following His death. The generation to whom the Lord was speaking would see that sign fulfilled, which was more than the sign itself, but still they would not believe.

It does not seem that the Lord was saying that the people of Nineveh understood the sign,

but they repented at the preaching of Jonah without a sign. They repented at the Word of God, but the people of that day were not satisfied with the Word of God. The Lord came back to Jonah in v. 32 of Luke 11.

11:30 What Jonah was to that generation of Ninevites, the Lord was to be to the generation living at that time--first of all by His preaching, and then by His death and resurrection. But, as the Lord said in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, men's hearts are so evil that they will not believe even though one has risen from the dead, as He did. See Luke 16:31,

> And he (Abraham) said unto him (the rich man),
> If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded,
> though one rose from the dead.

11:31 Another illustration: The Queen of Sheba made a long trip at great expense of money and time to hear "the wisdom of Solomon." What was "the wisdom of Solomon"? It was the Word of God! Here desire to hear the Word of God was so great that she will "rise up" in the judgment day to condemn the men who lived in Israel during the Lord's life here on earth because, instead of hearing His Word, they asked for more signs! And this was the case even though "a greater than Solomon is here." Solomon learned the truth of God as we have to learn it, but our Lord is the wisdom of God.

11:32 The same is said with respect to Jonah and his preaching in Nineveh where the whole city turned to the Lord "at **the preaching** of Jonah." And who is the greater, Jonah or Christ!

Application: How our hearts should condemn us because of those times in our lives when the Word of God has not been enough. We see that the Lord had even the unregenerate in mind when He said, "Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."

The discourse continues as the Lord was responding to those who were seeking a sign, but now it takes more of the form of an appeal to them, such as we have in v. 35.

11:33 This statement was used a number of times by our Lord. See Luke 8:16-18. Also Matt. 5:15; 6:22, 23. Cf. Mark 4:21.

Neither Solomon nor Jonah nor our Lord sought to hide the truth, but they proclaimed the truth. They lighted candles so that all who came to them, or to whom they went, would be able to see the light--to benefit from it so that they would no longer be in the darkness. This they did by preaching. (What an argument for preaching! It is like lighting a candle for those who are in darkness.)

11:34 Following along with the illustration--the body is able to benefit from the light with the eye. If the eye is single, or healthy, it is like flooding the whole body with light. Single can also mean "singleness of purpose, looking right at its object" (JFB, V, 43). But if the eye is evil, that is, diseased or even blind, it is just the same as if the light were not shining. And so the whole body is full of darkness.

The singleness of purpose which they needed was to learn how they could know God, and then how they could please and serve Him with their lives. People have many reasons for going to church, or seeking help from a pastor or some Christian they know. Often it is to clear up some problem that they have, but it is not to bring the whole life into harmony with the Word and will of God, and so they do not see the light. The Gospel is not given to meet just special needs we are concerned about, but to change the whole person.

This was the problem with the crowd. It was not that they needed more light; they needed to see the light which was already given to them--but they could not see. They were "an

evil generation." They needed to plead with the Lord to help them to see, to understand, the truth.

11:35 Here we have our Lord's admonition: "Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness."

This was a warning to them to make sure they were hearing the message--in that sense, seeing the light which was set before them.

11:36 The meaning of this verse is that, if the light gets in at all, there will be no need of signs.

Lessons:

1) An illustration of an evil eye is seen in the Parable of the Sower, and the seed which fell among the thorns. See Luke 8:14.

2) Another is the man who seeks to serve two masters--in this sense, double-minded. When this is the case he is not really looking for the light.

3) People need to be told about the importance, the tremendous importance, of what it means to hear the Word. The person with a single eye wants not just to listen, but to understand.

4) This passage also stresses the importance of faith, taking God at His Word, believing the truth. Cf. Jas. 1:5-8.

5) We constantly need to be praying the prayer of Psa. 119:18,

   Open thou mine eyes,
   that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

   Paul's prayer for the Ephesian believers should be our prayer for each other. See Eph. 1:15-23. See also his prayer for the Colossians in Col. 1:9, 10. Note how knowing and walking--hearing and keeping--are both included.

6) Although the Lord was speaking to unbelievers, yet there is also an extremely important lessons for us as Christians always to keep in mind--that is the value of having a single heart. Bishop Ryle has expressed it very wonderfully and clearly in the following words:

> But when can it be truly said that a man's heart is single in religion? What are the marks of a single heart? The question is one of deep importance. Well would it be for the Church and the world if single hearts were more common!
>
> The single heart is a heart which is not only changed, converted, and renewed; but thoroughly, powerfully, and habitually under the influence of the Holy Ghost. It is a heart which abhors all compromises, all lukewarmnesses, all halting between two opinions in religion. It sees one mighty object--the Love of Christ dying for sinners. It has one mighty aim--to glorify God and do His will. It has one mighty desire--to please God and be commended by Him. Compared with such objects, aims, and desires, the single heart knows nothing worthy to be named. The praise and favor of man are nothing. The blame and disapprobation of man are trifles light as air. "One thing I desire--one thing I do--one thing I live for:" This is the language of the single heart. (Psl. xxvii. 4; Luke x. 42; Philip. iii. 13.) Such were the hearts of Abraham, and Moses, and David, and Paul, and Luther, and Latimer. They all had their weaknesses and infirmities. They erred no doubt in some things. But they all had this grand peculiarity: they were men of one thing. They had single hearts. They were unmistakably "men of God."

The blessings of a single heart in religion are almost incalculable. He who has it does good by wholesale. He is like a light-house in the midst of a dark world: he reflects light on hundreds whom he knows nothing of. "His whole body is full of light:" his Master is seen through every window of his conversation and conduct; his grace shines forth in every department of his behaviour; his family, his servants, his relations, his neighbours, his friends, his enemies, all see the bias of his character, and all are obliged to confess, whether they like it or not, that his religion is a real and influential thing. And not least, the man of a single heart finds a rich reward in the inward experience of his own soul. He has meat to eat the world knows not of. He has a joy and peace in believing to which many indolent Christians never attain. His face is toward the sun, and so his heart is seldom cold.

Let us pray and labour that we may have a single eye and a whole heart in our Christianity. If we have a religion let us have a thorough one. If we are Christians, let us be decided. Inward peace and outward usefulness are at stake in this matter. Our eye must single, if our whole body is to be full of light.

-- J. C. Ryle,
Expository Thoughts on The Gospels,
St. Luke, II, pp. 39, 40.

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8. The Lord and the Pharisees--various warnings (Luke 11:37-12:12).

3/30/87

There are three parts to this rather lengthy section:

a. The Lord's warnings to the Pharisees (11:37-44).
b. The Lord's warnings to the lawyers (11:45-54).
c. The Lord's warnings to the disciples about the Pharisees (12:1-12).

In many respects these warnings all follow from what the Lord had been saying to the crowd in the first part of chapter 11, that is, reality, genuineness, and singleness of purpose in man's relationship with God. The Pharisees were masters of hypocrisy. And Poole says of them, "The Pharisees were, as to the generality of them, the most bitter, stubborn, and implacable enemies Christ had . . ." (Vol. III, p. 231). And so it is not surprising that they opposed Him, nor is it surprising that the Lord spoke to them as He did.

a. The Lord's warning to the Pharisees (11:37-44).

11:37 We are not told who this Pharisee was. He probably had listened to what the Lord had been saying to the people. And so he asked the Lord to come to his home for a meal (the Greek expression here indicates that it was either breakfast or lunch). And the Lord accepted his invitation.

There undoubtedly (from what the following verses indicate) were other Pharisees present, as well as some scribes and lawyers. The Lord turned his attention to the lawyers in vv. 45-54.

We need to observe here that the Lord did not hesitate to spend time with those who did not believe on Him even though He knew that their motives were anything but sincere.

11:38 The Lord went in to the Pharisees home, and sat down without the usual ceremonial washing that it was customary for the Jews to observe. Failure to do this was equal to admitting that one had been impure. See Matt. 15:1-20; Mark 7:1-23.

The Lord did not rebuke them here for setting aside the Word of God as He did in the two

passages cited above, but instead He denounced their hypocrisy in vv. 39-42,
their pride in v. 43.,
the evil influence they had on the people in v. 44.

Note how each of these inevitably leads to the next one.

But the Pharisee was offended that the Lord did not wash His hands, and, from what the Lord said in the following verses, we can assume that the Pharisee must have expressed himself to the Lord about this in no uncertain terms.

11:39-42 The Pharisees' hypocrisy.

11:39 Note that Luke used the title, "the Lord," here, as he did in 7:13. Thus Luke would emphasize that this was an expression of Deity. Although the Pharisee did not realize it, he was entertaining the Lord of heaven and earth, One Who not only looked on the outward appearances of men, but One Who knew their hearts.

And it goes without saying that hypocrites know that they are hypocrites. That is the reason they become so angry when their empty profession is exposed.

He used their circumstances at the table as an illustration of what they were. He was saying, in effect, that they would not think of washing dishes just on the outside, and then eating out of them while the inside was dirty. But that is what their lives were like. They took a great deal of care that they observed ceremonies like washing, but they paid no attention to the condition of their hearts. Outwardly they sought to be clean, but inwardly they were filled with "ravening and wickedness"--greed (covetousness) and wickedness (a wicked frame of mind, a wicked heart--Thayer says, "depravity . . . evil purposes and desires" [p. 530]). In other words, they were unregenerate! The two words have the relationship to each other of effect and cause. Men are greedy, covetous, because they are depraved. Or, as we often say, we sin because we are sinners; we sin outwardly because we are sinners inwardly. And that inner corruption cannot be washed away with any ceremonial washing.

It is true that the Law required washings in many instances, but they were symbolic of that greater cleansing which only God can effect. When the symbol becomes the main thing, then the truth is set aside. The Pharisees were inclined, as our Lord's words went on to show, to major in minors, and to ignore the majors. This is what hypocrisy is, and this is what hypocrisy does to us.

11:40 "Fools" means to be without understanding. They were claiming to be teachers of the Law, but their behavior displayed their ignorance.

God did not just make us body, but He made us "a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). This is often spoken of in Scripture as the heart! The heart must be cleansed first, and then the outer man can be clean also. But only God can cleanse the heart. The Lord taught,

Blessed are **the pure in** heart:
for they shall see God (Matt. 5:8).

The Pharisees had forgotten what Samuel was told about the sons of Jesse when the Lord sent him to that home to anoint the man who was to be the next King of Israel:

But the Lord said unto Samuel,
Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature;
because I have refused him (i.e., Eliab):
for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance,
but the Lord looketh on the heart (1 Sam. 16:7).

Solomon, David's son, said,

Keep thy heart with all diligence;
for out of it are the issues of life (Prov. 4:23).

Even Moses told the Israelites just before he died, "Only take heed to thyself, and keep

thy soul diligently" (Deut. 4:9a).

These are truths which the world is ignorant of, and many people who try to be religious are ignorant of it, too. Even Christians are inclined to forget it.

11:41 This is a difficult verse which believers have struggled with in trying to arrive at the true meaning.

Some say that the Lord must have spoken these word in irony, as though He were saying, "You think because you give alms that that is all that it takes to clean you up on the inside." That was true, but it does not seem to fit here.

Instead, it is interesting to note the literal meaning of the Greek text for this verse.

The NASB renders it this way:

But give that which is within as charity,
and then all things are clean for you.

It could also be rendered,

But give that which is within as alms,
and then all things are clean for you.

The point is this: the Lord was saying that if we give out of our hearts first, then that puts meaning and reality into what we do outwardly.

And this fits in with v. 42.

The first of three woes. See also vv. 43, 44.

11:42 "But woe to you." That is, instead of putting first things first they were putting second thing first, and consequently the judgment of God was upon them.

Cf. Matt. 23:23. The Lord evidently pointed out this truth to the Pharisees on more than one occasion.

It was right to tithe. In Luke 18:12 the Lord told of the Pharisee who said in his prayer, "I give tithes of all that I possess." And this was evidently true. But his problem was that he was trusting in what he was doing for the Lord, and not in what the Lord had done in showing mercy toward him.

The Lord was not condemning tithing under the Law. But He was saying that the Lord could not be pleased with our giving if He did not have our hearts. And the evidence that He has our hearts will be our attention to "judgment and the love of God," which here probably means, love for God. In Matt. 23:23 the Lord added "mercy, and faith." Think of these four things:

1) Judgment--dealing with people in a righteous manner.
2) Love of God, or for God.
3) Mercy--compassion toward others.
4) Faith--saving faith, and that daily faith without which it is impossible to please God.

Bishop Ryle has said (Luke, II, p. 45):

> The conduct of the Pharisees in this matter unhappily does not stand alone. There have never been wanting religious professors who have exalted second things of Christianity far above the first, and in their zeal for the second things have finally neglected the first things entirely. There are thousands at the present day who make a great ado about daily services, and keeping Lent, and frequent communion, and turning to the East in church, and a gorgeous ceremonial, and intoning public prayers--but never get any further. They know little or nothing of the great practical duties of humility, charity, meekness, spiritual-mindedness, Bible reading, private devotion, and separation from the world. They plunge into every gaiety with greediness. They are to be seen at every worldly assembly and revel: at the race, the opera, the theatre, and the ball. They exhibit nothing of the mind of Christ in their daily life. What is all this but walking in the steps of the Pharisees?

The Lord was not saying that the outward things are not important. We need to do them, too. But if they are not the expression of a sincere heart, it is only an act, and instead of bringing blessing, it will come under the judgment of God.

11:43 After speaking of the Pharisees' hypocrisy, the Lord spoke of their pride.

Cf. on this point, Luke 20:45-47. Hypocrisy always produces pride, not humility. And "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Pet. 5:5b). Prov. 15:33 and 18:12 tell us that "before honour is humility." "The uppermost seats in the synagogues" were reserved for the doctors; that was the place proud men wanted to be. This statement speaks of selfish ambition, status seeking, glorying in titles and degrees.

How different this kind of behavior is from our Lord! Cf. Matt. 11:29, 30; Phil. 2:5-7.

When Peter went to the house of Cornelius, the word tells us that Cornelius fell at His feet, "and worshipped him" (Acts 10:25). What did Peter do and say? Acts 10:26 tells us this: "But Peter took him up, saying,
Stand up; I myself also am a man."

11:44 Finally in this section, the Lord spoke of the evil influence of the Pharisees upon the lives of those who were following their teaching.

Compare this with what the Lord said along the same line in Matt. 23:27.

Under the Law (Num. 19:16) "to touch a grave rendered a man unclean for seven days" (Godet, II, 80). The Jews did not know that their leaders had successfully concealed their own corruption, and that, to follow them, was to become more of a child of hell than they were. Cf. Matt. 23:13, 15. They submit to the influence of the Pharisees and become like they are: proud, hypocritical, ungodly.

Note what the Lord said about teachers in Jas. 3:1. Cf. also Peter's words to the elders in 1 Pet. 5:1-4. Cf. 1 Tim. 4:12. And note what Paul said in 1 Cor. 11:1.

By way of contrast, note what the Lord said in Matt. 23:1-12.

How careful leaders need to be about the reality of their relationship with the Lord, and how careful people need to be that they are following true men of God!

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8. The Lord and the Pharisees--various warnings (Luke 11:37-12:12).

a. The Lord's warnings to the Pharisees (Luke 11:37-44).

b. The Lord's warnings to the lawyers (Luke 11:45-54).

11:45 The lawyers, who usually were also Pharisees, complained that the Lord was treating them outrageously, insulting them--indicating that they did not deserve the rebukes that the Lord had given them. (See Robertson, p. 167, and Plummer, p. 312.) And so the Lord turned especially to them. One spoke, but there probably were others present with him.

Application: People are quick to say that we are not acting in love if we rebuke people who are promoting error, or who are not serving the Lord according to the truth. It is amazing how people are inclined to tolerate anything in the name of religion, while they set the truth aside. But obviously this was not the Lord's way. We should not be hateful in rebuking others, but sometimes strong words are needed to make people realize what we are saying. People who want to be true and faithful will thank us; it is the

hypocrite, the one who has an axe to grind, who objects as the lawyer objected here. And we can see from vv. 53, 54 that they remained unchanged after the Lord had said what He did.

11:46 This section is easily divided. We have three woes delivered to the lawyers by the Lord, followed by vv. 53, 54 which give us the reaction of the scribes and Pharisees. This follows the same pattern as in our Lord's words to the Pharisees in vv. 42, 43, 44 where there were also three woes. The three woes here are:
1) The first woe (v. 46).
2) The second woe (vv. 47-51).
3) The third woe (v. 52).

A woe used as the Lord used the word here is a warning of judgment. It was a word used by the OT prophets, a word calling for a change, for repentance! But it was not taken that way by the lawyers, and it had not been taken that way by the Pharisees. The truth will either soften our hearts, or harden us.

There are two problems here.

First, we know that the lawyers, and the Pharisees generally, had not been content to abide by the Word of God as it had been revealed through Moses and the prophets of the OT, but they had added to what the Word of God said. Many of these additions were later written down in the Mishna, and it was treated as the traditional doctrine of the Jews.

But cf. Deut. 4:2; 12:32; 28:14; Joshua 1:7; Prov. 30:5, 6. In the NT see Rev. 22:18, 19. What a very important thing it is to stay by the Word of God! The Lord has given us His Word as He intended it to be. It needs nothing added to it, and nothing can be taken away from it.

The scribes and Pharisees and lawyers wanted to maintain a tight grip on the lives of the Jewish people, and so they added their traditions over the years, to the point that the people would not really know what was the Word of God, and what was not the Word of God.

You see, in the additions that they made to the Law they were actually doing that which was contrary to the Law. We have an example of this in Mark 7:9-13 with regard to the Fifth Commandment: "Honour thy father and thy mother."

The second problem is this: The lawyers were teachers who did not practise what they preached. They had no intention of doing all that they told the people to do.

Notice what the Lord said in Matt. 23:2, 3 about the scribes and Pharisees:

> The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:
> All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do;
> but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

See Paul's denunciation of the Jews in Rom. 2:17-29. You can see how the Jews had been affected by the teaching that they had received.

They put crushing burdens upon the people, but they did not intend even to "touch . . . the burdens with one of their fingers. Contrast this with what our Lord said in Matt. 11:28-30. Robertson says "touch" is a verb which describes the way a doctor would touch a patient's sore spot, or take his pulse (II, p. 168).

It has always been God's will that teachers of the Word practise what they preach. There is a complete breakdown in Biblical teaching when teachers fail to do this. Note what Paul said in 1 Cor. 11:1. See also Phil. 3:17; 4:9; 1 Thess. 1:6, 7; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; 1 Tim.

4:12; Titus 2:6-8. We also have Peter's word to the elders in 1 Pet. 5:1-4.

The primary application of such a passage is surely to men in the ministry, but we need to realize that spiritual leaders need to be examples so that those who hear them will (1) believe what they say, and (2) become examples themselves. Perhaps this the reason that the Apostle John said, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 4). The object of preaching and teaching is not just to convey information to the hearers; that is a major part of it. But the ultimate purpose is to see lives changed. And lives are going to be changed through those who themselves have been changed. So our example to others must not just be external, but internal, genuine, real, in the sight of God and in the sight of men. One old divine said that a minister's life is the life of his ministry (quoted by Bridges, The Christian Ministry, p. 160).

And what is said about ministers needs also to be said about parents, about Sunday School teachers, about every single Christian in the world because to someone, and usually to many "someones," each of us is an example. People may be watching us, and listening to us, of whom we are not aware. Therefore, never let it be said that we say, but do not!

Perhaps even our Lord's words in John 10:4 apply here when He said this about a shepherd:

> And when he putteth forth his own sheep,
> **he goeth before them,**
> and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

11:47-51 The second woe.

11:47, 48 Cf. Matt. 23:29-33. And see Stephen's words in Acts 7:51-53.

Here the Lord was showing the lawyers their hypocrisy. Outwardly they made a great show of adorning the sepulchres of the prophets whom their fathers had killed. What does it matter if you honor the graves of the prophets, but do not believe or obey what they taught? The Lord saw in this two things:

1) That they were actually recognizing the evil thing that their fathers had done in killing the prophets.
2) That they were, on the one hand, supposedly honoring the prophets, yet they were actually in the process of seeking to do the same thing to the One Who is the greatest of all of the prophets, the Lord Jesus Christ.

11:49 Note the way Matt. 23 ends, words similar to what we have here plus a lamentation by our Lord over the city of Jerusalem--vv. 34-39.

"The wisdom of God" may be a reference by our Lord to Himself (since He said in Matt. 23:34, "Wherefore, behold, I send unto you . . ." Or it may simply mean that this is the word of God, the revelation of what God was doing in their day.

Whatever its meaning was, it certainly indicated that the lawyers and the other leaders of the Jews were no different from their ancestors who had killed the messengers of God who had been sent to them.

11:50 God may not judge every sin as it is committed, and it may seem as though their fathers had gotten away unpunished, but the divine reckoning for the debt that had built up since the murder of Abel to "this generation" was to be required of that particular generation.

11:51 The first death for the sake of the truth was that of Abel.

The last recorded in the OT (2 Chron. is the last book according to the order of the OT in the Hebrew Bible) was that of Zechariah the son of Jehoiada (see 2 Chron. 24:15-22. He is called in Matt. 23:35, Zacharias the son of Barachias. Where that name came from we do not

know unless Jehoiada may have had another name. It is also possible that our Lord was speaking of another Zacharias, but that is not likely. It seems like it has to do with something that is not clear in Scripture.

However, it is clear that the time of judgment had come, and that the Lord was speaking of the coming destruction of Jerusalem. Why was it required of that generation? Undoubtedly it had to do with Israel's rejection and crucifixion of Christ which came at the end of a long line of martyrdoms stretching back to the world's earliest history. Succeeding generations had not learned anything from the time of Abel. They had gone on rejecting the Word of God, and rejecting the Word of God. Finally, the Lord had had enough!

11:51 The third woe.

It is interesting that this statement comes toward the first of the Lord's words in Matt. 23. See v. 13. Coming at the first of that message, and at the last of this message, both have places of emphasis.

The Matthew account speaks of shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men. Our account in Luke speak of taking away the key of knowledge. Obviously if you do the latter, it will result in the former. It has to do with salvation.

What is "the key of knowledge"? And what is the "knowledge" to which our Lord was referring?

We can say that "the key of knowledge" is the Word of God. But more particularly, "the key of knowledge" is CHRIST! It is the knowledge of God which men need, and Christ is the One Who opens up that knowledge. As long as men reject the Word of God which the prophets were sent to proclaim, and as long as they turn themselves and others away from Christ, the knowledge of salvation is completely out of reach. The Lord was saying here that those lawyers were unsaved men. They might have been teachers of the Law, supposedly, but they did not know the Lord. Remember that just because a man is a minister, a pastor, with seminary training behind him, does not mean that he is a Christian. It is the most serious thing when any person stands in the way of the salvation of any other person, but it is extremely serious when one posing to be a man of God actually is keeping people away from Christ and from salvation--and they are doing it every day!

These men were decorating tombs, when they should have been searching the Scriptures, paying attention to the message that their fathers had so consistently rejected. It reminds us of preachers today who will do anything but study the Scriptures and teach the Word of God. If they do it is mostly negative as they deny practically everything that the Word teaches about Christ. Or, in the case of man who pose as evangelicals, they are so taken up with their own light and frothy programs that they know practically nothing about the way the Spirit of God works in the hearts of men by the Word of God.

Cf. Luke 17:1, 2.

11:53, 54 Did the lawyers heed our Lord's warnings? NO! Instead, they were joined by the other scribes and Pharisees in an intensified effort to say something that would give them a basis for accusing Him before the Sanhedrin.

What happened about the meal (v. 37) we do not know. But we do know that the Lord had exposed "their hollow hypocrisy" (Robertson, II, p. 170), and they were furious! They were like hunters trying to trap an animal because they, too, had murder in their hearts. What a commentary on the depravity of the human heart! They will never be able to say that they never had an opportunity to be saved. "The perfect meekness of our Lord is strikingly shown in His never losing His temper under abounding provocations, and His perfect wisdom in never saying a word on which His deadliest enemies could justly lay hold" (Luke, II, p. 57).

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Luke 12

The first twelve verses of this chapter conclude the second which began in 11:37, having to do with . . .

8. The Lord and the Pharisees--various warnings (Luke 11:37-12:12).

This part is divided into three parts:

a. The Lord's warnings to the Pharisees (11:37-44).
b. The Lord's warnings to the lawyers (11:45-54).

And we are now ready for the third part:

c. The Lord's warnings to the disciples about the Pharisees (Luke 12:1-12).

Two things should be observed about our Lord's ministry at this point:

1) The last verse of ch. 11 indicates that the scribes and Pharisees had gotten physical with the Lord. "They positively jostled Him as He went out" (Morgan, p. 151).
2) He was in a time of great popularity with the people. Cf. 11:29 and 12:1.

And yet, in the midst of all of this turmoil, the Lord saw fit to minister to His disciples.

The following is the outline of this section:

1) Two warnings (vv. 1-5).
   Because of the powerful influence that the scribes and Pharisees exercised upon all of the Jewish people, they posed a real threat to the disciples also. And so the two warnings dealt with this possibility.
   a) The warning against hypocrisy (vv. 1-3).
   b) The warning about fearing the Pharisees (vv. 4, 5).
2) Three words of comfort (vv. 6-12).
   a) Concerning God, the Father (vv. 6, 7).
   b) Concerning Christ (vv. 8, 9).
   c) Concerning the Holy Spirit (vv. 10-12).

As far as parallel passages are concerned:

1) For v. 1, cf. Mark 8:15.
2) For v. 2, cf. Matt. 10:26; Mark 4:22.
3) For vv. 3-9, cf. Matt. 10:27-33.
4) For v. 10, cf. Matt. 12:31, 32; Mark 3:28-30.
5) For vv. 11, 12, cf. Matt. 10:19-22; 24:9-14; Mark 13:9-13.

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Let us pick up our outline:

c. The Lord's warnings to the disciples about the Pharisees (Luke 12:1-12).

These warnings (two of them) are followed by three words of comfort, but they are all given in the context of a warning, introduced by the word, "Beware . . ."

Vv. 1-5 give us the two warnings. The first in vv. 1-3.

12:1 This section begins with a warning from the Lord. He was particularly concerned about how they might be affected with "the leaven of the Pharisees." And He identified that "leaven" as "hypocrisy."

The word "beware" means to think about your own welfare, and avoid whatever is being discussed. They needed to be on guard.

Cf. Matt. 16:6-12. Here see that the issue was their teaching. And so our Lord here was warning against the teaching of the Pharisees.

It is amazing how gullible people are when it comes to teaching about God. They will blindly accept the instruction of their teachers, often never thinking that they could be misled by false teaching. People do not think! They let others do their thinking for them, and consequently are often deceived.

Here the "leaven" was defined by our Lord as being "hypocrisy." And so, first of all, let us ask the question, What is "leaven"?

When a woman baked bread, she would always keep a small amount over for the next time she would bake. This would ferment and sour, but it served the purpose which yeast serves today. It would permeate the fresh dough, causing it to rise, before it was put in the oven.

Some feel that there are times in Scripture when leaven is used in a good sense, but I believe that it is always used in an evil sense. In the parable of the woman hiding leaven in three measures of meal until all of it was leavened (cf. Luke 13:20, 21), which is generally singled out as the exception, the leaven shows that the kingdom of God is not yet pure. So I do not know of a single instance in either the Old or New Testaments where leaven pictures what is good.

Secondly, what is "hypocrisy"?

A hypocrite is one who plays a part on a stage. Hypocrisy is a simulation--assuming a false appearance. It is the practice of pretending what one is not, and of pretending to feel what one does not feel.

Hypocrisy is the besetting sin of anyone in public life--that which constantly assails them, an ever-present danger.

Cf. Matt. 15:7-9, a quotation of Isa. 29:13. This is hypocrisy. See also Matt. 6:1-18.

Robertson (II, 171) says that hypocrisy "was a mark of sanctity to hide an evil heart."

For the Lord to designate the teaching of the Pharisees as hypocritical meant that he was saying that the Pharisees were not saved. They might say some things that were true, but, since their hearts were wrong, the effect of their teaching could not be good. An hypocritica teacher will produce a following of hypocrites. Like produces like. Cf. Matt. 23:15,

> Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!
> for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte,
> and when he is made,
> ye make him twofold more the child of hell (Gehenna) than yourselves.

Comparing the Matt. 16 passage with this one, Poole makes the following observation:

> . . . there he compared their doctrine to leaven, for the aptness of it to infect others; here he compareth their lives to the same thing . . . (III, 233).

And so these were very strong words.

12:2 This was a proverbial expression. We had it in Luke 8:17. The hypocrite may be able to deceive here, but he will be unmasked when the time comes for him to stand before God. What a day of shame that will be for all who stand before God in their sins, unforgiven. The Apostle Paul spoke of "the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel" (Rom. 2:16). The hypocritical teacher is hiding things from those he teaches, but he is not hiding anything from God.

The writer of Hebrews said (4:13):

> Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight:
> but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Solomon said (Prov. 15:3):

> The eyes of the Lord are in every place,
> beholding the evil and the good.

Jeremiah said in 32:19, speaking of the Lord of hosts,

> Great in counsel, and mighty in work:
> for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men:
> to give every one according to his ways,
> and according to the fruit of his doings.

12:3 Comparing this verse with Matthew's account (Matt. 10:27) which was a command to speak in the light, and to proclaim the word from the housetops, we see that this was in itself an encouragement to continue on with their teaching even though it would be opposed by the hypocritical Pharisees. Regardless of the opposition or of the times in which we live, we who have the Word of God are to be faithful in proclaiming it, and we are to make it as widely known as we can in the time that we have.

There may be also in this a prophecy of what was going to take place from the day of Pentecost on. It had to be spoken at the time, "in darkness," so to speak, but it would be proclaimed openly and with great blessing.

The second warning is in vv. 4, 5.

12:4 Note the tenderness of the Lord at this point: "friends." This ought to remind us of two verses in John 15--verses 13, 14:

> Greater love hath no man than this,
> that a man lay down his life for his friends.
> Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

Preaching the Gospel would mean death for the Lord Jesus. According to tradition it meant death also for most, if not all, of the disciples. Even facing the Pharisees then, there was that danger. Fear can cripple our ministry if we are directed by the possible consequences of preaching the Word.

But we are not to fear men; instead, we are to fear God. That is the message of . . .

12:5 where this also is given as a warning.

Poole said, "There is nothing so effectual to drive out of our hearts a slavish fear of man in the doing of our duty, as a right apprehension of the power of God, begetting a fear of him in our souls" (III, 46).

We hear far too little about the fear of God in these days.

The enemies of the Gospel have no more that they can do after they have killed the body. But the Lord was setting before His disciples that awful fact, denied by men, that after death there is hell (Gehenna) awaiting those who have not believed the Gospel.

Note what Paul said about unbelievers in Rom. 3:18.

For those of us who know the Lord, note what the following passages have to say about the fear of the Lord: 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 5:21; 6:5; Phil. 2:12, 13; Heb. 12:28; 1 Pet. 1:17; 2:17; Rev. 14:7; 15:4.

We do not fear the Lord with a tormenting fear, but with a reverential fear, remembering Who He is, and maintaining a holy concern lest we grieve Him in any way--either by doing

what would displease Him, or failing to do that which pleases Him.

> The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom:
> and the knowledge of the holy is understanding (Prov. 9:10).

Now we are ready for the three words of comfort:
1) Concerning God, the Father (vv. 6, 7).
2) Concerning Christ (vv. 8, 9).
3) Concerning the Holy Spirit (vv. 10-12).

The words of comfort concerning God, the Father: vv. 6, 7.

12:6 The disciples would have known the value of sparrows, but they would not have known the latter part if the Lord had not told them.

In Matt. 10:29 the Lord said that two sparrows are sold for a farthing. Here, that you could buy five for two farthings. This probably referred to any small bird. A "farthing" was the term used in Greek and Hebrew to designate the most insignificant piece of money (Alford, I, 110). It was tantamount to saying that they were hardly worth anything at all. And yet, if one were killed, it did not escape the Father's notice. He does not forget any of them. Think of what this means with the millions and millions of birds there are in the world. Again, the Matthew account says, " . . . and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father," i.e., without it being within the will of God.

The disciples might have to lay down their lives for the sake of the Gospel, but it would not be because of the superior power of their enemies, but by the will of God. No one can pluck us out of His hands! Cf. John 10:29. The Father is the greatest of all, and is the God of all creation. The Lord was teaching His disciples about His providence and His sovereignty.

This was a truth of which the ancient philosophers of Greece and Roman had no conception. What a cure for the fear of man!

12:7 And what about the hairs of our heads?

They are all numbered. God even keeps count of them. Could there be anything that would more clearly indicate the personal, intimate concern that the Lord has for us, His people?

So we have nothing to fear because our worth is far greater than sparrows. In fact, remember what the Lord said in Mark 8:36, 37:

> For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world,
> and lose his own soul?
> Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

See also Luke 9:25.

The second source of comfort:

The words of comfort concerning Christ: vv. 8, 9.

12:8 Luke 9:26 indicates that to "deny" the Lord is to be "ashamed" of Him. An hypocrite would be ashamed of the Lord, but not a true believer.

Here on earth we have our time to confess the Lord before men; in heaven the Lord's time will have come to confess us before the angels. Cf. Rom. 10:9, 10. Confession is not a once-in-a-lifetime matter, but a way of life! We continue to confess Him when we are among friends, and when we are among enemies.

12:9 Clearly it is what a man believes about the Lord Jesus Christ that will determine His eternal destiny. Let us all take this to heart. If they followed the Pharisees,

they would follow them into hell. Following Christ might lead to physical death, but the final destination is heaven.

Now we come to the last part of this section.

The words of comfort concerning the Holy Spirit: vv. 10-12.

NO ELECT PERSON, BEFORE HE IS SAVED, OR AFTER, CAN COMMIT THIS SIN.

12:10 This is the unpardonable sin. What is it?

Expositors have struggled with this question from the earliest days of the Church, and there are still many questions connected with it. It obviously must be a possibility, or the Lord would not have spoken of it. Hebrews 10:28-31 seem to suggest an unpardonable sin. It is interesting that there, too, the Holy Spirit is mentioned.

It seems that it must be a sin which only those who have had a great deal of spiritual light can commit. Poole suggests that it seems to speak of an apostate. Paul was a blasphemer, but he was forgiven, as he said, "because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (1 Tim. 1:13b). The word "ignorantly" is probably a key word there.

A person would have to have more than the usual amount of truth to know about the Holy Spirit, and to blaspheme the Spirit of God. The Pharisees in Matt. 12 probably did not have that much light, but the Lord was warning them that they were perilously close to committing this sin when they blasphemed the name of the Lord by saying that He was casting out demons by the Prince of the demons.

But the warning that comes out of this is that it is a serious thing to reject the truth of God.

Cf. what Peter said in 2 Pet. 2:20-22. This would not have anything to do with a true child of God, but an apostate.

Whatever the true meaning may be, it is a very solemn truth, and people need to be warned against the possibility of doing such a thing. It is sadly true that the people who have known the truth, but turned back from it, rarely turn to it again.

12:11 Continuing with the thought of persecution, and persecution from those in "the synagogues" where you would expect that people would be receptive to the truth and to the Gospel of Christ. "Take ye no thought" means anxious thought. Such thoughts are the result of fear. But even here the Holy Spirit will come to the aid of the people of God. See v. 12.

12:12 Cf. Matt. 10:19, 20. Also Mark 13:11. The people of God have often been concerned about what to say. Cf. Ex. 4:10-12; 6:12, 30 about Moses. And Jeremiah in Jer. 1:6. There is a sovereign work of the Spirit in special times of need when, unasked for, He gives special help to His people so that they are enabled to say and do things which cannot be accounted for in any other way than that the Lord is with them.

Concl: So, on the one hand, we have the Pharisees, with all of their power and influence. Against them stand the disciples, unlettered and outnumbered, weak in themselves, no match for the hierarchy of the day. But the Lord has promised them all of the help that they will need, and encouraged them to be faithful even unto death.

Our circumstances and times may be different, but our responsibility with respect to the Gospel is the same, and the spiritual resources which those disciples had, we have. Therefore, we, too, need to be faithful, trusting the Lord to care for us and to help us that we may glorify Him. And if, in the service of the Lord, we are called upon to lay down our lives, how wonderful it will be to anticipate the Lord confessing us before the Father and the holy angels in heaven.

4/27/87

IV. JESUS' MINISTRY TOWARD JERUSALEM (Luke 9:51-19:27).
A. The first part (Luke 9:51-13:21).

9. The Lord's teaching regarding this present life, ultimately showing its relationship to the His second coming (Luke 12:13-59).

a. The greedy brother and the parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:13-21).

12:13 The request of this "one of the company" initiated the whole discourse that followed. Who it was makes no difference. The Greek would bear the translation, as we would say, "Someone in the crowd said to him . . ."

Note: It is obvious that this man had not heard what the Lord Jesus had been talking about. There are a lot of people like that. All of us may have been like that at one time or another, but some are habitually that way. You can tell by what they talk about after a message has been given, what they were thinking about while it was given. Not everyone comes to church because they want to hear the Word.

The immediate problem was legal, but the Lord saw in the request evidence of a spiritual problem.

We are not given any of the circumstances about which some expositors like to speculate, so let us deal with just the facts that are here.

Two things are important to learn from our Lord's response:
1) How careful the Lord was not to get into that area of settling a dispute over money. He did not come for that purpose.
Evangelical preachers and churches are getting more and more involved in social action today, things which only liberal churches used to promote. There are real dangers connected with this. It soon clouds our understanding of what our main task is. Political action is not the business of the church. Let us note this very carefully from the way the Lord handled this man's question. He did not hesitate.
2) How the Lord turned this request into an opportunity for ministry.
He did not turn the man away, but used the occasion to teach him something that would be of eternal benefit to him.

12:14 The Lord rejected the idea that this was His responsibility. He did not come just to solve personal disputes. There were delegated authorities to take care of problems like this man had.

But then the Lord began to minister to him, and He said something very, very important to this man. And this is in . . .

12:15 It was a warning coupled with the statement of a very important truth.

Williams translated the first part of this verse with its verbs in the present tense, "Be ever on the alert and always on your guard against every form of greed . . ." This will be a life-long problem, and there is a need to be constantly on guard against coveting--the tenth commandment.

The Greek verb for, "Take heed," is one of the verbs for seeing (ὁράω), but it has to do with mental perception, a discerning mind. So says Thayer.

The Greek also says all covetousness, that is, covetousness in every form. People can covet other things besides money, such as, position, power, fame, and the things which money will buy (although some people want money just to have money). But, whatever the

form, we are to be on our guard against it.

Few of us realize how strong our lusts are. They will consume us if we do not, by the grace of God, keep them under control. We never get rid of them entirely. Such a problem as this man in our text was facing can lead to murder. On a larger scale it can lead to war! Cf. James 4:1, 2. Covetousness is sin! Let us call it what it is. It is not wrong to possess things, but it is wrong to be possessed by things--to feel that we have to have them, and that we cannot live without them.

What is the opposite of covetousness? Contentment! Cf. Heb. 13:5, 6. We need to be thankful for all of the good things that the Lord has given to us, but these are not the essentials of life. "A man's life consisteth **not** . . ." Instead, "the love of money is the root of all (kinds of) evil" (1 Tim. 6:10; cf. vv. 3-12). "Ye cannot serve God and mammon," our Lord said. Cf. Luke 16:13.

What is "a man's life"? It is that which makes him the happiest, the most useful, the most contented--even when he comes to the end of his days and looks back upon what he has done and what he has achieved. The wealthiest man in the world ought to be the happiest if life is a matter of getting as much as we can. <u>But that is not the case.</u> In fact wealth often does what it did to the man in the parable we are considering: it blinds the heart to the need to prepare for life after death. Our Lord once asked the question, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall he give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:36, 37).

Plummer said that the term "your life" speaks of <u>the value</u> we place on the things which we possess, and how those values affect the will of God.

<u>If we want to know the way to true and lasting happiness, we need to note well the beatitudes of Scripture!</u>

How wonderful if we all were like the Apostle Paul who wrote to the Philippians,

> Not that I speak in respect of want:
> for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am,
> therewith to be content.
> I know both how to be abased,
> and I know how to abound:
> every where and in all thing I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry,
> both to abound and to suffer need.
> I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me (Phil. 4:11-13).

Bishop Ryle wrote:

> Let us pray for a thorough confidence in God's superintending providence over all our worldly affairs, and God's perfect wisdom in all His arrangements concerning us. If we have little, let us be sure that it would not be good for us to have much. If the things that we have are taken away, let us be satisfied that there is a needs be. Happy is he who is persuaded that whatever is, is best, and has ceased from vain wishing . . . (II, pp. 72, 73).

The Lord did not tell this man at this point what does make up a true and satisfying life--just what it is <u>not!</u> This needs to "soak in" first before a man will begin to ask about the right way.

Jeremiah said, "The heart is deceitful . . ." (Jer. 17:9, 10). How thankful we ought to be for the warnings of the Word because the consequences of living for the wrong things is eternal judgment.

The Lord was a master teacher. First, He stated a truth in a negative way, to get this man

thinking. Then He illustrated what He meant by telling him a story. Both of these things were designed to get and win his attention, and to start him thinking about things he probably had never thought about before.

THE PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL. At this point the Lord directed His remarks to the whole crowd.

12:16 A rich man became richer--which is often the case. He was industrious. As the TV commercial says, "He got money the old fashioned way: he earned it!" He was to be commended for that. And yet, what is more important, this man had been the recipient of the goodness of God, but he did not recognize it.

"Plentifully" is a medical term for one in good health. Things could not have gone better for this rich man. We get our word euphoric from this word.

12:17 "And he thought within himself" -- relate this to the word for thinking in v. 15: "Take heed." Everybody thinks, but not everybody thinks the way they ought to think. This man's attention was on himself, and only on this life.

Note how he used "I" and "my": "What shall I do."
"I have no room . . ."
"My fruits."
"This will I do."
"I will pull down my barns, and (I) will build greater."
"And there will I bestow
all my fruits and my goods."
"And I will say to my soul,
Soul,
Thou hast much goods . . ."

All of this is in vv. 17-19. All of this he was saying in a dialogue with himself.

12:18 He was not afraid of work. In fact, it seems at this point that he was "a workaholic"!

12:19 How blinding covetousness can be! He felt that he had a long time to live, and that he might have to work hard for the time being, but there would be plenty of time left to take it easy, to eat all of those good things that he had always wanted to eat, and to eat them in abundance, to drink to his heart's content, and just to have a good time!

However, long ago Solomon wrote words which this man should have remembered:
Boast not thyself of tomorrow,
for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth (Prov. 27:1).
James wrote later the words which we find in James 4:13-16.

Common sense should tell us these things, but we are so blinded by our sin and our greed that we ignore the facts of life. Even our weather forecasters, with all of the technical equipment at their disposal, do not know what a day may bring forth weather-wise. They demonstrate that again and again.

Sometimes we hear people say who are faced with some great problem, whether it be physical or financial, or whatever it may be, "Well, I'm just living one day at a time!" We all ought to be living that way, because today is the only time that we can be sure that we have--and we may not have all of it!

Note what the Lord said in v. 20:

12:20 This rich man had been speaking to himself as though he were God! The rich man

thought he was being very wise; God considered him a fool--one who was lacking in sense, one who acts without thinking clearly.

Remember that this was "a parable" (v. 16). So the Lord did not have any particular person in mind. But he was citing a case which was altogether too common. People are doing this every day, planning their lives but not taking God and His will into account. After all, the life of every single person is in His hands!

The Lord was not condemning work, nor expanding one's business. Legitimate success is to be commended IF the person involved is not leaving God out, and is not ignoring the greater importance of being, as the Lord said according to v. 21, "rich toward God."

"This night thy soul shall be required of thee." The Greek is very forceful. It should be rendered, They are demanding thy soul of thee. The rabbis used to speak this way to avoid using the name of God. Not all of the Greek MSS have "this night," but some do. This man would never see the light of another day. Then what would happen to all of his possessions? This was a turn of events he had never taken into consideration.

In words which we have already considered, Paul wrote to Timothy in 1 Tim. 6:7,

> For we brought nothing into this world,
> and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

If our lives are merely spent in amassing a fortune, we are spending our lives in vain. In addition to the fact that we cannot take it with us, it often disappears even before we die. This is why there were hundreds of suicides at the time of the depression in the 1930's. Men lost their fortunes, and they had nothing left.

12:21 This is the point that the Lord was making to all of the people as the consequence of one man's request.

Note the Lord's words in Matt. 6:19-21. See also Paul's words in Col. 3:1-4.

How can we be "rich toward God"?

One place that question is answered is in 1 Tim. 6:17-19. Earlier in the same chapter the Apostle Paul had answered the same question. See vv. 10-12.

This brings up the whole subject of good works and rewards. The object of our lives is to do the will of God, to bring glory to His Name, to prepare for the time that we will be with Him, and to be a spiritual blessing and help to everyone we possibly can. To be "rich toward God" "means being rich in those things which are pleasing to Him" (Plummer, p. 325).

5/4/87

IV. JESUS' MINISTRY TOWARD JERUSALEM (Luke 9:51-19:27).
A. The first part (Luke 9:51-13:21).
9. The Lord's teaching regarding this present life in relation to the coming of the Lord (Luke 12:13-59).

b. The Lord's message on seeking the kingdom of God (Luke 12:22-40).

The man in the preceding parable was concerned entirely with his own security, with his own future. That was the sole object of all of the work that he was doing. That may be the way the people of the world are inclined to live, but that cannot be the pattern for the child of God.

These words were spoken to the disciples. And note that here the Lord did not use parables.

We immediately recognize them as that which the Lord gave also in the Sermon on the Mount-- Matt. 5-7, esp. vv. 22-31 which is also found in Matt. 6:25-33. Matt. 6:34 concludes the teaching in Matt. 6.

The thing that the man in the parable lacked was faith in God. His whole life revolved around providing for himself, which is what the Lord alone can do for us. This does not mean that we should not work. Paul wrote in 1 Tim. 5:8,

> But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

Another passage that we need to keep in mind is 2 Thess. 3:10-12:

> For even when we were with you, this we commanded you,
> that if any would not work, neither should he eat.
> For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly,
> not working at all, but are busybodies.
> Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ,
> that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

We need to keep Scripture in perspective, that is, we need to keep in our minds the inter-relationship of the truths of Scripture. So when the Word encourages work in some passages (like those above) we will not find Scripture discouraging or condemning work in other passages unless their is something wrong about the work that is being done.

Now let us notice the teaching of the Lord.

This rather long section has two parts to it:
1) Vv. 22-34, where He was teaching the disciples to trust their heavenly Father to take care of them.
2) Vv. 35-40, the need, instead, to be prepared for the coming of the Lord.

12:22 "Taking thought" means being exercised by distressing thought. It is troubled thought, anxious thought, disquieting thoughts, or just plain worry! It is concern for that which is a person's main object in life. The Lord was concerned about the kind of thinking that keeps a man from resting inwardly. The Lord had particular reference to food and clothing.

An illustration of this is in 1 Sam. 9:5, the words of Saul to his servant after both of them had been looking for Saul's fathers donkeys, and which they were not able to find:

> Come, and let us return; lest my father leave caring for the asses,
> and **take thought** for us.

And that is exactly what Kish did!

In 1 Cor. 7:32 Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "But I would have you without carefulness."

And then we have Paul's well-known words in Phil. 4:6, 7: "Be careful for nothing . . ."

The people of the world worry, but it is a sin for the children of God to worry.

Do you remember that little verse which goes like this?

> Said the robin to the sparrow, "I should really like to know
> Why these anxious human being rush about and worry so."
> Said the sparrow to the robin, "I think that it must be
> That they have no heavenly Father such as cares for you and me."

12:23 The Lord gave us our "life." And He gave us our bodies. And we had nothing to do with that! Will He not care for what He has given to us?

Life is more than food. The body more than the clothing that goes on the body. The reasoning here is that, if He can do the greater, cannot He not do the less?

12:24 And then the Lord gave an illustration: "the ravens." Psa. 147:9 says, speaking of the Lord, "He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry." Job 38;41, the words of the Lord to Job, "Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat." Or, as the NIV renders it, "Who provides food for the raven when its young cry out to God and wander about for lack of food?"

Note the word, "Consider." Cf. v. 27 where it is used again. It means to think carefully about something. A worried man does not have time for bird-watching, even with his mind's eye, but what a tonic it would be for him--just to think about whether or not that raven is as concerned about his food and clothing as he is. Creation everywhere reveals not only the greatness of God's power, and His wisdom, but also amazing evidence of His providence.

The reference to sowing and reaping and storehouses and barns obviously points back to the parable.

"How much more are ye better than the fowls." We have already been told this. See vv. 6, 7. "Better" means "to surpass in the highest degree" (Godet, II, 99).

12:25 Besides, what can we accomplish by worrying?

We know that it cannot help us to grow an inch. Lots of men have worried about that, but it does no good at all.

Plummer feels that a better translation here would be, Who "by being anxious can add a span to his age"? (p. 326). The word translated "stature" here is translated "age" in John 9:21, 23. Again, this must refer to the parable because the rich man thought that he had enough for "many years," but actually he did not have another day! His worry did nothing to lengthen his life.

Note how the Psalmist speaks of life in Psa. 39:5,

> Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth;
> and my age is as nothing before thee:
> verily every man at his best state is vanity.

People worry about when they are going to die, and how they are going to die. But the worrying doesn't change a thing--so it is a lot of energy wasted for nothing! Again let me say that the Lord was not encouraging foolish habits with regard to our health. But He was showing that worry is useless. It is even harmful.

12:26 If we cannot do a minor thing like adding an inch to our height or an hour to our lives, why do we get all worried about "the rest"--our food, our clothing, etc.? How tall we are and how long we live are things that actually have very little significance in the light of how well we live, and how much we trust the Lord.

12:27 A second illustration: "the lilies."

How do they grow and how do they become so beautiful? It is not because of anything that they have done for themselves! God does it! Solomon with all of his wealth and with all of the resources available to him, could not do it!

12:28 HERE IS THE ANSWER TO WORRY: FAITH!

Grass was used for heating and cooking in some places in the Middle East because of the scarcity of wood. That is the meaning of the Lord's reference to it here.

Again we have "how much more" as in v. 24.

How do we increase our faith? Cf. Rom. 10:17; Heb. 12:2. "Without faith it is impossible to please him" (God) (Heb. 11:6).

12:29 These are the third and fourth exhortations from v. 22 on.
1) The first--v. 22.
2) The second (repeated)--vv. 24, 27.
3) The third--here, but needing to be taken with v. 31. This is really the application of all that the Lord had been talking about.
4) The fourth: "neither be ye of doubtful mind."

The "ye" here is emphatic. This was addressed to the disciples first, but also to all of the people of God in distinction from the people of the world.

What you are seeking is what you set your heart on. It becomes your main goal in life. From man's point-of-view, it is the good life! It is amazing how much time we spend thinking about food. But that is an indication of the trend of our lives when it becomes the main thing that we seek and think about.

"Neither be ye of doubtful mind" -- μετεωρίζεσθε. It is the present passive, third plural, of μετεωρίζω. It is used only here in the NT, and has been translated in a number of ways.

We get our word, meteor, from it. Basically it means to be lifted up from the ground, to be raised aloft. From this comes the idea of being raised up with false hopes. It might mean also self-exaltation. Or it can mean being tossed to and fro on the sea by the wind and the waves. This would speak of being anxious, of fluctuating between hope and fear.

The NIV translates it, " . . . do not worry about it." The NASB, " . . . and do not keep worrying." Robertson prefers the rendering of the KJV, expressing doubt.

Back in 1876, on a Thursday evening, January 27th, Spurgeon preached a very interesting sermon in which he sought to incorporate most of the ideas suggested by this very interesting word--ideas which have been used at various times by different writers. He basically brought out four thoughts, all of which are related to the text.
1) The first was that we are not to be tossed up and down with our worries and cares--either about our personal affairs, or even by difficult conditions in the Lord's work--as though everything were dependent upon us. He brought out that the Lord got along just fine before we arrived on the scene, and He could even do without us now!
2) Mr. Spurgeon's second point was that we are not to fly high. By this he meant that we are not to desire to be wealthy. If it comes, we can be thankful for it, and use it for the Lord's glory, but that is not to be our main objective in life. Neither are we to be ambitious for ourselves in the Lord's work. It is easy for us to begin to feel, especially if we begin to see some special blessing from the Lord, that we are worthy of a bigger place, or greater recognition.
3) Thirdly, Mr. Spurgeon warned against being indecisive about the circumstances of our lives, and deciding things on the basis of what is going to mean the most to us,

instead of what is according to the will of God, and what is going to bring the greatest glory to the Lord. This is James' "doubleminded man . . . unstable in all his ways.

4) Finally, he related this to salvation (as Spurgeon was always prone to do in his preaching)--saying that we should not be in doubt about it. But, departing from what Mr. Spurgeon emphasized, this could also have reference to doubts we might entertain concerning our relationship to God, i.e., will He take care of me, or not? This is often the result of not being assured about our salvation.

A meteor goes up, and it comes down. It seems that the Lord used this word to teach the disciples that they should beware of that which tends to lift them up falsely, as well as those anxious thoughts which seem to cast them down.

12:30 Why should we not seek those things? The Lord gave two reasons:

1) Because that is the way the people of the world, all over the world, live. And we are not to be like they are.
2) Because we have a heavenly Father Who knows "that ye have need of these things--and they do not have HIM!

12:31 What are we to do?

We are to seek "the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you." THIS IS THE MAIN POINT THAT THE LORD WAS MAKING! The idea in seeking is to seek, and continue to seek.

Note how Matthew stated it in Matt. 6:33.

What did the Lord mean by, "the kingdom of God"? Why should we seek it first, and why do we need to seek it continually?

THIS IS THE VERY HEART OF CHRISTIAN LIVING. The Lord was not speaking about the Messianic Kingdom here. That will come with the reign of Christ on the earth. But this is what we are to do now!

It does not mean that we are to seek to bring about the kingdom of God on earth, as the post-millennialists would have us believe.

The Apostle Paul has given us our answer in Rom. 14:17:

> For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink;
> but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

To seek the kingdom of God is to give priority to the things of God in our lives--doing His will, seeking His glory, seeking to be more Christ-like in our lives.

To seek the kingdom of God means that God and His work (salvation of the elect--2 Tim. 2:10) come first in our lives. It means that we are giving the pre-eminence in our lives to Christ. It means that we want to please Him more than we want anything else! Let your submissiveness to the Lord be the outstanding characteristic of your life. Cultivate a greater interest in heavenly things, and the purposes of God on earth, than you are about temporal things and what is going to mean the most to you in a material way. We need to be like our Lord when He answered His mother when they came back to Jerusalem seeking Him: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49b). Later He said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4). The Apostle Paul said when he had been warned by the Holy Spirit that he was facing difficult days ahead,

> But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself,
> so that I might finish my course with joy,
> and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus,
> to testify the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24).

This is the cure for our anxieties and worries which rob us of the joy of life, and do not

alter our circumstances for the better in any sense of the word.

Maclaren made this comment on this 31st verse:

> Oh, it is want of love, it is want of earnest desire, it is want of firm conviction that God, God only, God by Himself, is enough for me, that makes me careful and troubled. And therefore, if I could only attain unto that sublime and calm height of perfect conviction, that He is sufficient for me, that He is with me for ever,--the satisfying object of my desires and the glorious reward of my searchings,--let life and death come as they may, let riches, poverty, health, sickness, all the antitheses of human circumstances storm down upon me in quick alternation, yet in them I shall be content and peaceful. God is beside me, and His presence brings in its train whatsoever things I need. You cannot cast out the sin of foreboding thoughts by any power short of the entrance of Christ and His love (Vol. 4, p. 321).

This is the lesson that we all need to learn. This is the way we all need to live, putting God's will and God's work FIRST in our lives each day that we live.

5/12/87

12:32 "This verse has no parallel in Mt., and it is the only verse in this section which is entirely with equivalent in the Sermon on the Mount" (Plummer, p. 328).

It is a special word of encouragement for His disciples. The Lord had been contrasting two kinds of life for them: the person who lives for this present life only, and who seeks to gain more and more of material things; the other who lives with eternity always before him, and who is seeking to be "rich toward God" (v. 21).

"Fear not." The constant tendency of all of us is to be fearful. But we can make no mistakes when we do the will of God. Neither need we fear that the Lord will not give that which He encourages us to seek. "For it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Relate this to v. 31. So we are not seeking something which the Father will not give, nor even what He is reluctant to give. This is His will! Therefore they did not need to be anxious about what they would eat and wear, etc., because their heavenly Father not only knew their need of these things (v. 30), but would most surely provide for them.

"Your Father's good pleasure" -- the same expression that is found in Luke 3:22, and could be translated, your Father is well-pleased to give you the kingdom.

"Little flock" -- in contrast with the "innumerable multitude of people" mentioned in v. 12. The numbers of the people of God are always insignificant in size in comparison with the numbers who are not the people of God.

The Lord Jesus was being very tender here with His disciples. This tenderness is also to be seen in His reference to God as "your Father" in vv. 30, 32.

Bishop Ryle has written:

> The Lord Jesus knew well the hearts of His disciples. He knew how ready they were to be filled with fears of every description--fears because of the fewness of their numbers, fears because of the multitude of their enemies, fears because of the many difficulties in their way, fears because of their sense of weakness and unworthiness. He answers those many fears with a single golden sentence: "Fear not, little flock: it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Vol. II, pp. 83, 83).

12:33 In view of what the Lord had just said, He then commanded them to "Sell . . . and give . . . provide . . ." In doing the first two, they would be doing the third IF THEIR MOTIVE WAS TO PLEASE THEIR HEAVENLY FATHER!

The Lord was not condemning the possession of things because He is the One Who gives us what we have. But He was condemning the continued accumulation of things for our own

benefit, instead of being willing to share what we have with others. "Give alms" does not point to a reckless giving of our resources, but a careful and deliberate attempt to help those who are in real need. So the Christian is not commanded to sell all that he has, but he must be prepared to do so. Read the Apostle Paul's words in 1 Cor. 7:29-32a.

The trouble about laying up treasure upon earth is that earthly things can so easily be lost either to thieves or to moths or just to natural decay. What we store up in heaven can never be lost! And what we provide for others actually does us the most good--"a treasure in the heavens that faileth not."

12:34 Here is another very significant statement from our Lord.

Cf. Matt. 6:19-21. The important thing is what is taking place in our hearts. Our hearts need to be set on heavenly things. We need to keep eternity before us. Our hearts are always upon those things which we value the most.

This verse, like v. 31, gives us the true test of our relationship with the Lord. We may talk about how much we love the Lord, we can admire this kind of preaching and teaching, and we can be at church every time the door is opened, but the real questions is, What do we really love? Where are our hearts?

At this point in our Lord's message we come to a new emphasis on the same theme. One of the greatest reasons for living with such confidence in the Lord was the Lord had just described was because of the imminent coming of the Lord!

And so we need to be ready, to be prepared, for the coming of the Lord. All through the NT this is set before the people of God as one of the chief reasons for holy living.

The concluding part of this part of the Lord's message is, therefore, vv. 35-40.

12:35 If the Christian's treasure is in heaven, this verse will be a description of the way he lives.

1) To have one's loins "girded about" means to have the robe tucked into the girdle. This allowed freedom in walking, in working, in warfare. So it seems that here the Lord was probably encouraging His people to be always busy seeking the kingdom of God. They were not to be lazy, but energetic and working.
2) The Christian's light is his life--the testimony of his life. Cf. Matt. 5:14-16. Also Eph. 5:8-21 (this whole section deals with what it means to "walk as children of light").

12:36 The word "wait" here means to wait expectantly. "The wedding" is probably not the lord's wedding, but one he attended. The servant knows that the lord will return, but he does not know when! But the house is clean, and everything is in order, so that when the lord returns and knocks at the door, the servant will be ready to admit him without any delay.

The details concerning the order of events connected with the coming of the Lord are not included by our Lord at this point because He was stressing readiness. BUT IT SEEMS PERFECTLY CLEAR FROM OUR LORD'S REMARKS THAT NO VIEW OF THE LORD'S RETURN SHOULD BE ACCEPTED WHICH DOES NOT CONSIDER HIS COMING AS IMMINENT!

12:37 The child of God who is watching and ready for the coming of the Lord will have cause for joy throughout eternity--and doubtless will be rewarded by the Lord for such faithfulness. The Apostle John wrote about being "ashamed before him at his coming" (1 John 2:28).

The servant in this "parable" is ready for the coming of his lord, and has things prepared

for him to sit down to eat.

12:38 The Jews had three watches of 4 hours each; the Romans had four watches of 3 hours each. We do not know which this was, but the watches began at 6 p.m., and extended usually to 6 a.m. The first is not mentioned because the wedding would have been going on at that time. The fourth (is this were Roman) is not mentioned because the wedding would not have lasted that long.

But the point is the same as in vv. 35-37: the lord is coming, but the time is uncertain; therefore, the servant has to be ready for his arrival at any hour of the night. If he is, he will have the great approval of his lord, and his own heart will be filled with great joy. And so again we have the word, "blessed."

12:39 A change in the illustration. But the point is the same: the need to be ready!

The coming of "the day of the Lord" is likened to the coming of "a thief in the night" in 1 Thess. 5:2. See also 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3; 16:15.

12:40 Godet said this:

> The Church has not the task of fixing beforehand that unknown and unknowable time; she has nothing else to do, in virtue of her very ignorance, from which she ought not to wish to escape, than to remain invariably on the watch. This attitude is her security, her life, the principle of her virgin purity (Vol. II, p. 106).

If we are to be "ready" for the coming of the Lord, the passage indicates that our readiness is twofold:

1) We are not to be primarily concerned with our needs in this life.
2) We are to be laying up treasure in heaven by the way we life to glorify the Lord and to help when we can with the needs of others.

A literal translation of "be ye also ready" is "keep on becoming" ready, indicating that we can always be more prepared for the coming of the Lord than we are at this very moment.

The Lord is coming! Let us not doubt that for a moment. We do not know when He will come, and we will not know until He is here. When we are inclined to think that He will not come is likely to be the very time when He will come. But the main point is that we are to be in a constant state of readiness, getting more prepared for the Lord each day that we live.

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THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Introduction to the classes beginning on September 22, 1987:

This is the beginning of our third year in the Gospel of Luke. And we are only midway through the book. I want to announce my goal for this year at this first class: it is to finish the Gospel of Luke by May of 1988. Obviously we will have to go faster than we have been going, but we need to finish it, and so that is my plan.

I do not know if you still have your notes from September of two years ago, but if you do, I would suggest that you go over them again.

I spoke about the place of the Gospels in the Canon of Scripture. They are the focal point of the Word of God because they tell of the the coming, the life, the death, the resurrection, and the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Old Testament looked ahead to His coming; the New Testament explains the results of His coming--leading us right up to the Eternal State, the New Heaven and the New Earth.

And then I spoke of the place of Luke among the Gospels.

Luke has given us two books in the New Testament: the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts. The two books combined show us that Luke wrote more of the NT than any other writer. His Gospel is the longest of the four Gospels. Only Matthew actually gives us more of the words of the Lord Jesus than Luke did.

Luke was probably a Gentile, although there are those who claim that he was a Jew. But it is clear that he wrote for Gentiles. Michael Wilcock, in his brief commentary on Luke's Gospel points out that, although all four of the Gospels include the quotation from Isaiah about John the Baptist that he was to "prepare the way of the Lord," yet only Luke completed the quotation with the words, "All flesh shall see the salvation of God." Cf. Luke 3:4-6. The "all flesh" would include the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

And so Luke wrote for the Gentiles. It shows that he shared the burden of the Apostle Paul, whom he accompanied on many of his journeys--the burden to reach the Gentiles with the Gospel of Christ.

There is a special emphasis in the Gospel of Luke upon the humanity of Christ. This is seen at the very beginning where Luke has given us more information about the events surrounding the birth of Christ than any of the other Gospel writers have done--actually more than all of them put together! Matthew alone seems to have written primarily for the Jews.

Luke himself is only mentioned by name three times in the Bible: in Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11; Philemon 24. In Colossians Paul called him, "the beloved physician. He was with Paul in Rome at the time of Paul's first imprisonment. In 2 Timothy Paul said, "Only Luke is with me." So he was with Paul at the time of his second and last imprisonment. It seems safe to conclude that he must have been with Paul when Paul died. In Philemon Paul called Luke his fellow-laborer, along with John Mark, Aristarchus, and Demas.

In the book of Acts there are three extended sections where the writer used the pronoun "we," and we assume from that that those were times when Luke was with the Apostle Paul. Cf. Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-21:18; 27:1-28:16.

So, with reference to Luke, we can say that he was a physician turned evangelist. He was similar to Dr. M. R. DeHaan and Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones in this.

Concerning the outline, or plan of the book, I have suggested to you six divisions:

I. THE PROLOGUE (Luke 1:1-4).
II. THE PREPARATION FOR JESUS' MINISTRY (Luke 1:5-4:13).

III. THE FIRST PERIOD OF JESUS' MINISTRY (Luke 4:14-9:50). This was in Galilee and its vicinity. IV. JESUS' MINISTRY TOWARD JERUSALEM (Luke 9:51-19:27).
V. JESUS' MINISTRY IN JERUSALEM AND ITS VICINITY (Luke 19:28-21:38).
VI. THE FINAL EVENTS IN THE EARTHLY LIFE OF JESUS (Luke 22:1-24:53). This included His last hours with His disciples, His arrest, trials, crucifixion, burial, resurrection, post-resurrection appearances, and His ascension.

Michael Wilcock, whom I mentioned earlier, suggested this outline:
I. THE COMING OF THE SAVIOUR (Luke 1, 2).
II. THE DEEDS OF THE SAVIOUR (Luke 3:1-9:50).
III. THE WORDS OF THE SAVIOUR (Luke 9:51-19:44).
IV. THE GOING FORTH OF THE SAVIOUR (Luke 19:45-24:53).

You can see from his outline that in chapter 12 we are in the section of the book which is devoted to THE WORDS OF THE SAVIOUR. And this is true.

From my outline we are in the section of the book where Luke has recorded for us the ministry of our Lord when He left Galilee and made His way to Jerusalem where He knew that He was to suffer and die at the hands of men, but also that He would be raised from the dead.

In connection with the words of Christ, Luke included at least 19 parables that are in his Gospel alone. He also mentioned 6 miracles that were not mentioned by any other of the Gospel writers.

But now let us turn to chapter 12, verse 41.

This chapter contains only the words of our Lord with the exception of a part of v. 1, v. 13, and v. 41. Besides we have those introductory words to quotations such as are found in vv. 14, 15, 16, 22, and 54. But everything else is what the Lord said.

What was He talking about?

The first 12 verses were a warning against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.
The Lord had been rebuking the Pharisees in the closing verses of chapter 11, and he wanted to make sure that the people understood the significance of His words as it applied to them. AND RIGHT FROM THE BEGINNING OF THIS CHAPTER THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COMING OF THE LORD AND THE FINAL JUDGMENT OF EACH PERSON IS KEPT IN A VERY PROMINENT PLACE IN THE WORDS OF THE LORD. Note vv. 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 20, 21 (the emphasis on these last two verses is the sudden and unexpected way in which death can come to a person, but v. 21 anticipates the way things will finally be evaluated when we stand before the Lord Who will be our Judge). But to continue--vv. 29, 31,, 32. A strong emphasis begins in v. 35 and continues on down to v. 40. It is resumed in the parable of the "faithful and wise steward (vv. 42-48). The purpose of the Lord's first coming is stated in vv. 49-53, but then the Lord turned again to His second coming in vv. 54-57. The purpose of the last two verses is to warn people to make sure that things are right between them and the Lord before the time comes when they will stand in His presence for judgment.

And so the idea of a judge and a judgment becomes prominent following the request of the one who spoke to the Lord in v. 13, and the Lord's statement about Himself in v. 14. He was not denying that He is a Judge, and that the time is coming when He will execute judgment. But He was saying that He did not come for the purpose of making it possible for people to have everything that they want in this life. He came to prepare people for eternity! And along with that, He came to teach His people how to live now so that they will be "rich toward God" (v. 21) in that day when they stand before Him as Judge. Cf. v. 34. If we are laying up treasure here on earth, our heart will be here also. But if we are laying up treasure in heaven, then heaven will be our main concern.

On His work as Judge, cf. vv. 8, 9, 10, 46-48, 58, 59. And the Lord's question in v. 57 indicates that in view of all of the natural phenomena that the Lord had been speaking about, they have enough evidence to make the right decision. This has reference to the certainty of death, and the uncertainty about when it will come. It has to do with sparrows and ravens and lilies. It has to do with the expectation of a human master when he commits certain responsibilities to his servants, and then leaves them to discharge those responsibilities. He will not be pleased to find his goods wasted and his other servants mistreated. And neither will the Lord Who has made us stewards, and Who will one day, all unannounced, return to bring us into judgment.

See also the idea of "a divider," first mentioned in v. 14, and mentioned again in vv. 51-53. The Lord is a Judge and a Divider, but not in the sense that the person in v. 13 wanted Him to be. Faith in Christ divides even the members of the same family. All of us will stand before Him some day to give an account of our lives here on earth.

And so we see that beginning with v. 13 the Lord spoke on the dangers of covetousness. And from that He moved to words in which He warned about the danger of being overly concerned with the affairs of this life, at the same time ignoring the importance of preparing for heaven and the coming of the Lord. Cf. vv. 35, 36. His people are to be waiting for Him, expecting Him, watching for Him. This is the emphasis in vv. 35-40. And then from v. 41 on we see that they were not only to be watching, but they were to be faithfully serving the Lord as they waited for Him to come. The Lord gave at this time THE PARABLE OF THE FAITHFUL AND WISE STEWARD.

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IV. JESUS' MINISTRY TOWARD JERUSALEM (Luke 9:51-19:57).
A. The first part (Luke 9:51-13:21).
9. The Lord's teaching regarding this present life in relation to the coming of the Lord (Luke 12:13-59).

c. The parable of the faithful and wise steward (Luke 12:41-48).

For this parable, cf. Matt. 24:45-51. It is to emphasize again the importance of looking for and expecting the return of the Lord.

A parable like this certainly has to be interpreted in the light of its context. The context really goes back to Luke 11:37 where the Lord was invited to the home of the Pharisee. This brought on the Lord's solemn rebuke of the Pharisees, then of the lawyers (who were Pharisees also), especially for their hypocrisy and their covetousness.

In some ways it seems that this parable, among other things, was meant to identify those who are the true servants of the Lord.

It will help us in our understanding of the Scriptures if we remember that the Apostles faced the same kind of situation that we face in the work of the Lord, whether we are thinking about those who profess to be the Lord's people generally, or specifically about those who profess to be the servants of the Lord. There are always those who profess, but do not possess. There are always those who profess to be Christians, but are not really born again. There are ministers who are truly saved; there are others who do not know the Lord. By profession they are the servants of the Lord, but in reality they are not!

This was the situation with the religious leaders of our Lord's day: most of the scribes and Pharisees were hypocrites. They were the religious teachers of the nation Israel, but were without true faith. They claimed to be God's servants, but they had no use for the Lord Jesus Christ. Such is the case with many today, and this is the kind of a situation that the Lord was dealing with in this parable, as well as pointing out the character of a true servant of the Lord.

12:41 Peter asked a question. The Lord did not answer it immediately, but the parable indicates that He was speaking to all. Perhaps He had men like the apostles and the scribes and Pharisees in mind primarily (because He definitely seemed to be talking to leaders), but it was important for all of the people to hear these things so that, in the case where one was not a leader, but one of those who was to be led, he would know how to identify a true servant of the Lord from a false one.

We have many groups today with various doctrines--cults of all kinds, and church groups of all kinds (Protestant and Catholic), Jews, Moslems, and on and on--all talk about God, all claim to be serving God. But who are the right ones? This parable is designed to help us in answering that very, very important question.

The Lord had already spoken about His Father, about Himself as the Son of man, and even about the Holy Spirit. And from 12:40 it is very clear that the Lord was saying that he was the Son of man Who was coming and that they should be looking for Him.

So with these things in mind, let us look at the parable.

12:42 The Lord was commending a servant who is a "faithful and wise steward." Each of these three words is very important when we think of the person we can consider to be a true servant, one the people of God should follow, and one who will be rewarded and given an even larger ministry when the Lord comes. So this parable indicates that the service of the Lord will continue after the Lord comes.

What is a "steward"?

Before we answer that question let me read two verses to you. They are found in 1 Cor. 4:1, 2. Paul was writing to the Corinthians about himself, and the way that he wanted them to consider him. He said,

> Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ,
> and **stewards** of the mysteries of God.
> Moreover, it is required in **stewards**, that a man be found **faithful**.

We have two of the three important words of Luke 12:42 here: the words "stewards" (2 times), and "faithful." And Paul said that he and his fellow-servants were "stewards of the mysteries of God" (which is an expression for the Word of God revealed through himself and the other apostles), and it was their responsibility to be faithful in the way that handled that Word--that is, in the way they believed it and lived it and taught it and sought to get others to believe it.

A "steward" is one who has been entrusted with that which belongs to his master, and he is accountable to his master for the way in which he fulfills his responsibility. It might be his master's business. It might be the supervision of his master's property. It might be that he is a steward in charge of the education of the master's children. What he has is his master's, and his faithfulness is determined by whether or not he does what his master has appointed him to do.

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A "faithful . . . steward" is one who diligently, perseveringly, carries out the will of his lord.

Moses is an example of faithfulness. See Num. 12:7; Heb. 3:2, 5. And he is likened to our Lord in the latter passage. In Rev. 1:5 our Lord is called, "the faithful witness."

Ahimelech called David faithful in 1 Sam. 22:14, who went at Saul's bidding, and was honorable in his house.

Faithful men are rare. Solomon said,

> Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness:
> but a faithful man who can find? (Prov. 20:6).

Paul was faithful. Cf. 1 Tim. 1:12 and 2 Tim. 4:7, 8: " have fought a good fight . . ."

Timothy was faithful. Cf. Phil. 2:19-23. (The word faithful is not used, but it is certainly described.

Speaking of our stewardship as having to do with the Word of God, cf. Jer. 23:28 where the Lord said through Jeremiah,

> The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream;
> and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully.
> What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord.

Faithfulness is what the Lord will reward in the day that we stand before Him:

> Well done, thou good and faithful servant:
> thou has been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things:
> enter thou into the joy of thy lord (Matt. 25:21).

So one who is a faithful steward will be faithful to the Word of God--faithful in living according to it, faithful in preaching it, faithful in believing it.

What about a "wise steward"?

Thayer (p. 582, under _____) describes such a person as "prudent . . . one who has quick

and correct perceptions." This means that he is wise and disciplined as to the practical use of his time and energies. He does not let his own desires take precedence over that which his lord has appointed him to do. The lord and the lord's business come first.

Pharaoh believed that Joseph was "discreet and wise" (Gen. 41:39), and so he appointed him as a steward over all of his house, his kingdom, his people. Joseph not only knew what should be done, but he knew how to do it.

The servant of the Lord who is "wise" will be well-instructed in the Word, and taught by the Lord as to how the work of the Lord should be done.

Such a steward the Lord (speaking of His work) "shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season."

Note that his work has to do with the lord's "household", and that it has to do with giving them "their portion of meat in due season"--which is a very interesting expression when looked at in the light of the ministry of the Word.

12:43 Such a servant is one who will be glad to see his lord when he comes. Sin is anything that would keep the steward from taking care of his lord's household, and the business connected with it.

12:44 Faithfulness in whatever we are doing now will lead to greater responsibilities when the Lord comes.

The life of Joseph is an illustration of this.

When Matthew Henry conducted his mother's funeral service he commended her as one who one who did good "in a low and narrow sphere," and who did not seek "to make a fair shew in the flesh" (The Lives of Philip and Matthew Henry, p. 330). She was a faithful and wise woman--a steward of the Lord in the place the Lord had given her.

12:45 BUT WHAT IF A STEWARD BEHAVES OTHERWISE? What will happen if he mistreats the people who are in his lord's household, and seeks to do what he wants to do, having a good time?

12:46 His lord will come and will catch him not doing the things that he was appointed to do, and will (as the original text indicates) cut him off, "and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers."

Does this mean that an unfaithful steward will lose his salvation? No. It means that he never was saved! This does not mean that a true servant of the Lord will be perfectly faithful under all circumstances, and at all times, BUT THIS IS A SERVANT WHO REALLY ABANDONS THE WILL OF HIS LORD TO DO WHAT HE WANTS TO DO, SEEKING HIS OWN PLEASURE, AND NOT AT ALL CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT HE SHOULD BE DOING.

Such were the Pharisees. They were seeking their own honor. They were seeking their own wealth. They were hypocrites at heart even though much that they did and said was good and true.

12:47, 48 The last two verses of this section show that there will be degrees of punishment. The greater the place of responsibility and prominence a person has, the greater will be his judgment if he fails. To be in hell will be terrible beyond all of our comprehension for anyone who is there, BUT IT WILL BE EVEN GREATER IN ITS HORROR FOR THOSE WHO HAVE PROFESSED TO BE THE LORD'S SERVANTS, BUT HAVE BEEN IN THE MINISTRY "DOING THEIR OWN THING," SEEKING THEIR OWN ADVANTAGE--NOT DOING THE WILL OF GOD, OR SEEKING THE GLORY OF GOD!

Matthew Poole described the plight of such false teachers and false leaders in the

following words:

> . . .they know more than others, they have more committed to their trust than others, their examples do more harm than others, their sins are greater than others, and the fiery furnace will for them be heated over seven times (III, 237).

Even those who are true teachers of the Word need to take heed because of what James wrote in Jas. 3:1,

> My brethren, be not many masters,
> knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

Godet wrote (II, 110),

> What is claimed of each is not fruits which do not depend on the labourer, but devotedness to the work.

And "devotedness to the work" means as Hudson Taylor of the China Inland Mission used to say, "God's work done in God's way . . ." To be done in God's way, the work of the Lord must be done by a faithful man who labors according to the Word of God.

So, how are we to determine if a man is a faithful and wise steward"? We must ask,

1) Is he really teaching the Word of God?
2) Does he seek above everything else to be pleasing to God? And so, is there an absence of any desire to exalt himself, or to seek his own profit?
3) Is he concerned about the household of God?
4) Is his work his main interest in life?
5) Is he looking for His Lord to return, and working so as to be ready for Him any time He might come?

Men who serve the Lord like this have never been popular with the masses of people, but that is not their concern. They seek to please the Lord, and are concerned about that even if they have to walk alone. Always remember what it meant for our Lord Jesus Christ to do the will of His Father Who is in heaven.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Luke 13:1-21

These verses conclude the first period of our Lord's ministry as He made His way from Galilee to Jerusalem. It began in Luke 9:51.

Luke 9:51 also marks the beginning in Luke's Gospel of his emphasis on the words of the Lord Jesus, i.e., His messages. But it extends to Luke 19:44, as Michael Wilcock suggested in his outline of this book.

In chapter 12 we have seen how the Lord spoke alternately to the crowds and then to His disciples. To His disciples He was stressing the importance of their service in connection with His return and the judgment which would follow. They were to be watching for Him, but, as they watched, they were to be diligent and faithful in their service, knowing that they would have to give account to Him.

As we move into the 13th chapter, the Lord had been rebuking the crowd because they did not know how to discern the signs of the times. They, too, needed to realize that judgment was coming, and settle their debts before they were hailed before the judge. This was His way of warning them that they needed to repent of their sins before the judgment day. If they waited until the judgment day when they would stand before the Lord, that would be too late.

And so it seems that in the first two incidents mentioned by the people in chapter 13 they were seeking to interpret contemporary events, i.e., to <u>discern the time</u>. Cf. 12:56. In vv. 3 and 5 the Lord corrected their wrong ideas of what those two incidents actually meant.

And so in the first 21 verses of chapter 13 we see the evidence of THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD IN THAT DAY. And, since we are still waiting for the coming of the Lord, the things that are mentioned in this chapter have real significance for us as well.

<u>THE OUTLINE:</u>

I. TWO INCIDENTS IN WHICH GOD WAS SPEAKING (Luke 13:1-5).
II. TWO EXAMPLES OF THE GRACE OF GOD (Luke 13:6-17).
III. TWO PICTURES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD (Luke 13:18-21).

I. TWO INCIDENTS IN WHICH GOD WAS SPEAKING (Luke 13:1-5).

People seem to respond in one of two ways when there is a disaster of some kind:

1) Some will recognize the hand of God and turn to Him in fear (although often such self-humbling proves to be false after the danger is over).
2) Others will blaspheme God in their anger.

But it is usually the case that they misinterpret the true meaning of the tragedy, as was the case in these two incidents.

The first of these events was a massacre of Jews which had been ordered by Pilate during the time that they were presenting their sacrifices to the Lord. See v. 1.

The second was an accident. The tower of Siloam fell, killing 18 Jews.

The interpretation which the people had placed on these events, and

would place on all similar events was that the people who were killed suffered that fate because in some way their sin was worse than anyone else. See v. 2.

This was the idea that Job's friends had as they came to comfort him.

And there is no question but that sometimes judgment comes upon certain people because of the way they have displeased the Lord. An illustration would be the Egyptians in Moses' day.

However, in general tragedies which were "in the news" at that time, another interpretation is more likely. And that is stated by our Lord in v. 3, and then repeated for emphasis in v. 5.

And so when hundreds are left homeless by a terrible fire, or by floods, or by a hurricane. Or when there is a terrible plane crash with hundreds of people killed. Or anything like these events where even one person is affected, people are inclined to say that somehow they were getting what they deserved.

But the Lord Jesus said the message was not just for them, but it was for all! Even death itself, when it comes to a person through what we call "natural causes," carries with it a message to all people.

The question is, Are we listening?

It seems to me that our country is getting messages like this almost daily from the Lord, but no one seems to be paying any attention to the voice of the Lord in modern history in the making. Let us make sure that we are getting the message.

II. TWO EXAMPLES OF THE GRACE OF GOD (Luke 13:6-17).

The first is in:

A. THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE (vv. 6-10).

The second:

B. THE WOMAN HEALED ON THE SABBATH DAY OF AN EIGHTEEN-YEAR INFIRMITY (VV. 11-17).

A. THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE (vv. 6-10).

This, in a sense, continued the warning of the first 5 verses, but, as we can see, it also pictures the grace of God toward His people.

The fig tree has been related to the people of God from the time that Adam and Eve took fig leaves to make aprons to cover their nakedness in the Garden of Eden. Fig trees and vineyards are used in the OT to picture the people of Israel. Cf. Isa. 5:1-7. We also have that idea in John 15. Also Jer. 24:1-10.

The "certain man" in this parable is a type of God, the Father. The vinedresser is the Lord Jesus Christ. And the fig tree portrays Israel.

Usually if a fig tree does not bear in three years (see v. 7) it will not bear at all, and would be taken out. The vinedresser pleads for

one more year. He intended to loosen the soil around it and to fertilize it. If it did not bear in another year, he would agree that it should be taken out.

And thus we see the grace of God extended to His people (although all in the nation were not truly the spiritual seed of Israel). The Lord gave them more time than they could normally expect because actually the nation had been spiritually unfruitful for hundreds of years at this time. And the fact of the matter is that there was a remnant in the nation that would never be dug up and cast away although God's judgment did fall on the nation as such.

But here is the grace of God.

B. THE WOMAN HEALED ON THE SABBATH DAY OF AN EIGHTEEN-YEAR INFIRMITY (Luke 13:11-17).

Notice that her disease had deformed her, and so she was crippled and helpless. And, in those days especially, if a person had been sick this long, there really was no hope that he or she would ever get well again. She is a good type of a sinner.

And see the sovereign action of the Lord. Cf. v. 12. He "saw her," and "called her to him." Salvation is of the Lord. We as His people are those who are "called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

And by His word He healed her. And Luke tells us that "immediately she was made straight" (v. 13).

She knew, like Nicodemus, that "no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him" (John 3:2b). And so she "glorified God."

This is really a marvelous picture of salvation.

But we are not through seeking the likeness between this miracle and salvation.

The ruler of the synagogue, of course, strongly objected to what the Lord had done because it was done on the Sabbath Day. He would have gladly let her wait one more day in that miserable condition just so his man-made law could have been observed.

The Lord showed him how inconsistent he was, what a hypocrite he was, because he showed more mercy toward his oxen or his donkey by taking them out of their stall on the Sabbath Day to give them water.

But it is interesting to see the Lord's explanation for helping this particular woman. He called her "a daughter of Abraham." But every Jewish lady in that crowd was by birth "a daughter of Abraham." Why would the Lord use that term especially of her.

In answering that question, note a similar expression of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:9. He is called "a son of Abraham." Why did not the Lord go home with every Jew, and save every Jew, because by natural descent they were all <u>sons of Abraham</u>?

Our answer is in Rom. 4:9-17. See also Gal. 3:7. But now look back at Rom. 9:6-33.

What is the answer to this question? Why did the Lord heal this woman and call her "a daughter of Abraham"? It was because she was a part of that remnant, one of the elect of God, and the Lord knew her and called her to Himself as one in the nation who had been predestined to the life that is eternal.

This is the reason for the delay of the Lord's coming: There are still sons and daughters of Abraham, heirs of the promise of salvation, the elect of God, who need to be reached, and will be reached before the Lord returns.

What a marvelous picture of salvation! What a portrayal of the grace of God! And what a condemnation of religious systems that are more concerned about their hold upon the people than they are about the hold that Satan has on every sinner. This woman had been "bound" by "Satan," but the Lord set her free.

Cf. John 8:34, 36; 2 Cor. 4:3-7.

III. TWO PICTURES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD (Luke 13:18-21).

They are:

A. THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED (Luke 13:18, 19).

B. THE PARABLE OF THE MEAL AND THE LEAVEN (Luke 13:20. 21).

Both of these parables are given in the Gospel of Matthew as revealing "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 13:11). In Luke's Gospel he says that they picture "the kingdom of God." As far as the Gospels are concerned, the term, the kingdom of God, appears in all four Gospels, but the term, the kingdom of heaven, is used only in the Gospel of Matthew. And so it would seem that the term, the kingdom of heaven, used in Matthew, has a special Jewish emphasis. Therefore, there are times when these titles, the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God are used interchangeably and synonymously.

There times in Scripture when the word kingdom is used in a literal sense, pointing to an actual, literal, earthly kingdom; there are other times when it clearly speaks of a spiritual kingdom; and still other times when it is used to picture the work of the Lord on earth, including all who profess to be the people of God, whether their profession is real or not.

An example of the first is Rev. 11:15. Of the second, John 3:3, 5. Of the third, these verses that we are now dealing with.

Both parables teach the same thing: that in the work of the Lord on earth there always will be, as there always has been, a mixture of good and evil, i.e., there will always be those who really know the Lord as well as those who profess to know Him, but who are not really His. This is the condition of the Lord's work today; it was the condition of the Lord's work in our Lord's day, and it was true of the Lord's work in the OT. It was plainly illustrated in the event which we have just considered. "The ruler of the synagogue" (13:13) and all of the Lord's other "adversaries" (13:17) on this occasion were Jews connected with the synagogue. Yet they had no place in their hearts for the Lord. We have the same situation in the local church today.

A. THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED (Luke 13:18, 19).

The questions our Lord asked in a contemplative way in v. 18 do not reveal uncertainty as to how He should present this truth to the multitudes, but pointed out to the people that which He was presenting by means of the parables.

Notice that a man is responsible for the action in the first parable; a woman, in the second.

Perhaps the best explanation that we can give this is that there is a difference in the action of the two: the man's action is good; the woman's, bad.

The mustard seed, contrary to what it normally does, in this parable became "a great tree," indicating that no one would suppose that such a great kingdom would result from such an insignificant beginning. The meaning of "the fowls of the air" was pointed out by the Lord in Luke 8:5, 12 when He explained the parable of the sower to His disciples. It was the work of the Devil. And so we give it that explanation here. Not only was God working in Israel, but so was the Devil. And not only is God working in the Church today, but so is the Devil. And those who are of the Devil are concealed among those who make up the true Church.

B. THE PARABLE OF THE MEAL AND THE LEAVEN (Luke 13:20, 21).

I personally believe that, whenever leaven it mentioned it Scripture, it always portrays evil.

Again in this parable we have the idea of growth or expansion, plus the mixture of good and evil. It is like the good soil and the bad in the parable of the sower, or like the wheat and the tares in that parable. The Lord's work will always be made up of that which is good and bad until at last He purges out the evil, and His work will be pure in the new heaven and the new earth. However, the Lord did not deal with that final separation of the good from the bad in these parables. He meant, apparently, only to show that the work of the Lord on earth would always be like this, and that this is according to the plan and purpose of God--like the Lord said about the wheat and the tares,

> Let both grow together until the harvest:
> and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers,
> Gather ye together first the tares,
> and bind them in bundles to burn them;
> but gather the wheat into my barn (Matt. 13:30).

What could possibly be some of the purposes of the Lord for ordering His work like this?

Here are some reasons:

1) To show His sovereignty over His work and His power to preserve and to complete that which is His eternal purpose for His own people. Thus, it is for His own glory.
2) To show the corruption and the hypocrisy of the human heart.
3) To show that religion as such is not the answer. It is only by faith in Christ that hearts can really be cleansed and changed.
4) To encourage even those who are truly the Lord's people "to make your calling and election sure" (2 Pet. 1:10).

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JESUS' MINISTRY TOWARD JERUSALEM

The Second Period (Luke 13:22-17:10)

The introductory verse (13:22) announces the theme of this section. It is salvation.

Godet (Vol. II, p. 123) has this comment on 13:22:

> Jesus slowly continues His journey of evangelization . . . stopping at every city, and even at every village . . . , taking advantage of every occasion which presents itself to instruct both those who accompany Him and the people of the place, only pursuing in the main a general direction toward Jerusalem . . .

But the very fact that no city, no village, is mentioned is evidence that the places were not uppermost in Luke's mind, but what the Lord said.

We have in this section only one miracle, but eight parables, and one discourse after another, all of which have something to do with the main theme of salvation. In some cases the Lord was concerned about the conditions necessary for salvation, in others about the obstacles to salvation, and also included were the evidences of salvation.

The section begins with:

1. The question about salvation (Luke 13:22-30).

Somebody asked the Lord in one place where He was teaching, "Lord, are there few that be saved?"

It would be interesting to know what provoked this question. Perhaps this was a person who had been enlightened to some extent concerning the truth, and was beginning to wonder if there were very many who were actually saved. People have asked me a question similar to that in recent days: "How many professing Christians do you think are really saved?" I do not know, but I am sure that there are hundreds, even thousands, in our churches, whose profession of Christ is an empty profession.

But we do know from Scripture that there are many who are going to be saved, but how many, no one knows. And note in the verses that follow that the Lord did not answer the question. The Lord never allowed Himself to get sidetracked. He brought people back to the things that are really important instead of dealing with subjects which were not personally profitable for His hearers.

He told this person (and the crowd listening to Him) that whether few or many would be saved, there would be "many" in that day that would think that they ought to be admitted into the heavenly kingdom of God, but they would be rejected. See v. 24. And so the important thing was not how many or how few would be saved; the important thing is for each person to make sure that HE had entered by "the strait gate." "Strait" means narrow. Cf. Matt. 7:13, 14.*

There are many people that do not like verses such as John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 John 5:12. They do not like a narrow Gospel. Some would like to include every religion. Others would like to include every person that they would classify as a good person. Some think that everyone will eventually be saved--if there is such a thing as salvation.

But the fact remains that the gate to salvation is narrow--so narrow that you cannot be saved unless you are personally trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ and His work of salvation which He fully accomplished on the Cross, and in Him alone.

I heard a man ask the question just yesterday, "Can a man be a Hindu and a Christian at the same time?" And nobody answered the question! The answer is a loud and resounding, NO! It is not believing in Christ plus someone else, or something else; it is believing in Christ, and in Christ alone! There is no other way. Peter wrote in 1 Pet. 3:18,

> For Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God,
> being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.

Let us make sure that we understand that!

Now notice the parable which the Lord gave them. Sometimes a story helps to clarify the truth that is being taught.

It is clear that in the parable the Lord Jesus was "the master of the house (v. 25). The day will come when the door, or the gate, will be shut. And He will do the shutting! He opens doors, and He closes them. Cf. Rev. 3:7. But be sure to notice that He was indicating that, as He spoke to them, the door was still open. Cf. 2 Cor. 6:2. And it is still open now!

Let me take you back to vv. 23, 24.

The question was, Will few be saved? The Lord did not answer that. But He did say in v. 24, "For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.. He was saying in so many words, "If you want to know what many will be doing in that final day, it is this: they will be on the outside trying to get in, but they will not be admitted!"

Why do they think that they should be admitted?

Look at v. 26. One will say, "I attended a banquet because you were there, and I heard you speak, and I could not disagree with anything that you said. In fact, I told all of my friends that I really believed that you were the Messiah." Another will say, "Don't you remember that time when you came to our village, and taught in our streets, that I was there. And I really enjoyed when you had to say. I felt sure that you were right."

What will others say? Cf. Matt. 7:21-23.

How will the Lord answer them? Cf Luke 13:27. Note: all good works, even religious works, are nothing but works of iniquity if they are not done by a person whose faith is in Christ alone. That is something for us to think about. That is narrow, isn't it? But it is true!

And then notice how the Lord continued to make matters clearer.

Read v. 28. Why did He say this? Because most of them who were listening to Him (perhaps all) were Jews, the sons and daughters according to the flesh of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob--and they thought that that was really their main ticket to heaven. But they will see those men entering in, and Isaiah and Jeremiah and the other godly prophets of the OT along with them, "and you yourselves thrust out.

And then the Lord said something else that most of them were not ready to hear. It is in v. 29.

Who were the people He was talking about--"from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south"? THEY WERE GENTILES! What? Could the Lord mean that there would be Jews who would be shut out, and at the same time Gentiles who would be let in? That is exactly what He meant! But how could that be? It was because you do not get into heaven because you are a Jew, or because you are an American. Every Jew and every Gentile who is in heaven will be there because Jesus Christ is his or her Saviour, and all other will be shut out! So, if a Gentile believes, he will be admitted; if a Jew does not believe, even though he is a Jew, he will be shut out. And it also needs to be said that every Gentile who is without Christ as his Saviour will also be shut out!

Cf. John 1:11-13.

And then the Lord concluded this message with the words in v. 30.

In its context it means that the Jews who received the Word of God first, will be last, and shut out. The Gentiles who received the Word last, will be first, and admitted into the kingdom of heaven.

Remember that it is God, not man, who determines the way of salvation. We are so man-centered in our thinking, and so proud of ourselves, that we think we can handle even heaven when the time comes. But the person whose trust is in anyone or anything except Christ alone will know that bitter sorrow expressed by our Lord when he said, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (v. 28a).

2. <u>The warning given to the Lord by the Pharisees (Luke 13:31-35).</u>

A warning came from the Pharisees for the Lord concerning Herod's intention to kill Him.

Obviously Herod had kept this quiet. He was a sly, crafty fox-like kind of a person. How different from our Lord Who was out in the open about everything. And He wanted the Pharisees to take this message back to Herod.

Notice that the Lord in both v. 32 and v. 33 indicated that the time He had left was very brief, like three days. On those days he would continue to cast out demons and heal the sick, and on the third day He would be perfected (a reference to the completion of His earthly mission when He would die as a Saviour of sinners on the Cross).

And notice the word "must" in v. 33. Here we see the Lord speaking as the Lord, in all of His sovereign power. Regardless of what Herod might want to do, He could do nothing to stop the completion of our Lord's earthly work. Herod could not kill Him on His way to Jerusalem, because it was in Jerusalem that He was going to die.

His time was short. His work was going to be done. But like the question above, time was not running out for the Lord as much as it was running out for the people of Jerusalem--and for all of Israel!

And so here we have our Lord's lament over Jerusalem. How often He would have gathered them, as a hen her brood, but they would not come to Him.

This do not show the weakness of the Lord. His purposes will surely be accomplished. But it shows the hardness, the rebellion, the blindness of their hearts, and their failure to listen to the message of salvation.

What was the result? See v. 35.

Here we see in v. 35 a great expanse of time, the last of which has not yet been fulfilled.

It would appear from what the Lord has been saying from v. 22 on that His mission to Jerusalem and to Israel was a failure. Many had not really comprehended His message nor the purpose of His coming. And so, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." "Desolate" means deserted. It would be like a wilderness. This was not only true physically and geographically, but spiritually.

The Lord was going away. Not only was He going back to the Father, but His blessing would be removed from His people. His presence would not be manifested any longer among them. Their "house" was their nation.

But was there no hope?

Yes, there was hope, and there is hope. The last line of the chapter was taken by our Lord from Psa. 118:26. Godet explains it this way:

> The words which Jesus here puts into the mouth of converted Israel in the end days, are taken from Psa. cxviii. 26. This cry of penitent Israel will bring the Messiah down again . . .

Zechariah described that wonderful day when the Lord will return to the earth and to Israel in the words found in Zech. 12:9-14.

Concl: So what do we learn from this latter part of Luke 13?

We learn that it is urgent that we settle the matter of our salvation today. The time is coming when the door will be closed, and then it will be too late.

We learn that salvation is entered into by a narrow gate. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Door, and the only Door. Cf. John 10:9.

We learn that salvation is not according to men's plans and ideas, but according to the will of God.

We learn something of the terrible agony of those who will find themselves shut out from heaven forever.

We learn more about the sovereign ways of the Lord which man can not interrupt or change.

We learn that finally the plans and purposes of God will prevail, and He will be welcomed on the earth to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

JESUS' MINISTRY TOWARD JERUSALEM

The Second Period (Luke 13:22-17:10)

Luke was dealing with the subject of salvation. So far in this section we have considered:

1. The question about salvation (Luke 13:22-30).

2. The warning given to the Lord by the Pharisees (Luke 13:31-35).

We are now ready for the third point:

3. Two misconceptions about salvation (Luke 14:1-11).

Luke brought these misconceptions out by the use of (1) a miracle, and (2) a parable.

a. The man healed of dropsy on the Sabbath Day (Luke 14:1-6).

This issue of the observance of the Sabbath Day was the point of great contention between our Lord and the religious leaders of His day. They held, of course, that they were not to work on the Sabbath Day. And this certainly was the teaching of the Mosaic Law. The fourth commandment was, "REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY" (Ex. 20:8). And then the Lord followed that fourth commandment with these words of explanation:

SIX DAYS SHALT THOU LABOUR, AND DO ALL THY WORK:
BUT THE SEVENTH DAY IS THE SABBATH OF THE LORD THY GOD:
IN IT THOU SHALT NOT DO ANY WORK, THOU, NOR THY SON, NOR THY DAUGHTER,
THY MANSERVANT, NOR THY MAIDSERVANT, NOR THY CATTLE,
NOR THY STRANGER THAT IS WITHIN THY GATES:
FOR IN SIX DAYS THE LORD MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH, THE SEA,
AND ALL THAT IN THEM IS, AND RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY:
WHEREFORE THE LORD BLESSED THE SABBATH DAY, AND HALLOWED IT.

Notice that "the sabbath day" is "the seventh day": Saturday.

As far as our day is concerned, we need to recognize that "the sabbath" was never changed to Sunday. It is Biblically wrong to speak of Sunday as "the sabbath." If we want to call it by a special name, it is "the Lord's day" (Rev. 1:10). It is "the Lord's day" because it was the day on which He was raised from the dead. But we do not find in the NT any such commandment given regarding "the Lord's day" as was given concerning "the Sabbath day." They are two distinctly different days: the one, "the sabbath day," belonged to Israel under the Law; "the Lord's day" was the day that the early church met together, and it has been observed by the professing church down to the present day. But to say that we are obligated to observe Sunday in the same way that the Jews were commanded to observe Saturday, is simply not the teaching of Scripture.

The observance of "the Lord's day" in the NT was a matter of grace. The believers observed it because they loved the Lord. It was a day set aside for hearing the Word of God, for prayer, for the bringing of their gifts to the Lord, and for ministry to others. I personally believe that it is a tragedy in our day that "the Lord's day" has become just like the other six days. It has become a day of recreation, a day for shopping, a

day when people do what they want to do (and for most people this does not meaning going to church). But it is not a day that people think of as a day when they can go to church to be with the Lord's people, and to hear the Word of God proclaimed. People sin because there is no place for the Lord in their lives, but it is not right to say that we sin because we do not "remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." Romans 6:14b specifically says, "Ye are not under the law, but under grace." And so the church's inclination to impose upon people regarding Sunday the regulations which the Jews had to observe under the Law is evidence that we do not understand what grace means, and we do not understand what was accomplished by our Lord when He died on the Cross. You see, the idea that people have about Sabbath observance is that it gains merit for us with God. But that was never the purpose of God regarding the Sabbath. It was a day of rest as Exodus 20:8-11 clearly teaches. Violation of the Sabbath was punishable by death. And that is why the Pharisees wanted to kill our Lord--because they considered that by His healing on the Sabbath, He was working on the Sabbath.

For those who are inclined to keep the Lord's day as the Sabbath was observed, we have some very important words from Paul in Romans 14:5-9. (Read.)

No one can read the Gospels without seeing that this was the major difference between our Lord and the Jewish leaders of His day. But even then the emphasis upon the Sabbath had been corrupted from what the Lord intended it to be when the Law was given to Moses. People had the fourth commandment pushed at them all of the time, but even the Pharisees, as we have already seen in Luke's Gospel, were covetous, wicked men. They could violate the Law on other points, and it did not bother them, but woe to the Jew who did not do as they thought he should do on "the Sabbath day"!

So they were hypocrites!

This whole question of the Sabbath is a very important question even in our day. And so it is essential that we understand the teaching of the Lord on this matter. Read what Paul had to say in Galatians 4:9-11.

Actually the first day of the week is not mentioned very often in the NT. Cf. Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2. If the day were that important, surely the Lord would have said more about it in the Word. But the other point that we need to know is that nothing is said in the book of Acts, nor in the Epistles about observing the Sabbath Day. I repeat, the Sabbath Day is not Sunday. The OT Sabbath is important to us because it pictures the rest of heart which is now ours as a result of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to die on the Cross.

My systematic theology teacher in the seminary used to say, "We need to give some credit to the Seventh Day Adventists" (even though he did not accept most of their teaching) "because," he said, "they at least know which day is the Sabbath Day."

I have gone into this problem in some detail so that you would know the issue in the Gospels between our Lord and the Pharisees.

Now the man before us in this passage had "dropsy." Luke is the only Gospel writer who mentioned him. "Dropsy" is another word for edema. It is the abnormal retention of body fluid which causes swelling in the body. According to the information that I have gotten, it is really not

a disease in itself, but can be a symptom of a disease. Or it can be caused by improper diet, or even an injury. It is one evidence of heart disease.

What the medical people in our Lord's day knew about it, we do not know. But it is evident that this man was in trouble and, perhaps like others mentioned in the Gospels, had not been able to find help from the doctors.

Now there is the suggestion in Luke 14:2 that this man had been placed there to trap the Lord into performing a miracle on this particular Sabbath Day. The word "behold" seems to indicate that there was something unexpected about this. Perhaps the man merely showed up uninvited and unexpected. We do not know. But he was there.

The problem of healing on the Sabbath Day was not a problem that the Pharisees had had before the Lord Jesus Christ came. There is no evidence that John the Baptist ever performed a single miracle. No miracles were seen during the years between the close of the OT and the coming of Christ--a period of approximately 400 years! The question of healing on the Sabbath Day was not addressed in the Law. The opposition of the Pharisees was based upon their interpretation that for our Lord, healing was work. BUT WAS THIS A PROPER INTERPRETATION? This is why the Lord asked the question we find in v. 33--which the Pharisees refused to answer. To answer would have destroyed their argument.

After the Lord healed the man and let him go, He asked the Pharisees another question. See v. 5. The Lord knew that they would do this, and, in fact, had done it! So again there was no answer from the Pharisees.

You see, even the Law did not exclude the possibility that there might be times when, on the Sabbath, it might be necessary to help some animal in distress. The Law showed more compassion for animals than the Pharisees were willing to show toward people.

What are the lessons for us to learn from this miracle?

1) The most important lesson is that we have here a misconception of what salvation is.

What would it have done for this man spiritually to have waited until the next day to be healed? Would he have received some greater blessing from the Lord? Would it have been more likely that the Lord would save him because he refused to be healed on the Sabbath Day?

Or, to ask it another way, was the Lord dealing with Israel in a preferred way because they were Sabbath-observers? Did the Lord ever express grief that the Roman government did not enforce the Sabbath Day on all of their citizens? You see, to be occupied with the Sabbath Day clouds over what the Lord called, "the weightier matters of the law" (Matt. 23:23).

Wherever people get taken up with religious observances, the true Gospel becomes obscure. Nowhere does the Bible say, "Remember the Sabbath Day, and you will be saved." It does not even say, "Remember the Sabbath Day and it will be more likely that you will be saved than it would if you did not observe the Sabbath Day."

2) We also learn that religion, the observance of days, ceremonies and

the like, draw us away from the Word of God.

Our Lord's questions were designed to make the Pharisees think about what the Scriptures really taught. Go to a church where people are being put under the Law, and you will find them paying more attention to tradition than they pay to the Scriptures.

3) We learn that the people who are concerned about what they do, and not about what they are, have no place in their hearts for the Lord Jesus Christ. These Pharisees did not really understand sin. They did not see themselves as guilty, defiled, hopeless sinners. They would agree that there was wrongdoing, but people sinned against them, and against their system--not against God! The person who is concerned about the Law is a person who has never really come to understand the sufficiency of Christ.

4) Finally, we learn that a concern about Sabbath-observance make the heart cold and hard toward people. We are more concerned that they abide by our rules and regulations than we are that their needs be met.

But let us go on to the second misconception about salvation. It is to be seen in . . .

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b. The parable of the wedding (Luke 14:7-11).

In Luke's mind, as he continued to write about the Lord Jesus Christ and the Gospel, he very likely still had in his mind what he had written in chapter 13, verse 24, about the gate to salvation being "strait," or narrow. A part of the narrowness of the gate is to be seen in what is required as to the heart of the person who believes. Salvation is by faith alone, and so true faith does comes by itself; it does not bring any religious works along with it, such as the observance of the Sabbath Day (as we have just seen in the preceding passage), nor does it bring any thought of personal merit--that is, that there is anything about us, as compared with others, which should make us feel that we deserve to be saved.

The Lord brought out this truth by the parable which he taught in this passage, and he did it "when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms" (v. 7). That is, they were choosing out the first places, the places of honor. The picture is one of conceit, of obnoxious human pride.

Being invited to the wedding is used here to illustrate the invitation to salvation. A person was not invited to a wedding because he deserved to come, but because the parents of the bride and groom wanted that particular guest to come. The reason for the invitation lies in the heart of the one giving the feast, not in the merit of the guest. And how very much this is like salvation. All of us who are saved have been called to salvation because it was pleasing to God to save us, and not because we deserve it. If we are proud in heart, we can even feel that among those who are at the wedding, we deserve to be there more than anyone else does.

The lesson is clear: True faith is a humble faith. Faith and pride do not go together. No person can truly believe as long as he feels that he

has the right to be saved--either because of who he is, or what he has done (i.e., his accomplishments), or because of the position he holds in society. It is true with respect to salvation, and it is true with respect to the life of a Christian: "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Think of what Jacob said when he prayed on his way back home with his family:

> I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies,
> and of all the truth (faithfulness),
> which thou hast shewed unto thy servant;
> for with my staff I passed over this Jordan;
> and now I am become two bands (Gen. 32:10).

The Hebrew for "I am not worthy" is I am less than.

Remember also the centurion whose servant was sick. He sent for the Lord to come to heal him, and the servants who were sent to the Lord said that their master was worthy for the Lord to come, worthy because of what he had done in building a synagogue for the Jews. But the centurion thought differently and sent his friends to tell the Lord not to come because, he said, "I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof." And then he added, "Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee." Cf. Luke 7:4-7. He wanted the Lord just to say the word, and he knew that his servant would be healed. What did the Lord say in response? "I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Luke 7:9).

Salvation is a work of grace on God's part, not a work in which He is responding to something worthy on our part. It is "not of ourselves," and it is "not of works" (Eph. 2:8, 9).

A good illustration of what the Lord was talking about is to be seen in the case of the Pharisee and the publican in Luke 18:9-14.

So all idea of personal merit must be laid aside if we are to enter in at the strait gate.

4. The invitation to salvation (Luke 14:12-24).

The difference between the preceding parable and the two which now follow is that in the preceding parable the Lord was talking about someone who was invited; in the following two He spoke about one who did the inviting. Perhaps the best application in this section is to say that it has to do with preaching the Gospel where we are inviting people to come to Christ. What truths do we need to recognize in proclaiming the Gospel in view of the fact that the door to salvation is "strait" (Luke 13:24, or narrow?

a. The discourse on giving a dinner (Luke 14:12-14).

Even the person who bears testimony to the Gospel can be motivated by the wrong kind of interests, interest which are centered in himself. He may think of ways in which it would be an advantage to himself if some certain person, or persons, were saved.

So we have this man who gives a feast hoping that he will be invited to the home of his guests to enjoy a feast with them in return for his hospitality. But the Lord said that that was not what they were to do. See instead what the Lord said in vv. 13, 14. We cannot allow the Gospel

message to become something that is like a good investment of our time and money that will bring profit to us. We should be concerned about rewards, but not rewards in this life. We need to be looking forward to those rewards which will be ours "at the resurrection of the just" (v. 14).

Relate what the Lord said about the "rich neighbours" in v. 12 to the case of "the rich ruler" in Luke 18:18-27.

See also Luke 5:27-32, and especially the Lord's words to the Pharisees in vv. 31, 32 when they objected that he would "eat and drink with publicans and sinners":

> They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

So we cannot be motivated by self-interest in seeking to win others to Christ. We must be concerned for their blessing, and especially for the glory of God.

b. The parable of the great supper (Luke 14:15-24).

V. 15 indicates that there was one person at least who seemed to be getting the point of what the Lord was teaching them. But this led to the question as to who would "eat bread in the kingdom of God."

We perhaps have a picture here of Israel, the guests who were invited first, and then the door of salvation being opened to the Gentiles when the original guests refused to give this the greatest priority in their lives.

But relate that first statement in the parable to the truth of salvation: "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many." We have two things here:
1) The divine provision.
2) The gracious invitation.
Matthew Henry says that "the free grace and mercy of God, shining in the Gospel of Christ," appear in these words. The Lord has made bountiful provision in Christ, and He has issued the invitation. But only those who sense their great need and their great misery because of their sin, will come to this "great supper." It is amazing that anyone would refuse to come, but there are many who are not interested and do not want to come. They find greater pleasure in the things of men than they do in the things of God. The excuses are evidence of the depravity, the sinfulness, of the human heart.

In all three of the examples that the Lord gave in vv. 18-20, the point was that temporal matters were more important than eternal matters. The door to salvation is so narrow that things like buying a field, or oxen, or getting married (if it has greater priority), will keep that person from salvation. Remember the parable to the rich man in Luke 12:16-21.

At least two of these men were lying, or else they were very stupid. Who would buy a field without having looked at it, or "five yoke of oxen" without proving them. The man who got married may have been telling the truth. But the point is that nothing must be more important to us than getting to the great supper. If it is, we will not be there! What these men were really saying was, "I do not want to come."

So the lord, when he found out what had happened, commanded his servant

to do as we read in vv. 21-23.

The Lord was not teaching here that men can frustrate his purposes so that man's will overrules God's will. Nor was He teaching that some will come of their own will (vv. 21, 22), but others have to be constrained to come (v. 23). The point of the parable has to do with the fact that nothing must be allowed to take precedence over the invitation that has gone out for sinners to come to Christ.

See the emphasis again upon the strait gate in the words of 13:24. It makes no difference how much land or many oxen a man may have, nor how happy and faithful he may be in his marriage, those are not the things that prepare us for heaven. If we do not come to feast upon the salvation of the Lord, there is no possibility of getting in any other way.

10/26/87

5. The discourse on discipleship (Luke 14:25-35).

The word "disciple" is a word which is most prominent in the four Gospels. It is used throughout the book of Acts, as far as Acts 21:16, but it is not used afterwards. It is never used in the Epistles, nor in the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Often it is used of the twelve apostles, as in Luke 9:1, or of the smaller group who were close to the Lord before He chose twelve of the disciples to be apostles. But it is also used of those who became followers of the Lord. In the book of Acts the term disciple (or the plural) is used almost exclusively for the people of God. There is would be a synonym for a Christian. To illustrate this, see Acts 9:1, 10, 19, 25, 26, 36, 38. 6:1,2,7;

In the Epistles the people of God are called "saints," "the sons of God," "the children of God," "brethren," "beloved," "Christian" or "Christians" (only three times--Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16), and other similar expressions.

I mention all of these in order to show that a disciple was not a special class among the people of God, but basically designated those in the Gospels and the book of Acts who were the people of God. So, when we talk about becoming a disciple, we are talking about becoming a child of God. We are still considering what the Lord said in Luke 13:24 about "the strait," or narrow, "gate"--the door to salvation, the door into the kingdom of God. People did not enter into the kingdom of God by this "strait gate," and then become disciples afterwards. They were "disciples" when they entered in. The conditions for discipleship were descriptive of what it means to enter into salvation. The reason that it sounds to us like something in addition is because we have such low ideas of what it means to "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." A person may learn more about the things mentioned in this message that we are about consider after he becomes a Christian, but basically the truths are in the hearts of all who know the Lord.

Verse 25: The Lord was not deceived by His popularity with the multitudes. It is always a dangerous time for the Church, or for us as individual Christians, when the world looks upon us with favor. It may be evidence that God is working, but it also may be false enthusiasm which has been generated, in this case, by the miraculous works of the Lord Jesus Christ. We might have felt that this was a great

movement of the Spirit of God, but the Lord's response indicated that He knew their hearts, and He wanted them to think very, very seriously about what they appeared to be doing: becoming followers of Christ.

A disciple is, according to the definition of the word, a learner. But more than this he is a follower--"one who follows both the teacher and the teaching" (Bullinger's Lexicon, p. 226). One commentator pointed out correctly that the Lord was "calling not for spectators but for recruits" (Quoted in Wilcock's, The Message of Luke, p. 147). There are many people who profess to be followers of Christ, but you look in vain to see the evidence that they are following--that is, that their lives are regulated by the Word of God.

Now let us see the four things that the Lord emphasized here.

1) The first thing to look for is a person's love, his attitude, toward the Lord Jesus Christ. See Luke 14:26.

   Now we must remember that no one achieves such a standard perfectly, but the Lord was indicating here that for one who is truly a disciple, He, the Lord, will come before everyone else in the affections of the disciple. Love and hate are words which speak of a preference. We know from Scripture that we are not actually to hate our parents, or our wives, or our children, or our brothers and sisters. We are to love them very dearly. But our love for the Lord must be so great that, as much as we love all of these others, we love Him the most.

   This fulfills the first commandment, doesn't it? We are to love the Lord more than we love ourselves. When our interests and the Lord's interests are in conflict with each other, the Lord's interests must prevail.

   Think of what this means:

   > 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 (Luke 10:27).

But there is a second thing. It is mentioned in Luke 14:27.

2) A disciple must bear his cross.

   This statement does not refer to the Lord's Cross, but what the Lord's Cross meant to Him is what our Cross means to us.

   A Cross speaks of suffering. Lit., it can lead to death. It speaks of persecution, opposition. It indicates that the disciple is going to be hated. Cf. John 15:18, 18:

   > If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me
   > before it hated you.
   > If ye were of the world, the world would love his own:
   > but because ye are not of the world,
   > but I have chosen you out of the world,
   > therefore the world hateth you.

   But the Cross of Christ meant another thing: it meant the will of God. It was the Father's will that Christ suffer and die on the Cross. So the trials that come our way are not accidents, but they are appointed to us by the Father. Cf. 1 Pet. 4:1, 2, 12-19.

The Cross means still a third thing.

It means suffering which is used of God to meet the needs of others. It was through Stephen's sufferings that we first have evidence that the Lord was working in the heart of the wicked Saul of Tarsus. Often it is in seeing how the people of God respond to opposition that unbelievers are convinced of the power of the Gospel of Christ to change lives.

But, before we leave this point, note the words, "and come after me." The true disciples will not be turned away from the Lord, nor from obedience to the Lord, by whatever sufferings he may have to endure.

This is followed by two illustrations which bring out two other points in showing us what it means to be a disciple, a believer in Christ, one who has gone through "the strait gate."

3) A disciple expects to persevere. See Luke 14:28-30. He has faced up to what it means to be a disciple. He has set out to build a tower. A "tower" was mentioned in Luke 13:4. Thayer says that this tower could have been "a tower-shaped building as a safe and convenient dwelling," i.e., a home. But the primary meaning is "a fortified structure rising to a considerable height, to repel a hostile attack or to enable a watchman to see in every direction" (Thayer, p. 558).

A disciple wants to be sure that he can complete what he starts (and this can only be done by the grace of God). But there may be the suggestion here of warfare, spiritual warfare, and building this tower so that he can watch, i.e., pray.

The world may hate us, but we do not want the mocking of the world because we have started something that we cannot finish.

The fourth thing:

4) A disciple not only perseveres, but he aims at nothing short of victory in the conflict. Cf. Luke 14:31-33. And he carefully prepares for the conflict so that he will not be in the position which is described in Luke 14:32--getting whatever settlement he can possibly arrange with his enemy.

To do this requires utter abandonment to the will of God. Nothing can take precedence over his discipleship.

The chapter ends with a reference to salt (vv. 34, 35), and then a favorite expression which the Lord used frequently during his ministry, found at the end of v. 35.

As salt which has lost its saltiness is worthless, and is good for nothing but to be cast out, such is the case of one who professes to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, but there is no saltiness to his life. His profession is empty and worthless.

And then the Lord said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Everybody has ears, but very few are using them to hear the Word of God. The person who hears, understands--and that is what the Lord wanted.

For one who turns from the faith, cf. 1 John 2:19. Also 2 Tim. 2:19, "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal . ."

JESUS' MINISTRY TOWARD JERUSALEM

The Second Period (Luke 13:22-17:10)

6. Three pictures of salvation (Luke 15:1-32).

a. The parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:1-7).
b. The parable of the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10).
c. The parable of the lost son (Luke 15:11-32).

The first two verses are introductory, and explain for us why the Lord told these three parables. Let us keep in mind that the grand theme is THE GOSPEL.

It is important to notice the contrast between the two preceding chapters and this chapter. In the preceding chapter the Lord sought to restrain the Pharisees and the multitudes who, in some instances, obviously were what Plummer (p. 367) called, "heedless enthusiasts." But in chapter 15 with "the publicans and sinners" the Lord knew that He had sincere "penitents," and He sought to encourage them.

It is interesting to note that with the Pharisees it was necessary for sinners to be clean before they could be accepted; with the Lord, they came in order to be forgiven and cleansed. This is the difference between legalism and the Gospel of the grace of God.

"Publicans" were tax collectors. They were Jews who were considered to be traitors by the Jewish people. They collected what was required by the Roman government, and as much more as they could. Whatever was over and above that which the Romans required, they could keep.

"Sinners" describe two kinds of people:
1) Jews who were guilty of failing to keep the Law, or more accurately, for not keep the laws set up by the scribes and Pharisees.
2) Gentiles. Matt. 26:45 and Mark 14:41 give us our Lord's words to Peter and James and John in the Garden of Gethsemane,
   Sleep on now, and take your rest;
   Behold, the hour is at hand,
   and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners
   Matt. 26:45).

Note also the expression in Gal. 2:15 where Paul used the term "sinners" of "the Gentiles":
   We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles.
Some feel that Luke mentioned the Gentiles here for their encouragement that the Lord would not turn them away. See also Luke 5:31, 32:
   They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.
   I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Godet had this to say about "the publicans and sinners":
> What drew those sinners to Jesus was their finding in him not that righteousness, full of pride and contempt, with which the Pharisees assailed them, but a holiness which was associated with the tenderest love. The publicans and sinners had broken with Levitical purity and Israelitish respectability; the former by their business, the others by their life. They were outlaws in Israel. But were they finally lost on that account? Undoubtedly, the normal way of entering into union with God would have been through fidelity to the theocracy; but the

> coming of the Saviour opened another to those who, by their guilt, had shut the first against them. And that was exactly the thing which had exasperated the zealots of Levitical ordinances. Rather than recognize in Jesus one who had understood the merciful purpose of God, they preferred to explain that compassionate welcome He gave to sinners by His secret sympathy with sin (Vol. II, pp. 143, 144).

An important truth expressed by Godet is that "the publicans and sinners" were drawn to Christ, not by something in themselves, but by what they saw in Christ. The Lord made them realize their sinful condition, and raised hopes in them that they could be accepted with God. The legalism of the Pharisees closed the door on them without any possibility that it would ever be opened.

And so Godet was also right when he called right when he called these three parables in Luke 15, "The Parables of Grace" (Vol. II, p. 143).

"The publicans and sinners" "drew near" to the Lord. They came "to hear him." And he received them. And then He ate with them. What a beautiful picture of salvation!

Plummer points out that "drew near" could mean that they "drew near" on this particular occasion, or it could very likely mean that wherever the Lord went, these were the people who were drawn to Him. A prerequisite for salvation is a sense of need.

6. Three pictures of salvation (Luke 15). All three are concerned w/ that which is "lost."

   a. The parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:1-7). The parable itself is in vv. 3-7. Cf. Mt. 18:10-14.

The Lord raised a question in v. 4--asked, very probably, of the Pharisees and scribes.

While the shepherd is not mentioned here, obviously the "man" in the parable was a shepherd.

Shepherds were common in Israel and, as Wilcock pointed out (p. 150), the "person and work" of the shepherd "had also acquired spiritual significance in helping Israel to understand God himself." In many passage of Scripture, both in the OT and in the NT, the relationship between God and His people has been likened to that of the shepherd and his sheep. Cf. Psa. 23 and John 10:11-16, 27-30.

See also Isa. 40:10, 11; Ezek. 34, esp. vv. 11-16, 30, 31.

What are the main lessons of the parable?

1) We have a sheep which is "lost." Cf. Luke 19:10. There was no such consciousness with the Pharisees and scribes, but there was with the publicans and sinners.

2) The ninety and nine must picture the nation Israel as a whole.

3) The sheep did not come back by themselves; the shepherd went after them.

4) There was joy in the shepherd's heart when he found the sheep.

5) He picked up the sheep, put it on his shoulders, and brought it home.

6) He called for his friends and neighbors to rejoice with him that his lost sheep had been found.

7) What causes joy in heaven? With v. 7 the Lord had completed the parable, and He proceeded to give the meaning of the parable.

When only one sinner repents. This is a part of the truth of salvation that we seem to have forgotten: repentance. No one will repent who does not, first of all, see himself as a sinner.

The Lord Jesus Christ is obviously the shepherd. He came to rescue His sheep. It was His love for the sheep that caused Him to come. He died for the sheep. Cf. John 10:11. He seeks the sheep. He brings the sheep. He rejoices over the sheep. Surely it must be made known in heaven when even one sinner repents of his (or her) sins and turns to Christ. There may be grumbling and even persecution for that repentant sinner on earth, but there is rejoicing in heaven.

What a lot information we have here giving some of the most wonderful truths related to the Gospel of our salvation!

11/9/87

There are similarities and differences in the three parables:
1) In each parable there is something that is lost: a lost sheep, a lost coin, and a lost son.
2) In each parable someone goes seeking that which is lost: the shepherd, a woman, and the father.
3) In all three parables that which was lost is found.
4) In all three parables there was great rejoicing when that which was lost is found.

But is there a different emphasis in each parable? It would seem that there is.

Some make quite a point of the shepherd, the woman, and the father--seeing in the first, the Lord Jesus; in the third, God the Father; in the second, the church (or the redeemed) seeking that which is lost with the use of light, which can symbolize the Holy Spirit (cf. Rev. 4:5), and/or the Word of God (cf. Psa. 119:130). The people of God are also called "the light of the world" in Matt. 5:14, 15.

There may be some truth to that, but it seems that the main difference in each parable has to do with that which is lost: the sheep, the coin, and the son.

The lost-ness of the sheep was due to its own folly and ignorance. There is no indication of rebellion, of a deliberate attempt to get away from the shepherd and from the rest of the sheep. It is a picture of Isa. 53:6. The sinner is like a sheep. When he launches out on his own, he does not know where he is going, nor does he know the way back. And so it would have been folly for the shepherd to hope that the sheep would come back of his own accord, or of his own will. He must be sought. And so the shepherd seeks the sheep, never stopping until he finds the sheep. And then he does not lead the sheep back, nor drive it back, nor did he have someone else carry it back. THE SHEPHERD HIMSELF CARRIED THE SHEEP. The shepherd does not wait for the sheep to want to come back; he picks

up the sheep, and brings him! He accomplished what he set out to do. And then the shepherd called for his friends and neighbors to rejoice over what he himself had done.

We can see from Luke 15:7 that there is much more involved in the salvation of a sinner than that which is depicted by the parable. The return was preceded by repentance. "The sheep" realized that he was lost, and that his lost condition was due to sin. And so the parable pictures salvation, but the emphasis is upon what the shepherd did in bringing the sheep back to the fold.

The ninety and nine represent those human beings, religious though they may be, who never realize that they are sinner, and lost, and so see no need for repentance.

In Matthew's account (9:12) of this same kind of situation where the Pharisees were objecting because the Lord was eating with publicans and sinners, the Lord said,

> They that be whole need not a physician,
> but they that are sick.

And then the Lord added:

> But go ye and learn what that meaneth,
> I will have mercy, and not sacrifice;
> for I am not come to call the righteous,
> but sinners to repentance (Matt. 9:13).

Now let us look at the second parable.

b. The parable of the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10).

Here we have a coin. It is not capable to running away like a sheep. It was entirely passive. A coin does nothing by itself. So that shows the difference in emphasis from the preceding parable.

What can we say about a coin--a silver coin?

Obviously it was something very valuable to the woman who had lost it. It was the equivalent of a day's wages. So the woman was distressed that she had lost it, and set out diligently to find it. We are told that she did not stop until finally her mission, like that of the shepherd, was successful.

So the point of this parable seems to be that we are dealing with something that is very precious.

Some people would just at this and say that we have here a picture of self-worth. That is nonsense. The Word of God nowhere teaches that God has provided salvation for sinners because we are worth so very much in and of ourselves, or that we are of great value to God. We are worthless, defiled, corrupt sinners. Christ paid the price that He paid for our redemption, not because we are worth that price, but because that is what it took to satisfy the righteousness of God.

And yet at the same time there is something very, very valuable about every human being. The Lord expressed that when He said,

> For what is a man advantaged,
> if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?

See Luke 5:25 (vv. 23-25).

All of the wealth of the world is not to be compared with the value of the human soul. The world and its wealth are temporal, but the human soul is eternal--and no price can be placed upon the human soul. If a person amasses a fortune in this life, it means nothing because he cannot take a penny of it with him. If he fails to see that his soul is saved, he has suffered a loss which can never be reversed.

When the coin has been found, this woman, like the shepherd, called for her friends and neighbors to rejoice with her because that which was lost had been found.

And then to show that the significance of the parable went beyond the details of the parable. We have the truth of v. 7 repeated in v. 10. Though the coin could not repent, it represented a sinner repenting and turning to the Lord for forgiveness and eternal life.

The scribes and the Pharisees might grumble over the publicans and sinners, but heaven was rejoicing in what was taking places. And those publicans and sinners who were despised by the scribes and Pharisees were men who living souls, worth more than all of the world put together. It surely is the greatest occasion for joy when anyone, high in society, or low, repents and turns to Christ.

And then we come to the third parable.

c. The parable of the lost son (Luke 15:11-32).

This parable is twice as long as the first two parables put together. And again the emphasis is different. Here we see the sinner in his wilful sinning against the Lord. Here we see the sinner as a rebel. We see him as a depraved sinner, following the evil desires of his heart. So this is another dimension of the sinner. We need all three of these pictures to have a clear picture of what God sees in the human heart.

(Read the parable -- vv. 11-24. This is the first part. The sequel is in vv. 25-32.)

This young man started out with his full inheritance, but his sin led him to the depths of humiliation--a Jew feeding pigs! And he had nothing!

Sometimes the Lord has to bring a man completely down before he will realize how needy he is. This was the case with the prodigal son. A prodigal is one who is given to extravagant, wasteful living. Verse 30 indicates that he had spent his money on "harlots."

The book of Proverbs is a good book for everybody to read. It warns against prostitution. Cf. Prov. 7:24-27, as an example. This young man felt that, if he could get away from home where he would be free to do what he wanted to do, then he would be happy. But he was to learn otherwise--that sin ruins us; it never satisfies us. He spent all that he had, and then "he began to be in want" (v. 14).

But he was not at the bottom yet.

He went lower and lower until we finally read that "he came to himself." For the first time since before he left home he was beginning to see things clearly. Plummer says that this expression "implies that he had been 'beside himself'" (p. 374). But something was taking place in his heart. This was the beginning of his repentance. Sin blinds; grace

enables us to see. Again, notice that the parable does not give every detail of what happens when a person turns to the Lord because we know that sinners do not come to themselves by themselves; this is evidence of the work of the Spirit of God in their hearts.

And so he began to prepare his prayer because that is exactly what we have in vv. 17-19. When he left home, he said to his father, "Give me." Now he is ready to go back, and this time he will say, "Make me." He no longer was interested in making his father serve him, but he was ready to serve his father as a hired servant.

From v. 20 on down through v. 24 we have a picture of the father, which, in turn, is a revelation of the heart of our heavenly Father.

Note that his father had been looking for him, that when he saw him coming, his father "ran" to meet him, "fell on his neck, and kissed him" (v. 20).

The son began his confession, and gave enough so that his father knew why he had come back, but his little speech (or prayer) was never finished. Instead, this parable (at this point) concludes like the first two did. The father calls all of his servants together to rejoice that his son who was dead, was alive, and who was lost, was found!

Oh, the joy of seeing a sinner turn to the Lord.

Before I go on to the latter part of this parable, let me point out one thing that is important in dealing with the truth of salvation. Failure to understand what I am about to point out has caused many to feel that the story of the prodigal son in particular has to do with the restoration of a wayward child of God and not the repentance of a sinner.

It all has to do with these obvious facts:
1) The shepherd owned the sheep before it went astray.
2) The woman owned the coin before she lost it.
3) The son was a son before he left his father and went off into sin.
How, then, can we say that these teach the salvation of sinners?

This is answered by the doctrine of election in Scripture.

But let me illustrate. Cf. John 10:11-16, esp. v. 16.

Note also the Lord's prayer in John 17, vv. 6, 9.

When did we become the Father's special possession? We were "chosen . . . in him (Christ) before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4). See also 2 Thess. 2:13:

> But we are bound to give thanks to God alway for you,
> brethren beloved of the Lord,
> because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation
> through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

Parables are not expected to teach every facet of the truth, but, if there is an explanation for this apparent problem in these parables, this is surely the answer.

The Sequel of the Parable of the Lost Son (Luke 15:25-32).

11/16/87

What are we to learn from this sequel?

The prominent one is still the father. He is caught between the joy that he feels because his prodigal son has returned home, in contrast with the jealousy of the older brother who resents the fact that his brother is getting treatment which he never received. He had been faithful. He had never gone away. He had stayed at home and worked hard. The big question in his heart was, WHY?

ONE POINT THAT IS MADE IN ALL THREE OF THE PARABLES IS THE REJOICING THAT TAKES PLACE WHEN THAT WHICH WAS LOST WAS FOUND. THAT IS WHAT THE FATHER WANTED HIS OLDER SON TO DO: TO REJOICE! But he refused because jealousy had suddenly filled his heart.

Envy is the result of pride. We can be proud even of our faithfulness to the Lord. And our flesh bristles when others who are obviously less worthy are given honor which we have never received.

And so it is a test of our relationship with the Lord when we are faced with a situation like this older brother faced. And we need to learn to rejoice when the lost are found, when the prodigal returns. And we rejoice <u>with the Father!</u> The father was not honoring the son as much as he was calling others to rejoice with him. The father's joy consisted in the fact that he had both of his sons with him again.

The father, remember, represents God. We see God's mercy, His tenderness, and His love for all of His sons.

Cf. 1 Cor. 12:18-27. Also Rom. 12:15. <u>The oneness of the family</u> is that which brings greater joy to the heart of God our Father than we are capable of understanding. Cf. John 17 and how <u>the Lord Jesus prayed for the oneness of those whom the Father had given to Him.</u>

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

IV. JESUS' MINISTRY TOWARD JERUSALEM (Luke 9:51-19:27).

A. THE FIRST PERIOD (Luke 9:51-13:21).

B. THE SECOND PERIOD (Luke 13:22-17:10).

7. The discourse on faithful service (Luke 16:1-13).

a. The parable of the unfaithful steward (Luke 16:1-8).
b. The discourse which followed (Luke 16:9-13).

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a. The parable of the unfaithful steward (Luke 16:1-8).

Those who have studied and taught the Gospel of Luke seem to be generally agreed that this is perhaps the most difficult part of Luke's Gospel.

It seems disconnected and unrelated to what we have just seen. But we need to remember that Luke told Theophilus in Luke 1:3 that he was writing "in order." This means consecutively, or in connected order. So this parable is connected; it is related. Besides, to say that it was unrelated would cast a bad light upon the ministry of our Lord.

We have seen over and over that Luke was concerned with the theme of salvation. I have been emphasizing with you, the narrowness of the door to salvation. Cf. Luke 13:24. Everything has been related to salvation, and this parable is too.

The Lord has been speaking to two groups--first to one, and then to the other. There were those who stood opposed to His message and His ministry, and there were those who came to Him, followed Him, and gladly received His teaching. In chapter 15 the Lord was speaking primarily to the Pharisees and scribes. Cf. 15:2, 3. Now he speaks to the disciples. Cf. Luke 16:1.

The disciples were stewards. A steward by definition is "an officer or employee in a large family, or on a large estate, to manage the domestic concerns, supervise servants, collect rents or income, keep accounts, etc." (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, p. 976).

This steward had been unfaithful because he had wasted his master's goods. And so he had been told that he could no longer be a steward. He was going to have to give account of his stewardship, and so he had a little time to prepare for the time when he would no longer be in the service of his master.

So what did he do? He made friends out of his master's debtors by cancelling part of their bill. The master did not commend him for his honesty (because he was actually dishonest), but he did commend him for being smart! He was thinking about his own welfare in the future. The Lord used this parable to show how the people of the world in preparing for the future show more wisdom than do His people, "the children of light."

Sometimes parables teach by contrast, and this is a parable like that.

This steward was actually working in such a way that there was some

advantage to his master, as well as to himself. It appears that these were debts which the master was having difficulty collecting. And so the master was at least getting part of what he had coming.

To say the least, we who are stewards of the things of God have only a short time. An end is coming to our stewardship. It may not be because of unfaithfulness, or it may be. But what is the part of wisdom? The wise thing to do is to do what we can that will be for our ultimate good after we are no longer stewards, that is, after we are not longer here on earth, but have gone to heaven where we must given an account of our works before "the judgment seat of Christ." Cf. 2 Cor. 5:10-15.

The work of the Gospel is so important and so urgent that we should count no time, however brief it may be, as unimportant time, time which we cannot "redeem." What we do will not only benefit our master, and those we serve, but it will work out for our advantage, too. Matthew Poole wrote this:

> It hath pleased God so to twist the interest of His glory with our highest good, that no man can better use his Master's goods for the advantage of His glory, than he who best useth them for the highest good, profit, and advantage for himself; nor doth any man better use them for his own interest, that he who best useth them for God's glory (Vol. II, p. 248).

The parable teaches that we need to prepare for the future, and that it is never too late to start to do what we can. We need to work with our eye on eternity. We may have more time than we think. But the time will come when we will no longer be stewards.

On stewardship, see 1 Cor. 4:1-5. We are stewards of God's Word, and, in the context of Luke's Gospel, this is the Gospel of the grace of God.

b. <u>The discourse which followed</u> (Luke 16:9-13).

Here the Lord was actually explaining and applying the preceding parable.

"Mammon" is an Aramaic word for <u>wealth</u>. The Lord was using money to represent the stewardship of His disciples. This is clear from the latter part of verse 9. <u>Failing</u> means <u>dying and going to heaven</u>. To be <u>received</u> is to be welcomed by the Lord with great joy--"into everlasting habitations."

From v. 10 we learn that no opportunity is so small that it is unimportant. In fact, if a person is unfaithful in that which is least, he will be unfaithful with greater opportunities and responsibilities. We can see very clearly what the Lord was teaching. A ministry to one person is just as important as a ministry to a thousand.

V. 11 seems to indicate that there will be ministry in heaven where we will be concerned with "the true riches." Unfaithfulness now will have its effect in eternity. So the one thing that we need to be concerned about is just what Paul said in 1 Cor. 4:2: FAITHFULNESS.

V. 12 repeats and emphasizes the truth of v. 11.

Finally, in this section, we see the Lord distinguishing between the wealth of this world, and serving God. Evidently He was clearing up any false conception that He was speaking about the stewardship of money. He was talking about serving God, and serving only Him. When we serve Him,

as Poole so clearly pointed out, we find that the rewards for us cannot be calculated.

FAITHFULNESS -- what is it?

We have many examples in Scripture:
1) Joseph -- Gen. 39:1-6, 7-9, 21-23; 41:46-57. He is one who was faithful in smaller ways, and the Lord enlarged his ministry beyond what Joseph could ever have expected.
2) Job -- Job 13:15.
3) David -- in his behavior toward Saul, and in countless ways after he became king over Israel. Only in the matters of Bathsheba and Uriah do we see unfaithfulness.
4) Habakkuk -- Hab. 3:17-19.
5) Paul -- Acts 20:24-27, 31, 33-35.
6) Lydia -- Acts 16:15:

> If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord,
> come into my house, and abide there.

Many others could be mentioned -- Moses, Samuel, Peter, John, etc. But the greatest example of all is:
7) Our Lord Jesus Christ -- John 17:4; 18:10, 11; 19:30. The writer of Hebrews called Him "a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God" (Heb. 2:17). John the Apostle called Him "a faithful witness" (Rev. 1:5). In Rev. 19:11 we are told that our Lord's Name as He comes again is "Faithful and True."

<u>By definition</u> a faithful man is one who, first of all, is full of faith. He is a man who trusts the Lord, who believes the Word of God and who seeks to live according to that Word. He has deep convictions regarding the truthfulness of the Word and the trustworthiness of God. This means that, in his dealings with people, he will be honest, humble, dependable, consistent (constant, diligent), prompt, accurate, sincere, loyal, staunch, and good. He will stand against any opposition. He will not be turned aside by dangers or by difficulties, but will continually do what he is supposed to do.

A faithful man will be a man of prayer; he will be bold and persevering in his testimony to the world.

When we have said that a man is <u>faithful</u>, we have said all of the good about him that can possibly be said. There is no rank higher than this!

Solomon once wrote:

> Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness:
> but a faithful man who can find? (Prov. 20:6).

Note again Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 4:2. And look at his commendation of others in Eph. 6:21; Col. 1:7; 4:7, 9.

David wrote in Psa. 101:6,

> Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land,
> that they may dwell with me:
> he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.

Here is a definition of faithfulness: "He that walketh in a perfect way." These were the kind of men that David was looking for to serve with him.

This is Spurgeon's definition of a faithful man (Vol. 40, p. 241 ff.):
1) One who is true in his dealings with God.

2) One who is true in his dealings with men.
3) One who is true in his dealings with men on God's behalf.
4) One who is thorough in all that he does.

Note that the effectiveness of the ministry is dependent upon the work of "faithful men": 2 Tim. 2:2.

How can we be faithful when it is our nature to be fickle?

Perhaps no better help can be given to us than Paul's word in 1 Cor. 7:25 where he was writing about virgins. There was no specific commandment given by the Lord for this, but Paul said this:

> . . . yet I give my judgment,
> as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.

His word in 2 Cor. 4:1 ff. is consistent with this statement that it is only the Lord who makes us faithful:

> Therefore seeing we have this ministry,
> as we have received mercy, we faint not.

(That entire fourth chapter of 2 Corinthians teaches faithfulness.)

Nothing is more important! Let us pray that the Lord will make us, and keep us, FAITHFUL.

But to conclude:

The parable teaches us:
1) How precious our time is.
2) That none of us will continue on here in this life forever.
3) That what we do here in the way of service will be of eternal importance and consequence.
4) What a solemn and holy honor it is to be entrusted with our Master's goods--the Word of God, the message of eternal salvation.

Therefore, above everything else, we need to be FAITHFUL.

11/23/87

8. The Word of God and salvation (Luke 16:14-31).

   a. The importance of the Word (Luke 16:14-18).
   b. That importance stressed in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31).

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a. The importance of the Word (Luke 16:14-18).

We have noted from Luke's introduction to his Gospel that he was presenting an history of the ministry of Christ "in order," i.e., consecutively, or in a connected order. Thus a part of the task of expounding the Gospel of Luke is to seek to determine, with the help of the Holy Spirit, the connection between that which follows each event, or message, with the event or message itself. And so we come to that problem here in verse 14. What is the relationship between verses 14-18 and verses 1-13?

The theme, of course, of the Gospel is salvation. But in verses 1-13 we have been concerned about money, or "mammon" (wealth). This carries on into verses 14-16. The Lord had been addressing His disciples, but, at

this point, the Pharisees interrupted the Lord, deriding Him. Luke tells us here that the Pharisees were covetous, and it is evident that they had gotten the point of what the Lord Jesus Christ was saying.

"They derided Him." Lit. this means that they turned up their noses at him. The same expression is used in Luke 23:35 where it is said that as the Lord Jesus was hanging on the Cross,

> . . . the rulers also . . . derided him, saying,
> He saved others; let him save himself, if he be the Christ,
> the chosen of God.

And so to deride is to ridicule, to mock, to scorn, to treat Him with contempt.

Wilcock said this about the Pharisees:

> They were men who lived a double life. For them the sacred and the secular were watertight compartments. In the religious compartment, they were 'Pharisees,' with certain beliefs and practices by which they were assured of a good standing before God (they thought--my comment). The secular compartment was quite separate ; in that, they could afford to be 'lovers of money,' for their attitudes in such matters had no bearing on their religious status. That was why they ridiculed the idea that getting to heaven might be in some way connected with ordinary life (p. 161).

If they were forced to explain their riches, it probably was as Plummer said in his commentary,

> . . . they regarded their wealth as a special blessing for their carefulness in observing the Law. Hence their contempt for teaching which declared that there is danger in wealth, and that as a rule it promotes unrighteousness. They considered themselves an abiding proof of the connexion between riches and righteousness; moreover, they had their own explanation of the reason why a Rabbi who was poor declaimed against riches (pp. 387, 388).

Thus, we have in the Pharisees and their practices the forerunners of present-day SUCCESS THEOLOGY! It is interesting how we can justify things that are displeasing to the Lord when we ourselves are living in a way that is contrary to the Word of God.

The unjust steward in the preceding parable was obviously a covetous man. For him to have "wasted his" master's "goods" must mean that he had embezzled that which belonged to his master. The Pharisees had taken the parable as picturing what they were doing, and this is the reason that they began to scoff at the Lord.

But note what the Lord said in response to the Pharisees. See v. 15.

It is one thing to appear righteous before men, but the important thing is what we are in the sight of God. And God is not deceived by our outward appearance, nor by our words, because "the Lord knoweth your hearts." And "that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."

What a lot of trouble we would spare ourselves if we only remembered this! SUCCESS THEOLOGY is abominable to God because it makes money, or popularity, or numerical success the measure of God's blessing. The man who is justified before God is the man who seeks to do what is pleasing to God. God's standards are altogether difference from the world's standards. His ways are different from our ways. Cf. Isa. 55:8, 9. The

wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. Cf. 1 Cor. 1:20.

But how can we know what is pleasing to God?

Obviously it cannot be what we or anybody else merely thinks will please Him. The Pharisees claimed to know, but they were wrong. THIS IS WHERE WE COME IN OUR LORD'S WORDS TO HIS EMPHASIS UPON "THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS." It is by the Word of God, and only by the Word of God, that we can know.

Look at v. 16. John the Baptist was the last of the OT prophets. The Lord apparently meant that "the law and the prophets" (a Biblical expression for the OT) was binding upon the people of Israel until the time of John's ministry. But after John, the Gospel was preached to "every man." Under the Law as such, there was no hope held out to sinners because it was not the ministry of the Law to save. The Gospel, however, offered hope to all, and all kinds of men were seen pressing into the kingdom during the time of the Lord's ministry on earth--the publican, the harlot, the Gentile--in short, all kinds of sinners.

But that did not mean that "the righteousness of the law" had in any way changed. See v. 17. It was still wrong to covet, and, thinking of v. 18, it was still wrong to commit adultery. Sacrifices were no longer required. The priesthood was no longer needed. Nor was the temple. But righteousness is required--not in order to be saved, but as evidence of salvation. So regardless of how the Pharisees might explain their attachment to money, it was wrong, and was basically a very corrupting influence upon their lives.

Notice how the Lord referred to the Law of Moses in 5:27-48. He showed that it was not merely the outward violation of the Law that was sin, but even the contemplation of sin in the heart.

It is significant that in these references to the Law He said nothing about the necessity to keep the Sabbath Day, or any of the other Sabbaths.

Remember Paul's word to Timothy in 1 Tim. 6:10. (Read vv. 10-19.)

The meaning of "tittle" in v. 17--"one of the little horns . . . or minute projections which distinguish Hebrew letters, otherwise similar, from one another. There are several Jewish sayings which declare that anyone who is guilty of interchanging any of these similar letters in certain passages in O.T. will destroy the whole world" (Plummer, p. 389. A "jot" is the Heb. letter, י. Cf. Psa. 119:73.

To illustrate the meaning, use the Hebrew alphabet in Psalm 119:
1) Beth in v. 9 with Caph in v. 81.
2) Daleth in v. 25 with Resh in v. 153.
3) Vau in v. 41 with Nun in v. 105.
4) Cheth in v. 57 with Tau in v. 169.

Godet feels (and it would seem, rightly so) that in vv. 14-18 of Luke 16 we have only a fragment of the full discourse which the Lord gave at that time, touching only the high points of the message, and giving us enough so that we could see the two things that the Lord was doing:
1) Exposing and condemning the Pharisees.
2) Showing the permanent nature of the righteousness which was proclaimed in the Law and in all of the OT.

Thus we see that in salvation authority rests ultimately in the Word of God--not in the Pharisees, nor in the people, nor even in the prophets unless they proclaimed the truth that God had revealed in His Word.

And so we have Luke stressing the importance, the authority, the sufficiency of Scripture. And it must be Scripture rightly divided.

Referring back to v. 15, Bishop Ryle wrote the following words which express the message of these verses:

> The truth of this solemn saying appears on every side of us. We have only to look round the world and mark the things on which most men set their affections in order to see it proved in a hundred ways. Riches and honours, and rank, and pleasure, are the chief objects for which the greater part of mankind are living: yet these are the very things which God declares to be "vanity," and of the love of which He warns us to beware! Praying, and Bible-reading, and holy living, and repentance, and faith, and grace, and communion with God, are things for which few care at all: yet these are the very thing which God in His Bible is ever urging on our attention! The disagreement is glaring, painful, and appalling. What God calls good, that man calls evil! What God calls evil, that man calls good! (Italics mine.)
>
> Whose words, after all, are true? Whose estimate is correct? Whose judgment will stand at the last day? By whose standard will all be tried, before they receive their eternal sentence? Before whose bar will the current opinions of the world be tested and weighed at last? These are the only questions which ought to influence our conduct; and to these questions the Bible returns a plain answer. The counsel of the Lord--it alone shall stand for ever. The word of Christ--it alone shall judge man at the last day. By that word let us live. By that word let us measure everything, and every person in this evil world. It matters nothing what man thinks: "What saith the Lord?" It matters nothing what it is fashionable and customary to think: "Let God be true, and every man a liar" (Rom. 3:4). The more entirely we are of one mind with God, the better we are prepared for the judgment day. To love what God loves, to hat4 what God hates, and to approve what God approves, is the highest style of Christianity. The moment we find ourselves honoring anything which in the sight of God is lightly esteemed, we may be sure there is something wrong in our souls (Luke, Vol. II, pp. 207, 208).

Now let us go on to . . .

b. That importance (i.e., of the Word) stressed in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31).

This is the story of a very wealthy man. He "fared sumptuously every day." This is a word which is usually connected with feasting. It speaks of really having a good time. This man lived a happy life. No mention is made of any troubles that he had. He lived "the good life." He lived like every worldly person wants to live. He had more than he could ever use.

In contrast with him was Lazarus who had nothing--not even enough food to maintain good health. Malnutrition caused low resistance, and so his body was "full of sores." What he got, he had to beg for. He ate that which the rich man threw away, and only the dogs had compassion on him. His life was full of grief.

But this life is not everything; it is not forever. V. 22 reminds us of Heb. 9:27,

> And it is appointed unto men once to die,
> but after this the judgment.

So they both died. He may have starved to death, but the fact is that he died, and went where Abraham was who was "the father of all them that believe" (Rom. 4:11). The rich man died, and went to "hell." This is hades. It includes both heaven and hell. To die for Lazarus meant comfort and peace (see v. 25); for the rich man it meant "being in torments" (vv. 23, 24, 25). The rich man saw Abraham and Lazarus, and he realized the difference between their circumstances, and so he made two requests, neither of which was granted:

1) He wanted Lazarus to come to him to cool his tongue with a little water. Abraham said, "No." It was impossible.
2) He wanted Lazarus to go to his father's house to tell his brothers not to come there. He felt that if someone were to rise from the dead and go to tell his brothers that they would believe. Again the answer was no.

And Abraham added a third negative: It was impossible for the rich man to come to them. See v. 26.

But was Abraham so negative that he had no answer? Was there nothing that he could tell the rich man?

Yes, there was a message: See vv. 29-31. Stating it very simply it was that his brothers had the Word of God. They had Moses and the prophets. They had the message in every blood sacrifice. They had Psalm 2. They had Isaiah 53. They had the promises of the Redeemer. His brothers needed to hear the Word of God.

The rich man's wisdom was still of the world. See v. 30. But notice the truth expressed by Abraham in v. 31:

> If they hear not Moses and the prophets,
> neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

This shows two things:

1) The power and sufficiency of the Word of God.
2) The blindness and stubbornness of the human heart. They would not be persuaded even though one were to rise from the dead.

Did you ever wonder why Christ did not appear to any unbelievers after He was raised from the dead? Here is your answer. It would have accomplished nothing that could not have been done through the Word alone! Let us make sure that we understand and believe these truths.

But in concluding our study of this parable, let me summarize the lessons:

1) Cf. Luke 12:15. We have already had a warning about covetousness, and a parable to illustrate it.
   > Take heed, and beware of covetousness:
   > for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things
   > which he possesseth.

   A person can have everything in this world, and yet have nothing that is of lasting value, of eternal value.
2) We are all going to die, and we are going to one of two places immediately after we die. We will either be comforted, or in torment. There is no third place, and there are no exceptions.
3) Once we are where we are after death, we will be there forever.
   a) Nobody can come from heaven to help those who are in torment.

b) Nobody will be able to leave hell. There is no possibility of a change after death.
c) Nobody can go back to warn those who are also headed for hell.

4) Finally, and most important of all, we see that salvation comes to those who are saved through the Word of God. Cf. Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23; Rom. 10:6-16.

Does all of this mean that poor people will be saved and that rich people will be lost? Certainly not! Our Lord was teaching the danger of covetousness in connection with salvation. The assumption is that the rich man was ignorant of what it meant to be "rich toward God." And it is also assumed that Lazarus, though he had nothing of this world's goods, yet had heavenly and eternal riches which meant that, although he had nothing, he had that which makes men truly rich.

Let us be sure, living in this world where money is the god of so many, that we seek to be rich in the light of eternal and heavenly values.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

IV. JESUS' MINISTRY TOWARD JERUSALEM (Luke 9:51-19:27).

B. THE SECOND PERIOD (Luke 13:22-17:10).

9. Instructions for the disciples in the work of the Gospel (Luke 17:1-10).

This concludes the second period of the Lord's ministry from Galilee to Jerusalem. The third and final period is found in Luke 17:11-19:27).

We noticed at the beginning of the 16th chapter that the Lord was speaking again to His disciples. He was speaking to them about their stewardship and their need to be faithful. One great danger that threatened faithful service was the sin of covetousness. In 16:13 the Lord warned them that they could not serve God and money at the same time.

Evidently the Pharisees were standing by, and they interrupted the Lord with their derision in v. 14, and so in v. 15, and continuing to the end of chapter 16 the Lord was speaking mainly to the Pharisees.

Having said what He did, He then, at the beginning of ch. 17, resumed what He had intended to say to His disciples. And so we read, "Then said he unto the disciples."

And so we have in the concluding verses of this Second Period of our Lord's ministry toward Jerusalem some further words of instruction for the disciples to help them in the ministry that was to be theirs. In addition to being faithful, and in addition to being on guard against all forms of covetousness, WHAT PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS ARE ESSENTIAL IF A SERVANT OF THE LORD IS TO RECEIVE THE LORD'S BLESSING AS HE LIVES AND SERVES THE LORD?

These ten verses fall into four divisions:
1) Vv. 1, 2.
2) Vv. 3, 4.
Verse 5 really forms a transition from what the Lord was saying in vv. 3 and 4 to what He would say in response to their request in v. 5. This was really a prayer request. It shows clearly that the disciples believed that faith comes from the Lord, and therefore it is not something which we are capable of generating within ourselves.
3) V. 6.
4) Vv. 7-10.

Alfred Edersheim in his work, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Vol. II, p. 306, had this to say about these verses:

> . . . they are intended to impress on the . . . disciples these four things: to be careful to give no offence; to be careful to take no offence; to be simple and earnest in their faith, and absolutely to trust its all-prevailing power; and yet, when they had made experience of it, not to be elated, but to remember their relation to their master, that all was in His service, and that, after all, when everything had been done, they were but unprofitable servants. In other words, they urged upon the disciples holiness, love, faith, and service of self-surrender and humility.

Let us think about these four words (holiness, love, faith, and humility)

as they relate even to us in our lives today and in our service to which the Lord has appointed us.

a. Holiness (Luke 17:1, 2).

The word translated "offences" is a very common NT word. It means a stumblingblock, or, to state it another way, it is one who causes another to stumble. It is the Greek word from which we get our word, scandal. The Greek is σκάνδαλον.

Cf. Matthew's account of this discourse in Matt. 18:1-11.

A person is a stumblingblock who hinders others rather than helping them. This can be done through false teaching. It can be done by setting a bad example.

It is inevitable but that there will be offences. This is because of the sinfulness and the weaknesses of the human heart. The child of God in his basic nature is no different from anyone else. He will not always be what he would like to be, and he will not always do what he would like to do. James wrote,

> For in many things we offend all.
> If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man,
> and able also to bridle the whole body (Jas. 3:2).

But the Lord was not speaking about those unintentional failures and sins of which we are all guilty; He was speaking of offences which are deliberate, and often calculated. He was talking about the hypocrite--the person who pretends to be more than he really is, one who in his actions displays attitudes and ways of doing things that are contrary to what people should expect to find in a child of God.

And the Lord was particularly concerned about the children.

An example of being an offence to children is in Luke 18:15, 16.

Those who teach children are doing that which is very dear to the heart of God. And contrary to what we often hear, not everyone is qualified to teach children. Perhaps the Lord would say that those who teach children should be the most godly people in the church. The Lord said that it would be better for a man to be drowned in the sea before he had the opportunity to offend one little one.

But it behooves all of us to seek by the grace of God to have our lives above reproach. The holier a person is, the least offensive he will be. Therefore, the child of God, and especially the servant of the Lord, must, above everything else, be a holy person.

This is a great subject. Much more could be said about it, but we need to go on to the next point.

b. Love (Luke 17:3, 4).

The Lord was actually speaking here about forgiveness, but the truly forgiving person is one who truly loves.

The Apostle John said this in 1 John 2:10:

> He that loveth his brother abideth in the light,
> and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

As Edersheim so correctly said, the disciple needs to be just as careful about carrying a grudge, and refusing to forgive, as he is to offend. In fact, this is a form of offence. Not to forgive someone who has sinned against us is to cast a stumblingblock in their way.

If a person sought our forgiveness seven times in a day, we would begin to wonder about his sincerity, or even if he was trying to take advantage of us in some way. But whether or not he is sincere is not our business. Our business is to make sure that our hearts are right. We leave the rest up to the Lord.

Remember Peter's question in Matt. 18:21, and the Lord's answer in the next verse.

This is also a very important characteristic for a child of God to cultivate if he wants to please the Lord and to have the Lord's blessing upon his life and ministry.

This brought forth the request from the disciples which we have in v. 5. If they were going to please the Lord in this, they needed more faith because "faith . . . worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6b). They needed to be able to trust the Lord with the outcome of the circumstances if they were going to forgive again and again.

c. Faith (Luke 17:6).

The disciples were concerned about the amount of their faith; the Lord sought to show them that it was not quantity, but quality, which makes the difference.

True faith comes from God (Eph. 2:8, 9). It comes from the Lord Jesus Christ, and our pre-occupation with Him. See Heb. 12:1, 2. It comes through the instrumentality of the Word of God. Cf. Rom. 10:17. And obviously, from our text, faith is given in answer to prayer.

Will you note that all of these things are a part of a holy life?

The sycamine, or sycamore, tree was known for two things: its shade, and its fruit (a fig-mulberry) which was delicious. Many feel that the tree was being used by the Lord as a picture or emblem of the kingdom of God. The sea we know is an OT picture of the world, the Gentile world. And so this would speak of establishing the kingdom of God among the nations of the earth, and it could only be done through faith in a sovereign, omnipotent God! We call upon Him knowing that He is perfectly sufficient for the work He has ordained to be done.

Finally we come to . . .

d. Humility (Luke 17:7-10).

In all of our service we must not forget that we are servants, and that the Lord is the Lord. We are unworthy to be His servants. We are unworthy of any of His blessings. And what we accomplish seems always to be so little in comparison with what the Lord deserves. We can say in the words of the hymn,

We have not served thee as we ought;
Alas! the duties left undone,
The work with little fervor wrought,
The battles lost, or scarcely won!

(next page)

Lord, give the zeal, and give the might,
For thee to toil, for thee to fight.

Times of blessing are times when our hearts can be lifted up so easily with pride, and, like the servant the Lord mentioned in this parable, we will even be inclined to put ourselves ahead of the Lord. We will begin to feel that the Lord is very fortunate to have us as His servant, and that we have proven ourselves to be very valuable to God.

If we fulfill our duty completely, we still are "unprofitable servants." The Lord said that this is what we are to say about ourselves. The greater the blessing, the greater should be our humility before God that He would ever condescend to use us to serve Himself.

God does not owe us anything however faithful we may be. The praise belongs to Him for all that He so graciously does in us, and then through us.

12/7/87

IV. JESUS' MINISTRY TOWARD JERUSALEM (Luke 9:51-19:27).
A. THE FIRST PERIOD (Luke 9:51-13:21).
B. THE SECOND PERIOD (Luke 13:22-17:10).

C. THE THIRD PERIOD (Luke 17:11-19:27).

The main theme throughout this section is THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

1. The miracle of the ten lepers who were healed (Luke 17:11-19).

The theme of THE SECOND PERIOD (salvation) continues on into this THIRD PERIOD, only under a different heading: THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

The dominant idea among the Jews regarding THE KINGDOM was that of a literal kingdom in which the Messiah would overthrow Rome, and establish His own throne, reigning over all the earth. In this THIRD PERIOD we see that the Lord was teaching them that the first idea that they needed to have about THE KINGDOM was that of an inner, spiritual change--which is what salvation is. In this sense His kingdom was a heavenly kingdom, and certainly would continue eternally.

Today many of the Lord's people are making the opposite mistake. They do not anticipate an earthly reign of Christ, the Messiah. Both of these teachings are found in the Word of God, and we must not fail to see either one of the them. No one will enter into the earthly reign of Christ who has not experienced salvation, entering the narrow gate we have been considering from the past section. This is the truth that the Lord was driving home to the hearts of men in this section.

The healing of the ten lepers constitutes a transition from THE SECOND PERIOD to THE THIRD PERIOD because it introduces a subject that will, or ought to, become a vital part of every believer's relationship with God. That is praise, or thanksgiving.

As our Lord continued his journey toward Jerusalem, He arrived on the border between Galilee and Samaria. This is the meaning of "through the midst of." Here he met 10 lepers. They were keeping their distance from the people in accordance with Lev. 13:46. But they cried out to the Lord

that He would have mercy upon them. Instead of healing them like He did the leper in Luke 5:12-15, He simply told them to go show themselves to the priests. This, too, was according to the teaching of the Law. Cf. Lev. 13, 14. It seems that the important thing to notice at this point was that the Lord only gave them His word without saying anything specifically about healing. However, that was sufficient because, as they went, they were healed. They acted upon the Word of God. That was all that they had, but that was enough.

It was then that the most significant thing took place. One of them, realizing what had happened to him ("when he saw that he was healed"), and Who had done it, returned to our Lord, glorifying God, and giving thanks to the Lord Jesus. The Lord accepted the homage shown to Him (in contrast with what Peter did when Cornelius bowed before him--Acts 10:25, 26).

The Lord in His omniscience knew that this one man had not returned just because he was the only one healed. The Lord knew that they all had been healed. His question was, "But where are the nine?"

Verse 10 probably should be taken as a question: "Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" (NIV). This man who came back was a Samaritan--a Jew of mixed blood. And they, for the most part, were despised by the Jews. Plummer suggested that there may have been a touch of irony in which the Lord said: "This man, who is commonly regarded as little better than a heathen" (p. 405).

Notice how this fits into the pattern regarding those who were responsive to the Lord and His ministry. It was the sinners, and the publicans, and the common people, and now this Samaritan, who heard the Lord and responded to Him. Those who were sick in body and sick in soul needed the Physician!

But notice the added word that the Lord gave to this Samaritan in v. 19.

Godet believes (and I do, too) that by this word the Lord was indicating that this Samaritan had been healed in his heart as well as in his body. He had shown true faith, and consequently gave evidence that he had been made "whole." It was not by his praise, but by his faith. His praise was evidence of his faith. People are not saved because they worship; they worship because they are saved. And only those who are truly saved can truly worship.

But let us return for a moment to the subject of thanksgiving.

Cf. Luke 2:13, 20, 38; 24:53. Twice in Luke's Gospel we read of our Lord giving thanks: 10:21; 22:17, 19. In the eleventh verse of chapter 18 we have the wrong kind of thanksgiving.

Cf. also Rom. 1:21-25. See Acts 12:23 concerning Herod.

Apparently no sin is more grievous to God than the sin of ingratitude. Cf. 1 Thess. 5:18, "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." See also Col. 4:2: "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving." Cf. Phil. 4:6, 7 and the little phrase, "with thanksgiving." We glorify God for all that He is; we praise and thank Him for all that He has done, and continues to do, for us. Cf. Isa. 42:8,

I am the Lord: that is my name:

and my glory will I not give to another,
neither my praise to grave images.

Praise was rare among the lepers, and it is rare among all men.

Let me conclude our present study of this miracle with the words of Bishop Ryle (pp. 234, 235:

> The lesson before us is humbling, heart-searching, and deeply instructive. The best of us are far too like the nine lepers. We are more ready to pray than to praise, and more disposed to ask God for what have not than to thank Him for what we have. Murmurings, and complainings, and discontent abound on every side of us. Few indeed are to be found who are not continually hiding their mercies under a bushel, and setting their wants and trials on a hill. These things ought not so to be: but all who know the Church and the world must confess that they are true. The wide-spread thanklessness of Christians is the disgrace of our day. It is a plain proof of our little humility.
>
> Let us pray daily for a thankful spirit. It is the spirit which God loves and delights to honour: David and St. Paul were eminently thankful men. It is the spirit which has marked all the brightest saints in every age of the Church: M'Cheyne and Bickersteth, and Haldane Steward, were always full of praise. It is the spirit which is the very atmosphere of heaven: angels and "just men made perfect" are always blessing God. It is the spirit which is the source of happiness on earth: if we would be careful for nothing, we must make our requests known to God, not only with prayer and supplication, but with thanksgiving. (Phil. iv. 6.)
>
> Above all, let us pray for a deeper sense of our own sinfulness, guilt, and undeserving. This, after all, is the true secret of a thankful spirit. It is the man who daily feels his debt to grace, and daily remembers that in reality he deserves nothing but hell,--this is the man who will be daily blessing and praising God. Thankfulness is a flower which will never bloom well excepting upon a root of deep humility.

In the light of Bishop Ryle's comments about humility, we can see a relationship between this story of the healing of the lepers and the Lord's words in vv. 7-10 of this chapter having to do with the humility of the "unprofitable servants."

Psalms is a book that will teach us how to praise God.

2. Various events and discourses having to do with THE KINGDOM OF GOD (Luke 17:20-19:27).

Note: This subject takes us to the end of THE THIRD PERIOD of our Lord's ministry toward Jerusalem.

a. The question asked by the Pharisees (Luke 17:20, 21).

This was undoubtedly a question that had been asked by the Pharisees many times. "Demanded" is evidence of interpretation, not just translation, on the part of the KJ translators. The verb simply means to ask, but does not indicate whether a question is sincere or insincere--or even the tone of the question.

But their question gives expression to the false conception that the Jews had about the Kingdom of God--that it would be an earthly kingdom. Eventually it would be, but not during the first advent of our Lord to the earth.

So, at the beginning of this THIRD PERIOD Luke was seeking to clear up this basic misunderstanding about the Kingdom of God.

The word "within" in v. 20 is sometimes translated, in your midst, as though the Lord were indicating that by His presence on earth the Kingdom of God had come, or that there were evidences already of the work that the Lord was doing in the hearts of men if the Pharisees only had the spiritual perception to see those evidences. Of course, both of these things were true.

But it seems that the main thing that the Lord was pointing out to them with the words of v. 21 was that the foundational truth concerning the Kingdom of God was that it was an inner change, a work of God, and a work over which God (and Christ) have supreme authority. The Kingdom of God externally is impossible until men experience the transforming power of the Gospel internally--in their hearts! People need to be "born again." They need to become new creatures. And only God can do a work like that.

b. The discourse given to the disciples concerning the day when the Son of man would be revealed (Luke 17:22-37).

12/14/87

Note two things here:
1) The Lord turned from the Pharisees to whom he was speaking in vv. 20, 21, to speak to the disciples.
2) The Lord made another turn--from speaking about the present, internal aspect of the Kingdom in vv. 20, 21, to speaking in vv. 22-37 about the future aspect of the Kingdom when the Lord Jesus would come again --when He will be revealed. See v. 30.

It is important to realize that the Scriptures teach both. In fact, we see here that our Lord taught both. Men are often inclined to speak about one to the exclusion of the other. The future Kingdom is millennial, and will begin with the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ as He returns to the earth to reign.

The main ideas in these verses are as follows:
1) The coming of the Lord will be unmistakable (vv. 22-24).
2) It was not imminent (v.25). There can be no Kingdom without the Cross.
3) The coming of the Lord will not be expected (vv. 26-30). The idea in these illustrations regarding Noah and Lot indicate, too, that the coming of the Lord will be accompanied with great judgments.
4) The judgment which accompanies the Lord's return will be selective and distinguishing (vv. 31-37). The righteous will flee and will be spared; the wicked will not flee, and will be removed in judgment.

Many try to link this to the destruction of Jerusalem, but the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. was nothing compared with the judgments that will take place when the Lord returns. This all comes at the close of the Great Tribulation, as Matt. 24, 25 clearly show.

There are several things that we need to observe in these words of our Lord:

1) We see evidence of the omniscience of the Lord, as well as the certainty with which He spoke of future events, linking them with the past. It was the disciples, not the Pharisees, to whom the Lord said these things. They were the ones who were capable of understanding them, and they were the ones who would believe and profit from them.
2) It is important to link these events with the doctrine of salvation, as the Lord did in v. 25.
3) We see that even in those difficult days people will be more concerned about pleasure than they will of being warned by the judgments of the past. People do not stop to think about the reason for the record of judgments that have taken place in the past.
4) On v. 33, cf. 9:23-25. This shows unmistakably that the Lord was emphasizing the importance of salvation as the only way of escape from the judgments to come.

V. 37 has been interpreted in many different ways. When we compare Luke's account with Matthew's (24:28), it seems that Luke's account showed the Lord returning to the words that He spoke at the beginning (Luke 17:22-24)--or, in other words, it had to do with the identification of the Son of man when He comes. We do not need to say that the eagles represent one thing, and the carcass another. It was a proverb which taught that you cannot deceive eagles about where the carcass is. They know, and cannot be deceived. In the same way believers will not be deceived about the coming of the Son of man. Others will claim to be the Messiah, but true believers will know the Lord when He comes.

In this connection, note our Lord's words in John 10:4, 5:

> And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: FOR THEY KNOW HIS VOICE.
> And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: FOR THEY KNOW NOT THE VOICE OF STRANGERS.

So what applies to all of Scripture, applies equally to prophecy. Cf. 1 Cor. 2:14-16. See also John 16:13-15.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

IV. JESUS' MINISTRY TOWARD JERUSALEM (Luke 9:51-19:27).

C. THE THIRD PERIOD (Luke 17:11-19:27).

2. Various events and discourses having to do with THE KINGDOM OF GOD (Luke 17:20-19:27).

c. The lesson on prayer, also related to the coming of the Son of man (Luke 18:1-8).

Here again, as in the preceding section, we see an emphasis upon spiritual life. One wonders if there were more prayer offered in connection with the study of prophecy, if there would be as many different ideas as there are in connection with prophetic truth. And often the prophetic teacher is not the most spiritually minded of teachers of the Word. It is very significant that we have this message on prayer given as the Lord was dealing with the subject of the Kingdom of God.

In vv. 1-5 we have the parable. In vv. 6-8 we have the application of the parable made by our Lord.

However, in introducing the parable, He had said what the point of the parable was: "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (v. 1).

Note that the Lord was still speaking to the disciples here; in v. 9 it seems that Luke was referring to the Pharisees.

On praying always, cf. Luke 21:36. Also, Rom. 12:12; Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:17.

As Matthew Poole pointed out, this does not mean that we are to be always on our knees, but that we should be prepared to pray at any time, and in any place, frequently and briefly--always being in a frame of mind and heart in which we will be ready to pray.

"Not to faint" -- meaning that we are not to give up if the answer is delayed, nor are we to fail to pray because of our own lethargy. It was our Lord's purpose to teach this kind of prayer by the parable that followed.

The parable has to do with an unjust judge and a widow who was being bothered by her adversary. Finally the judge, reluctant to hear the widow at first, was forced to do what she wanted him to do because she just would not take "no" for an answer. And he answered her to get rid of her, "lest by her continual coming she weary me," or wear me out!

In v. 6 the Lord called particular attention to what the judge had said.

The point of the parable is that if an unjust judge would finally give in to a widow who before had been a stranger to him, would not our just God do that and more for "his own elect"? Thus, this is an encouragement to be faithful in prayer.

But notice some other things about prayer (suggested by the text and mentioned also by Poole):
1) The Lord gives us trials so that we will pray.
2) He lets the Enemy continue to take advantage of us so we will

continue to pray. If the Lord always answered immediately, we would stop our praying. We learn to pray always by having our trials persist.

3) Persistence in prayer ultimately brings an answer. We cannot pray in vain against our Enemy.

And so, through our trials, we not only learn the importance, the absolute necessity for prayer, but we learn the value of continuing to pray until the answer comes. How often we tell ourselves that the Lord is not going to answer, and so we stop praying, when, if we had continued, we would probably have seen the answer.

CF. MT. 15:21-28 - THE CANAANITE WOMAN W/ THE DEMON-POSSESSED DAUGHTER. ALSO MK 7:24-30.

This is not against the sovereignty of God. Nor are we saying that we can convince God against His will. But we are saying that this is one of the ways of the Lord, and if we are to find profit in prayer, we must learn to deal with God as He has ordained that we should.

But notice how the Lord referred to His people in this section. They are "his elect," those whom He has chosen for Himself.

Bishop Ryle said of election that it is "one of the deepest truths of Scripture" (Vol. II, p. 254). And then he quoted this definition from the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England which says this:

> It is "the everlasting purpose of God, whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, He hath decreed by His counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation."

And then he went on to say this:

> Election is a truth which should call forth praise and thanksgiving from all true Christians. Except God had chosen and called them, they would never have chosen and called on Him. Except He had chosen them of His own good pleasure, without respect to any goodness of their's, there would never have been anything in them to make them worthy of His choice. The worldly and the carnal-minded may rail at the doctrine of election . . . but the believer who knows his own heart will bless God for election. He will confess that without election there would be no salvation (Ibid.).

If it were not that God has an elect people whom He calls to Himself, no one would be saved because no man will come, or can come, on his own.

What is one of the distinguishing marks of an elect person? He will pray! And if for a time he does not pray, his heart will give him no rest until he begins again to call upon the Lord.

One thing remains.

The Lord raised a very important question in v. 8b. See what He said in Matt. 24:12. The true people of God will remain faithful, but it surely is out of the question to expect that the whole world will be saved before the Lord returns in His glory. How would we answer that question as far as our own generation is concerned?

1/11/88

This last verse (v. 8) shows that this section on prayer is connected with the Lord's discourse in chapter 17 concerning the coming of the Lord. What will things be like spiritually prior to the coming of the Lord? Perhaps from our Lord's question we can deduct the following

things that He was seeking to teach His disciples:

1) In the latter days how many will there be on the earth who pray like the widow plead with the unjust judge? How many do you know who pray like that? How many of you pray like that?
2) This ought to be an encouragement to us to begin such praying if we are not already doing it. There is nothing that is more vital to a strong Christian life, or to a vital ministry, than prayer.
3) Note the contrast between the beginning of v. 8, and the end of the verse. In spite of the teaching of this parable, and in spite of the many commands to pray, and the promises that prayer will be answered, people will not respond and pray.
4) We see from this an indication of what things will be like when the Lord returns. With the prevalence of sin, there is always a decline in true devotion to the Lord. Therefore, the child of God must be prepared to stand against the trends of the day, and faithfully give himself to the Lord in prayer. The point of the question seems to be that it will not only be unusual to find the people of God who pray, but it will be an unusual thing to find those who are truly saved.

d. Parables, teachings, and events which have to do with the way that one enters the kingdom of God (Luke 18:9-30).

1) The parable of the Pharisee and the publican (Luke 18:9-14).

When we first look at this parable we are inclined to think that it belongs with the parable of the widow and the unjust judge--because it deals with prayer. And, in a sense, it does. But it probably was given to follow up on the question at the end of v. 8: "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

We see in this parable of the Pharisee and the publican, as well as in the Lord's teaching concerning children, followed by what the Lord said to the rich ruler--all of these have to do with the great doctrine of salvation.

When we talk to people about what it means to be a Christian, even the most ignorant will usually mention the need to pray. Lucille and I were talking to a young man in our home the other day about going to heaven, and he said how much better people would be if they would spent two hours every day with God! He said nothing of Christ, and he really wasn't interested in talking about going to heaven, but he thought it would be a good idea to pray.

But it is not talking to God that makes a person a Christian. If that were sufficient, the Pharisee would have been as well off as the publican because he probably knew much more about prayer than the publican did. Prayer was an important part of every day's schedule for the Pharisees. But the Lord indicated that a man's prayer (so-called) can be no more than an exercise in the most disgusting kind of pride. All the Pharisee said had to do either with what he was not, or in what he had been doing. But that is not what saves us. The Lord was teaching here that a man can be religious leader and yet not be justified before God.

Spurgeon said that the Pharisee was like a proud peacock, spreading his feathers for everyone to see, glorifying himself, not God. The Lord said that he was praying "with himself." Note the "I . . . I . . . I . . . I . . . I . . ." He obviously felt that God was obligated to him. He was going to be accepted with God because of his good works.

How different was the prayer of the publican!

Basically he had two things to say:
1) He was a sinner. The Greek at the end of v. 13 is the "sinner," not "a sinner." As Spurgeon remarked, he felt that everyone else was righteous, and that he was the only sinner in the world.
2) He was casting himself upon the mercy of God.

Although he was in the temple, he felt that he had no right to be there. He was so conscious of his sin that he could not look up even expectantly to heaven, and to God! He knew that God was not obligated to him in any way. His only hope was in the mercy of God.

Do you remember those wonderful words in Eph. 2:4, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us"? This is the key to repentance and to faith: MERCY! GOD'S MERCY! Salvation does not come through rituals or ceremonies or observing holy days or special hours during a day. Salvation comes through divine mercy. It is not something that we do for God, but it is a work which God does in us.

So it is good to pray, but everything depends upon how we pray. If we come in humility and dependence upon God, He will hear us and help us. If we simply parade our own pride, God pays no attention to us.

What were the results of the two prayers? See Luke 18:14.

"I tell you." It makes a lot of difference as to whom you are listening when you talk about salvation. The only true way is that which the Lord Jesus has told us. This shows our Lord's authority. It is like the expression John used in his Gospel so often: "Verily, verily, I say unto you." Pay no attention to what men say; it is the Word of God that we need to hear. If you hear something about salvation that is not the teaching of Scripture, forget it. And go to the Word of God.

"This man," i.e., the "sinner." The Lord specifically identifies the publican and sets him apart as being very distinct because of his humility and his faith. Obviously the publican would not have gone to the temple to pray if he had not had such a burden of sin that he would go where he felt he had no right to go because there he would meet God and experience the forgiveness of his sins.

"Justified" is to be declared righteous. Lit. it is, having been justified. The passive voice indicates that he did not justify himself, even by his prayer, but that he was justified by Another--and that one was God.

Not all of the details of the Gospel are given here. Faith obviously is necessary. And that faith has to be in the Word of God, and in the work of our Lord Jesus Christ and the work He did on the Cross. But the Lord was showing here that it is not through prayer alone that we approach God, but it is through humility of heart. A self-righteous, self-satisfied Pharisee, in spite of all he knows and in spite of the position he holds, will never be justified until he comes on the same level as the despised publican--humbled and broken because of his sin, with a deep sense of unworthiness in his heart.

Note the great principle of divine truth, expressive of the ways of the Lord:

> For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased;
> and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Bishop Ryle wrote:

> The truth of this great principle admits of illustration at every step of Bible history. Pharaoh, Goliath, Haman, Sennacharib, Nebuchadnezzar, Herod, are all cases in point (Luke, II, 265).

What hope this gives to the greatest of sinners! Regardless of how great or how numerous our sins are, the mercy of God is greater. And if God can and will save the chief of sinners, then no one who comes to the Lord will be turned away.

The next incident emphasizes the same truth.

2) The Lord's response to, and His teaching concerning, the little children (Luke 18:15-17).

1/18/88

Wilcock points out in his commentary (p. 168) that there is a very similar pattern to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. That is why we refer to them as the Synoptic Gospels. They are similar subject, order, and language. It is the order that we are concerned about at this point in Luke's Gospel.

Mark was probably the first Gospel written, and so Matthew and Luke followed his plan. But the interesting thing about the Gospel of Luke is that at 9:51 and continuing on to this point, Luke inserted material about the Lord which was basically his own--the result of his investigation into the life and ministry of our Lord. "But with 8:14 Luke's special section ends, and at 8:15 he rejoins Matthew and Mark" (Wilcock, p. 168). In the section that was uniquely Luke's we have chapter devoted to the teaching of the Lord. But at this point we begin, as Wilcock said, to hear from the people. We see how badly they had misunderstood the Lord. And it seems that Luke was especially anxious that those misunderstandings would be corrected so that the people would know the truth concerning the kingdom of God.

But we can also see that the theme suggested when people brought their "infants" to the Lord for Him to bless them is exactly the same as that which the Lord emphasized in the parable to the Pharisee and the publican. They are designed to correct the misunderstandings that the people, and sometimes even the disciples, had about the kingdom of God.

In 8:15 we learn that the people brought their children to the Lord for Him to bless them. But the disciples "rebuked" them, and tried to stop what they were doing.

Matthew and Mark said that they were "little children" who were being brought to the Lord; Luke said "infants." Both expressions are right, but Luke seems to have been particularly impressed that parents were bringing "infants," and so he used the Greek word _____, expecting that it would be taken to mean small children as well.

It is actually a very touching scene to try to visualize what took place at this time. There was something about our Lord which made parents feel that their children needed His blessing. And it is most clear that the Lord Jesus wanted to bless them. Why the disciples tried to turn them away, we do not know. Perhaps they did not realize how important this was. Perhaps it was because they knew that the Lord was tired, and they

did not want to both Him with this added load. Whatever it was, the Lord rebuked them for rebuking the people. And He called for the parents to come, and to bring their children.

Ryle, who is usually very dependable in his exposition, certainly went beyond what is written when he tried to make a case here for infant baptism. Nothing could be more farfetched.

The Lord was simply teaching one thing, which all of the Synoptic writers make crystal-clear. It was that people must become like little children if they are to enter into the kingdom of heaven. That will be a characteristic of anyone who is genuine in his desire to be saved. The Lord produces that kind of humility in the hearts of those are truly repentant. At that point Ryle resumes his usually dependable exposition and points out the simplicity of a child's faith, their dependence upon others to do for them what they cannot do for themselves, their freedom from pretence and from guile. They are inclined to believe what they are told, and they do not argue about it. As long as men seek to judge the Word instead of being submissive to the Word, we can be sure that they do not have true, saving faith.

But what else can we say of the salvation of children? (Suggestions for the following comments have been taken from Spurgeon's sermon on Luke 18:17 found in Vol. 24 of his sermons, pp. 577-588.)

1) They are not saved because they were born of a particular blood line, nor of parents who are Christians. Infants who die in heathen lands of heathen parents would be saved just as readily as the children of Christian parents. Dr. Ironside, and many others including Spurgeon believed that God was claiming many of His elect in heathen lands from the children who die in infancy.
2) They are not saved by ceremonies--not by circumcision, nor by infant baptism. If either of these were necessary, this would have been the place for the Lord to mention it. Works are excluded from the salvation of children just as much as from the salvation of adults.
3) If there ever is an illustration that salvation is by the will of God, and by the grace of God, it is in the salvation of helpless little children.

A. T. Robertson (II, 234, 235) wrote: "Jesus makes the child the model for those who seek entrance into the kingdom of God, not the adult the model for the child." And Plummer (p. 421) said: "A child receives what is offered to it, in full trust that it is good for it."

Children are, as Spurgeon said, "teachable," and they are <u>receptive</u>. They are not sophisticated and skeptical, but humble and eager to learn and to accept what is told them. This is one reason we must be careful to see that they get the truth, not error.

"Verily I say unto you" -- Luke only used this expression 8 times, and in one of those (11:51) the word is ____, not _____. It is an expression like, "Thus saith the Lord," in the OT, and places special emphasis upon the truth of what the Lord was saying. In Luke the references are: 4:24; 11:51; 12:37; 13:35; 18:17, 29; 21:32; 23:43. Another similar expression is that which we find in Matt. 6: "But I say unto you." The Lord never said anything that was not true, but these expressions call special attention to what He was saying, and emphasized their truthfulness. Spurgeon once told his people at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London,

> These prefatory expressions are intended to secure our reverent

attention to the fact that so far from the admission of children into the kingdom being unusual or strange, none can find entrance there except they receive the gospel as a little child receives it (Vol. 24, p. 578).

Besides setting the pattern for salvation, these verses certainly emphasize the importance of evangelizing children.

Matthew tells us that those who brought the little children wanted Him to "put his hands on them, and pray" (Matt. 19:13).

This incident ought to remind us of the prophecy in Isa. 40:11:

> He shall feed his flock like a shepherd:
> he shall gather the lambs with his arm,
> and carry them in his bosom,
> and shall gently lead those that are with young.

~~Luke 18:15-17 (7)~~

There are some important lessons for us in these verses:

1) It ought to be a great encouragement to us to notice that our Lord Jesus was interested in the children, and wanted the children to be brought to Him.
2) It ought to make us ask ourselves, what am I doing to bring children to Christ? Am I doing what the Lord Jesus did--praying for them? Do I pray for the salvation of my children? Of my grandchildren? How many children do I pray for specifically by name?
   One of the tragedies of our day is the way in which our children are being affected, even before birth, by drugs, and by parents who have AIDS.
3) It ought to make us take a fresh look at our faith. Does our faith continue to be as simple as the faith of a little child? We are to enter the kingdom in this way, but we are also to continue with child-like faith. How often we become so worldly-wise that we are very slow to believe the Word, and to trust the Lord to do what He has promised to do.
4) For our children, this ought to encourage them to come to the Lord. There is no reason for them to wait; they need to come now!
5) This is one of the incidents in the Bible to encourage us to believe that babies and very young children who die are with the Lord. Spurgeon expressed it this way:

> We know that infants enter the kingdom, for we are convinced that all of our race who die in infancy are included in the election of grace, and partake in the redemption wrought out by our Lord Jesus. Whatever some may think, we believe that the whole spirit and tone of the word of God, as well the nature of God himself, lead us to believe that all who leave this world as babes are saved (Vol. 24, p. 583).

This account is also found in Matt. 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16.

3) The Lord and the rich ruler (Luke 18:18-30).

This is the third section in this chapter in which the Lord sought to clarify misunderstandings that people had regarding the truth of salvation. Notice that in v. 25 the Lord was speaking of entering into the kingdom of heaven. The section is concluded with the comment by Peter and our Lord's response to him in vv. 28-30.

This account is also found in Matt. 19:16-30 and Mark 10:17-31.

This man seems to have been sincere. Matthew called him "young." Neither Matthew nor Mark called him a "ruler." This means that he was a chief person in some respect, possibly because of his wealth and the fact that he would have had many servants.

He seems to have been a good, moral man, genuinely concerned about his soul. But, in spite of his riches, and in spite of his morality, he was not satisfied in his heart that things were as they should be between himself and God. His question was not child-like (relating it to the preceding incident), but it was man-like--a question you would expect a man of the world to ask.

Just how much he believed about the Lord, we cannot say, even though he called him, "Good Master." "Master" means teacher. Perhaps he had gone to the rabbis of the day with the same question--we do not know. But, at any rate, he came to the Lord, evidently believing that the Lord could answer his question truthfully.

Before the Lord answered his question, He inquired about the way the young ruler addressed Him: "Good Master." The Lord was not denying His own Deity, but seeking to get the ruler to think about what he was saying. Goodness is a leading attribute speaking of the moral perfection of God. It is in contrast with the sinfulness of man. It is related to His love, His grace, His tenderness, His compassion. The ruler felt that the Lord Jesus was approachable. Had this young ruler realized that Jesus Christ was more than a man, that He was indeed the Son of God? We do not know, but the Lord probed his thinking on this point, saying, in effect, "Do you realize what you are saying?" A "good Master" would not give a wrong answer.

He probably used the word "inherit" to meaning receive, but, as Ryle remarked, it brings out the legality of the young man's mind. He felt that you must work for anything that you expect to get. And then it would be his just as certainly as an inheritance would be his.

Obviously this ruler was Jewish--that is why the Lord would bring up the subject of the Law.

Was the Lord teaching that salvation was by obedience to the Law, or that it had ever been this way? Certainly not! But "by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20b). Paul did say that

> . . . if there had been a law given
> which could have given righteousness,
> verily righteousness should have been by the law.
> But the scripture hath concluded all under sin,
> that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ
> might be given to them that believe (Gal. 3:21b, 22).

Salvation has never been by the Law. Nobody has ever been saved by obedience to the Law. The Law was given to make men realize the sinfulness of sin. But this young man had not realized that. He had a very superficial idea of sin, and it was restricted to outward observances.

And so he very glibly and confidently asserted that he had kept the Law from his youth. But it is important to note that, although he felt good about himself with respect to the Law, he had no confidence that had earned for him the right to expect eternal life.

V. 22 shows how gracious the Lord was. We would probably have contradicted him at this point. But the Lord brought out the fallacy of his

thinking in another way. He showed the young man that at that very moment he was guilty of violating the tenth commandment: "Thou shalt not covet." Coveting not only means to get what we do not have, but it means to keep what we do have. Men of the world are inclined to feel that, if you have money, you can do anything, or get anything. That is not true even in worldly things; much less is it true regarding heavenly things. Salvation cannot be purchased with money! Isaiah said,

> Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,
> and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat;
> yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price
> (Isa. 55:1).

The Apostle Peter said,

> Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed
> with corruptible things, as silver and gold,
> from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;
> But with the precious blood of Christ,
> as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Pet. 1:18, 19).

Neither is salvation by works. Cf. Eph. 2:8, 9; Tit. 3:5. Paul told Timothy (2 Tim. 1:9), speaking of God,

> Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling,
> not according to our works,
> but according to his own purpose and grace,
> which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

This was too much for the young man, and so he went away, not angry, but "very sorrowful." He was overwhelmed with grief, consumed with grief. The Lord obviously did not assure him that he had done enough, or that he had enough resources to make up the difference. In short, the Lord did not tell him what he wanted to hear; He told him what he needed to hear if he were to be saved. THE PROBLEM WAS HIS MONEY.

But now the question comes up, If I am not to be saved by what I do, nor by what I pay, can I be saved by what I give up? Is salvation to be ours if we sell all that we have, and give the money to the poor? There are a lot of people who would make us think that today with the emphasis that there is upon the street people.

No, we are not saved by what we give up. The reason that this was an issue with this very rich young ruler was because he could not really be trusting solely in the Lord as long as he was trusting in his possessions. Again, while all of the truths of the Gospel are not given here, we know that to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ means to believe wholly and solely upon Him. He alone must be our only hope of eternal life.

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V. 23 -- Matthew expressed it this way:

> But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful:
> for he had great possessions.

He did not ask for more instruction. The cost was too much for him. His hopes of eternal life were dashed because it was not what he thought it would be, and he saw that he could not have it on his own terms.

Prior to our Lord's words in v. 22, Mark tells us, "Then Jesus beholding him loved him" (Mark 10:21a). Some feel that this is an indication that the rich young man was elect, and that some time in the future he came to Christ, and believed. That may be true. If so it would encourage us to believe that, though a person may turn away from the Gospel initially,

yet we should not give up hope that he (or she) may still be saved.

V. 24 - It is hard to reach anyone with the Gospel, but the more a man has in the way of this world's goods, the harder it is to reach him.

V. 25 - There are two times in the Jewish Talmud in which this illustration is used of a camel going through a needle's eye to show the impossibility of a certain thing happening. There does not seem to be anything to the idea that the needle's eye was a narrow gateway in a wall for foot passengers. The word "needle" was used of the point of a spear, and then of a surgeon's needle. This last is probably what the Lord had reference to. We can see from the illustration that there was no possibility at all that a rich man could be saved.

V. 26 - The question of the disciples showed that there was another truth about God that they had to learn: HE IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS! Perhaps they were inclined to think that a rich man could get anything that he wanted. But that is not true! He not only cannot buy salvation, but his money gives him a false sense of importance and closes his eyes to his own real need so that he will not listen to the Gospel.

V. 27 - The two times the word "with" are used it is the same word in the Greek: _____. It really means beside. If you and I take our stand beside men, we are going to find that there are a lot of things that are impossible. "Take your stand 'beside' (para) God and the impossible becomes possible" (Robertson, II, 236).

The Lord was not saying here that the salvation of the poor is impossible with men, but the salvation of the rich is impossible. He was indicating that the salvation of any person is impossible with men. We cannot save ourselves, nor can we save anyone else. If God left us alone, no one would be saved. He must open our eyes. He must convict us of our sin. He must show us that Christ is the Saviour. He must grant us faith. He must do that work which makes sinners into new creatures. Salvation is all of God, all of grace! And this is the lessons that the disciples needed to learn! We all need to learn it. And in serving the Lord and seeking to win the lost, we must keep this ever in our minds and hearts. If God does not work, our work is in vain!

Cf. Rom. 1:16; Eph. 2:4-9.

Then comes Peter's bold declaration in v. 28. Matthew indicates that Peter concluded his words with a question: "What shall we have therefore?" The rich man's question was, "What shall I do . . . ?" Peter's question was, "What shall we have . . . ?"

V. 29 - The Lord certainly was not indicating that we need to renounce our parents and not care for them, or divorce our wives and disown our children in order to enter into the kingdom of heaven. He was not saying that we cannot own a home. But this was like the statement we had in 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.

IT MEANS THAT CHRIST MUST BE THE PRE-EMINENT ONE IN OUR LIVES. WE DO NOT DO THE WILL OF OUR PARENTS, OR OF OUR FAMILY; WE DO THE WILL OF GOD. WE ARE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT OBEYING HIM AND PLEASING HIM THAN WE ARE ANY OTHER PERSON WHO MAY BE VERY DEAR TO US.

Sometimes the sacrifices that a person has to make in order to be saved are very great. Often it does mean great divisions in families. Humanly speaking, the cost is great. But the present rewards are greater than the losses, and the eternal rewards are incalculable. On the other hand, if we turn from Christ, the losses are likewise incalculable.

This ends the section in which we have seen the truths concerning entrance into the kingdom of God in*
1) The parable of the Pharisee and the publican.
2) The Lord's call for the little children to come to Him.
3) The Lord and the rich young ruler.

In all of these the emphasis is upon the Gospel and salvation. Therefore it is very fitting that in the following verses we have a repetition of what we had in Luke 9:22 and 44: HINTS OF THE CROSS: 5:35; 12:50; 13:32; 14:27; 17:25.

e. The Lord's prediction of His suffering, death, and resurrection--the foundation upon which the kingdom of God is established (Luke 18:31-34).

This clarifies the truth that is basic to all three of the events mentioned above which had to do with salvation.

The meaning of our Lord's words is very clear, but the disciples were blinded by their pre-conceived ideas, taught them from their youth, as to what the Messiah would do when He came. They were not looking for a Saviour, but for a King. And so such words as this were confusing to them, and, we could even say, repulsive.

Let us notice the words even though we are familiar with what happened, and we know that what the Lord was saying was the absolute truth.

V. 31 - Notice that these words were spoken only to the twelve disciples.

Concerning this trip to Jerusalem, look back at Luke 9:51 when this journey began, and notice what was written there:

> 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.

"Set his face" is a term which shows absolutely determination to go there. No one could possible keep Him from going there to do what He had to do. "Received up" not only speaks of the completion of His work through His death, but it speaks of the acceptance of His work by the Father. Cf. John 16:10,

> Of righteousness, because I go to my Father,
> and ye see me no more.

Also 1 Tim. 3:16,

> And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:
> God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit,
> seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles,
> believed on in the world, received up into glory.

The Lord was intent on finishing the work that the Father had given Him to do.

Note also that the Lord believed the OT prophets. See Luke 18:31.

Note how the Lord referred to Himself: "the Son of man." This title of our Lord is used 85 times in the four Gospels. It is only used by the

Lord of Himself. That is, no one else ever called him by this title. And it is found only 4 additional times outside of the Gospels: Acts 7:56; Heb. 2:6; Rev. 1:13; 14:14.

It definitely refers to the true humanity of our Lord.

V. 32 - Note the evidence of the sovereignty of God in the death of Christ: "He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles." Peter, preaching later on the Day of Pentecost said of our Lord,

> Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel
> and foreknowledge of God,
> ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain
> (Acts 2:23).

OF JUDAS - MT. 26:14,15
OF THE JEWS - MT. 26:18
OF PILATE - MT. 27:26
BUT...

He was not delivered unto the Gentiles by Judas, nor by the Jews, nor by Pilate, but by God! CF. ISA. 53:10; 2 COR. 5:18-21.

CF. MT. 27:28,29,31. EVEN AFTER HE WAS CRUCIFIED - MT. 27:39-44.

"Mocked" - They made sport of Him, had fun with Him. They hailed Him as the King of the Jews. They put a purple robe on Him. They gave Him a crown of thorns. They hurled their ridicule at Him as He was dying on the Cross. It was all in mockery.

"Spitefully treated" - This means that they felt that they had the upper hand with Him, and so they outrageously did everything they could to insult and abuse the Lord of glory. It is a very strong and very wicked expression.

CF. MT. 27:30

They spit on Him. This was an expression of their utter contempt for Him.

CF. MT. 27:26

V. 33 - "And they shall scourge him." They would whip our Lord. It was a form of punishment that was used with those who were condemned to be crucified--and of itself, often ended in the death of the one being scourged. The Roman method was to strap the prisoner to a frame, and then beat him with rods. Sometimes they were leather straps with pieces of metal attached to the ends of the straps to tear the flesh of the prisoner.

"And put him to death" - because it seems that they would have run out of anything else to do.

Isaiah prophesied in Isa. 52:14,

> His visage (appearance) was so married more than any man,
> and his form more than the sons of men.

This meant that His body was mutilated beyond recognition. It was hard to realize that what was on the Cross was actually a human body.

The Lord knew all of this, and could speak of it, and yet He steadfastly moved in the direction of Jerusalem, so intent was He on doing the Father's will, and in providing salvation for those whom the Father had given to Him.

But notice the response of the twelve disciples.

V. 34: And they understood none of these things:
> and this saying was hid from them,
> neither knew they the things which were spoken.

What are we to learn from a verse like this? It seems quite easy to understand the words which the Lord had spoken, but it did not really get through to them. They did not understand what He was saying.

We can learn several things:

1) This is a clear indication that our Lord Jesus Christ was a Prophet. He knew in detail what would happen to Him--and it did!
2) We see also that spiritual truth has to be revealed, and then made known to us by the Holy Spirit. Perhaps at this point the disciples had trouble even understanding why our Lord's death was necessary. Cf. 1 Cor. 2:14.
3) We see the goodness of the Lord in not letting the full impact of what He said get through to them. Do you remember what the Lord said about this in the Sermon on the Mount? Cf. Matt. 6:34:
   Take therefore no thought for the morrow:
   for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.
   Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.
4) Then let us remember what the Lord said to His disciples as recorded for us in the Gospel of John:
   a) "Now I tell you before it come,
      that, when it is come to pass,
      ye may believe that I am he" (John 13:19).
   b) "And now I have told you before it come to pass,
      that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe" (John 14:29).
   c) "But these things have I told you,
      that when the time shall come,
      ye may remember that I told you of them" (John 16:4).

Oh, how wise the Lord is! He spares us from things that we are not prepared to receive. He has kept most of our future from us. When the time comes, He gives us the grace to endure whatever may come. And the joys also take us by surprise when we may have given up on the possibility that certain of our prayers would ever be answered.

If the disciples were to learn the ways of the Lord, they needed to understand the Lord's way of revealing and concealing the truth. V. 26 of this chapter also shows the need they had to understand the ways of the Lord. God's ways and our ways are not the same. Cf. Isa. 55:8, 9. "As for God, his way is perfect" (Psa. 18:30a). Psa. 77:19 says, "Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known." <u>One of the most profitable of all studies in the Bible has to do with the ways of the Lord.</u> All of the people of God in the past have had to learn them, and so do we!

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But to return to the text itself, Wilcock, whom I have quoted before, gave the following illuminating statement about <u>the Cross</u> in his commentary on Luke. His comment has to do with the words, "these things," in Luke 18:34.

> But 'these things' were quite literally the <u>crucial</u> things; and it is as if Luke is saying that, whatever people may have understood by the kingdom, when it came to the most important facts of all 'they did not grasp what was said'--their understanding of the whole was hopelessly awry <u>if the cross was missing from it.</u>
>
> For the last act of the drama, the passion and resurrection of Jesus, was the heart of the message. This was the third explicit prediction of it which Jesus had given them--indeed the seventh or eighth, if we include all his hints about it (see references on p. 11 of my notes) --and it would in due course be seen to be, in the words of Luke's friend Paul, the fact 'of first importance' in the preaching of the

gospel: 'that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures.'

It is as possible today as it ever was, and perhaps more so, for Jesus to be claimed as a figurehead for movements which he himself would never have owned. Popular notions of what is meant by his leadership make him more than acceptable as Jesus the beautiful example, Jesus the iconoclastic rebel (my explanation: one who went against the religious tide of his day), Jesus the mystic guru. A variety of political, social, and religious causes may identify themselves with his 'kingdom.' But Luke supplies us with the question which has to be asked of any such movement: Are these so-called Christian soldiers 'Marching as to war, With the cross of Jesus Going on before'? However enthusiastic may be their march on Jerusalem, If 'this saying' is 'hid from them' their cause in not Christ's. You cannot have a crusade without a cross (Wilcock, Michael, The Message of Luke, p. 172, IVP).

The heart of the kingdom message is the Cross of Christ. There can be no Kingdom of God without the Cross. The Cross has to do with the spiritual change that is needed in the hearts of men to make them acceptable to God. There is no salvation without the Cross. That is why we know that the preceding passages, while they do not mention the Cross of Christ, nevertheless require the Cross to make their message complete and meaningful.

If we would only keep the true meaning of the death of Christ before us, it would keep us from getting involved in a lot of other movements which really are no founded upon the death of Christ, and are a perversion of the Gospel message.

f. TWO MEN who came to Christ (Luke 18:35-19:10).

Both of these events are very significant in connection with the kingdom of God.

1) A certain blind man (Luke 18:35-43).

Mark tells us in his account of this miracle that the man's name was Bartimaeus. See Mark 10:46-52.

THE OTHER MAN was Zacchaeus, the publican (Luke 19: 1-10).

2/2/88

This story is found also in Matt. 20:29-34 and in Mark 10:46-52. There are some differences in the three accounts. Matthew speaks of two blind men who were healed as the Lord was leaving Jericho. Mark speaks only of one blind man, healed as the Lord was leaving Jericho, and Mark alone of the three Gospel writers named the blind man: Bartimaeus. David Brown has two comments about the apparent discrepancies:

1) That we do not know all of the facts, and, if we did, we would see that there really is no problem here. The Lord may very well have healed more than one blind man, and evidently did. And the circumstances in more than one could have been practically the same. Besides, there is evidence that the Roman leaders of the day had built and beautified a second Jericho near the first. And that the writers

were not each speaking of the same Jericho.
2) If the Gospel writers had been trying to deceive there readers, they certainly would have cleared up this problem. So situations like this are an argument for the authenticity of the Gospel records.

V. 36 - It seems that Bartimaeus may have had some difficulty in finding out why there was such a large crowd, but eventually he was told (v. 37) that it was "Jesus of Nazareth."

V. 38 - At this moment Bartimaeus shouted out: "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me." When the Pharisees were asked in Matt. 22:42 whose son the Messiah would be, they answered, "The son of David." Thus, Bartimaeus' words indicated that he believed that Jesus was the Messiah! And later on, in v. 41, when Bartimaeus addressed the Lord as "Lord," it seems that there we must take this, not just as a title of respect, as it is in other places (like our word, Sir), but that he was actually indicating that he believed in the Deity of Christ!

Here we need to note two verses given to us by the Apostle Paul.
1) 1 Cor. 12:3b, " . . . and that no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (Spirit).
2) Rom. 10:9, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus" (or, Jesus as Lord), "and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Although Christ had not yet died, and so had not been raised from the dead, even so there is much evidence here in the case of Bartimaeus that, although his physical eyes were blind, his spiritual sight was 20/20, and that he stood by the side of the road that day as one who was already trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour! God had already done a work of grace in his heart. Thus we find evidence of the Lord's work in the most unexpected and unlikely places.

And so, when the crowd tried to silence him, he would not keep quiet. He literally shouted out his faith!

V. 39 - The rebukes of the crowd should remind us of the rebukes of the disciples when people sought to bring their children to the Lord in v. 15 of this chapter. The disciples did not think that the Lord would have time for children; the crowds did not think that the Lord would have time for a blind man, especially while He was travelling down the road, and accompanied, as He was, by such a large multitude of people.

But Bartimaeus would not keep quiet. He, too, did not believe that he really deserved to call upon the Lord because his appeal to the Lord was for the Lord to have mercy upon him. Once we have experienced the mercy of the Lord in salvation, we continue to experience His mercy throughout our lives--AND WE ALWAYS RECOGNIZE THAT HIS BLESSINGS ARE MERCIES!

V. 40 - The crowd had rebuked the blind man, but the Lord Jesus commanded that he be brought to Him. And Mark tells us, "And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus" (Mark 10:50).

V. 41 - Then it was that the Lord threw open the door of mercy to blind Bartimaeus: "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?"

Bartimaeus' simple answer was, "Lord, that I may receive my sight."

So we see that Bartimaeus not only believed that Jesus was the Messiah and Lord, but he also expressed the greatest confidence in the power of

the Lord. He believed that the Lord could give him sight.

V. 42 - The Lord gave him sight by the word of His power. Matthew does say of the two blind men that the Lord touched their eyes, but Mark and Luke emphasize that it was by the spoken word that the Lord healed blind Bartimaeus.

V. 43 - Note four things that followed the Lord's words:
1) Bartimaeus received his sight "immediately."
2) He began to follow the Lord.
3) He glorified God.
4) The attitude of the crowd had completely changed, and the people, too, "gave praise to God."

Application: Notice the Lord's words, "Thy faith hath saved thee." Compare this with the Lord's words to the cleansed leper in Luke 17:19b, "Thy faith hath made thee whole."

These words seem to indicate that there was more going on in behalf of these needy men than just their physical healing. It would be more appropriate for the Lord to have said, "Thy faith hath healed thee," or, "Thy faith hath restored thy sight." But the Lord used the word, "saved." Thus, it seems very, very likely that as Bartimaeus received his physical sight, he also received the salvation of his soul. The Lord, as we have seen, was obviously working in his heart before this time; here, we can say, the work was completed. And, therefore, the four things that describe the aftermath of his healing, in v. 43, also take on real significance as far as the salvation of his soul was concerned. And this becomes not only a picture of salvation, but also fits in with the emphasis that we have seen that Luke has been making regarding how we enter into the kingdom of heaven. In this miracle, emphasis is now placed upon FAITH. And this, coupled with what our Lord had said about His sufferings in vv. 31-33, make our understanding of the truth of salvation complete.

We cannot overlook the fact that God was working in Bartimaeus' heart before he actually came to the Lord.

The story of Bartimaeus illustrates the words of that wonderful hymn, the author of which is anonymous. Listen to the three stanzas as I read them:

I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew
He moved my soul to seek Him, seeking me;
It was not I that found, O Savior true;
No, I was found of thee.

Thou didst reach forth Thy hand and mine enfold;
I walked and sank not on the storm-vexed sea;
'Twas not so much that I on Thee took hold,
As Thou, dear Lord, on me.

I find, I walk, I love; but O the whole
Of love is but my answer, Lord, to Thee!
For Thou wert long beforehand with my soul;
Always Thou lovedst me.

We can never really glorify God as we should until we, too, recognize the truthfulness of these words regarding how we have been saved.

Note: Gary taught Luke 19:1-27 (2/9 and 2/16) while I was on vacation.

2/22/88

V. JESUS' MINISTRY IN JERUSALEM AND ITS VICINITY (Luke 19:28-21:38).

This section covers the final period of public teaching in the earthly ministry of our Lord.

The Lord, by the parable of the pounds, had shown that the kingdom would not come immediately. And, as Gary stressed with you last week, our Lord set before them their responsibility with regard to the message of the kingdom, the Gospel message. We can see why the Lord did that when, in this section to which we are now coming, we see the increased opposition of the chief priests and the scribes, and the Sadducees as well. The Lord knew that the end was near. The Lord knew that He would leave them following His resurrection, and so everything must be done by the disciples after the ascension in preparation for His return.

A. The royal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (Luke 19:28-40).

Luke has some additions and some omissions when we compare His account with that of the other three Gospel writers. He did not mention that the Lord went to Bethany. He did not mention the resurrection of Lazarus and the excitement which that had caused among the people. But Luke recorded immediately the entry of the Lord into the city. It might be labelled as triumphant, but that is for believers to understand. It was in every sense royal--the King entering the city, not to reign, but to suffer and die!

It is important that the child of God carry this picture of the Lord with him as he goes on to the record of the Cross, remembering what the Lord did and its significance for all of the days to come. It is not unusual for the Scriptures to give us a glimpse of the future in order to strengthen our faith before those future hopes are finally realized.

Bethphage was a town of which there are now no remains. We know from the Scriptures that it was near the mount of Olives, and probably between the mount and Bethany.

19:30 There is no indication that the provision of the colt had been pre-arranged by the Lord. It rather seems to be evidence of His sovereign authority and wisdom because the Lord knew that the unbroken colt was there, and that the disciples would be able to bring it to the Lord.

19:31 Note the claim that the Lord was making here to Deity when He told the disciples to say, "The Lord hath need of him."

19:32-35 These verses surely give evidence of the prophetic ministry of our Lord.

19:36-38 The response of the people to what the Lord was doing seems to have been spontaneous. Their song was taken in part from Psa. 118:26. The people were accustomed to sing it at the conclusion of the Passover, according to Godet, and the words, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," were

taken as referring to the Messiah. To come in the Name of the Lord means to come on behalf of the Lord, to come as the Lord's Representative. He had come as One sent by the Lord, on a mission from the Lord, to do His will. "The Lord" in Whose Name Jesus had come would, of course, be the Father!

Thus Stanley (quoted by Plummer, p. 447) has called this the "earliest hymn of Christian devotion."

Where the people got the latter part of the hymn, we do not know: "Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." It may have been Luke's way of translating, "Hosanna," which his Gentile readers would not have understood, and would have needed an interpretation. It is a word which means, Save now. It certainly is related to the angelic message which was given to the shepherds: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14). These were to be the work of our Lord: peace and glory--peace in heaven, establishing that "by the blood of His Cross" (Col. 1:20), peace between God and man through Christ, and through the Cross the greatest thing that was accomplished was the eternal glory of the Father. These are the very heart of the Gospel message!

The people were looking at the end, not knowing what dark hours were ahead for the Lord Jesus Christ. But it is very clear that the Lord was even then being glorified by the Father through the words that He had put into the hearts of the people.

19:39, 40 The Pharisees were obviously aroused with great jealousy, and knowing that they could not silence the crowd of disciples, called upon the Lord to do so. They were completely blinded to the significance of the occasion. If they could not silence the crowds, what would they have done if the stones had cried out?

Why were they jealous?

Spurgeon pointed out that they had never been the objects of such praise. Nor had the Pharisees ever seen such joy connected with the religious exercises which they demanded of the people. And there is no question but that they were jealous of the Lord Jesus. Those who are merely religious people, never having experienced the grace of God through the Lord Jesus, do not understand such devotion to the Lord.

The stones would cry out "immediately," the Lord said. The Lord must be praised! If men will not praise Him, all creation will cry out to His glory and honor. And what a story they could tell! Remember that piles of stones were used to commemorate some of the great works of God in the OT. They could speak of His power and His wisdom and His glory.

Previously the Lord had silenced those who would tell what great things He had done for them, but now it was so much a part of the regal glory which He was manifesting that He must be praised--if not by His own, then by the stones!

But what exactly would the stones have said? They would have said the same things that the disciples were saying.

2/24/88

B. The Lord's concern for Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-46).

Here we see the two sides of the Lord's nature: His compassion and His wrath. Or to state it another way, His love and His righteousness. He is tender, but He is also holy. And no person has a true understanding of God unless he keeps both of these in mind.

Many people think of God only in terms of love. To them God will put up with anything, and always be ready to forgive. So they do whatever they want to do.

God is love. And there is no greater subject in Scripture. God's love is manifested in His grace, His mercy, His goodness, His tenderness, His pity. Which of us does not love that verse in Psalm 103 (verse 13),

Like as a father pitieth his children,
so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.

Or those words of Jeremiah in Lam. 3:22-25,
It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed,
because his compassions fail not.

They are new every morning:
great is thy faithfulness.
The Lord is my portion, saith my soul;
therefore will I hope in him.
The Lord is good unto them that wait for him,
to the soul that seeketh him.

And then we can add words like John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 1 John 3:2.

But God is also holy and righteous.

Adam and Eve found that out. So did Cain. And so did Noah's generation. Remember Sodom and Gomorrah. And Moses has given us those great words found in the Psalm which the people sang after they had crossed the Red Sea:

Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?
who is like unto thee?
glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

And so on and on throughout the OT.

But lest we think that the righteousness of God is only and OT doctrine (as many do), let us remember the Cross. The Cross of Christ is not only the greatest illustration that we have of the love of God, but it is also the greatest illustration of the righteousness of God. Remember Ananias and Sapphira. Remember that John warned of a sin unto death. Some of the greatest passages in the NT on the righteousness of God are to be found in the NT.

19:41 When the Lord got to the city of Jerusalem, He wept over it! How amazing this is! Cf. also John 11:35--the shortest verse in the Bible.

Jeremiah was much like His Lord when he wrote those words found in Lam 3:48,

Mine eye runneth down with rivers of water
for the destruction of the daughter of my people.

19:42 But what it that grieved the Lord?

It was the fact that they had no peace--no peace with God--the kind of peace the angels had sung about to the shepherds, the kind of peace that the multitude of disciples had just sung about as the Lord descended from the mount of Olives to go into the city of Jerusalem. It was the peace that comes from being justified by faith (cf. Rom. 5:1)--the peace of salvation. It was the peace that the OT prophets had preached as they proclaimed the righteousness of God, and the grace of God.

Sadly, the history of Israel is a history of the rejection of the peace of God. They thought that they knew, but they were blinded by their own ignorance. God had given His Law. He had sent His prophets. Finally He sent His Son. And they were going to do with Him just as they had done with the true messengers of the Lord in past days. Oh, there were those who had heard and had been saved, but the history of Israel for the most part is a tragic testimony to the depravity, the TOTAL depravity, of the human heart.

But now the Lord was announcing a judicial act of judgment against His people: "But now they are hid from thine eyes." The Lord could have opened their eyes, but He chose to shut them even tighter. The door of salvation was to be opened to the Gentiles as never before. It was to be as Paul wrote later in Rom. 11:25,

> . . . that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

Three things are evident here in connection with salvation:
1) Man's natural blindness toward the things of God.
2) It is not God's plan to save everyone.
3) He alone has the ability to open men's eyes, or to close them so that they can never see the truth of salvation. And yet at the same time every person is responsible before God for the way in which he responds to the truth, for the way he (or she) hears the truth of God.

Gary brought out in his teaching last week that the Lord reveals the truth, but He also conceals the truth. And he rightly cited Luke 8:10 to prove that.

How we have robbed God of glory which belongs to Him because we have made a god out of man, and have thought of God as being at the mercy of man as far as the success of His Word is concerned. God is God! Let us never forget it. And let us interpret the Scriptures in the light of the absolute and sovereign Deity of the Godhead--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

19:43, 44 Jesus Christ spoke again as a Prophet.

Here we have a prediction of the destruction of the city of Jerusalem under Titus in 70 A.D., but, when we get to chapter 21 we will learn that that judgment foreshadowed a greater judgment which will fall upon Israel just before the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The prophecy shows that man does not learn even from the history of the Lord's dealings with His people.

Notice the expression at the end of v. 44, " . . . because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

God sometimes visits His people in mercy; at other times He visits them in judgment. But it is safe to say that He does not visit in judgment unannounced!

Cf. Luke 7:11-18 (esp. v. 16) regarding the visitation of the Lord upon the people of Israel. This, for the most part, had been ignored by the leaders and by the people of Israel. The purpose of the miracles was to show the people that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. But they had not paid attention to the message. Consequently now, while the Lord was to enter into judgment for the sake of His people, the nation Israel was also falling under the judgment of a God who is righteous, Who is holy!

Then we see evidence of the Lord's righteousness in . . .

19:45, 46 Mark tells us that it was the next day that the Lord entered into the Temple to do what is recorded here. See Mark 11:1-19.

Here was evidence of the rebellion and blindness of the people. It ought to make us think about how the work of the Lord has been perverted from being what it ought to be in our day. Could it not be that this is the reason for the scandals that we are seeing in that which professes to be the work of the Lord today? The servants of the Lord are filled with pride. They have millions of dollars. They get exalted and harsh because of their position. Church services are productions, and we use the ways of the world to attract people to hear the Gospel. What would the Lord say and do if He were to come to our churches today? THIS IS A MATTER TO WHICH WE SHOULD GIVE THE MOST SERIOUS THOUGHT AND ATTENTION!

Illus: A letter came to the church last week in which an insurance company was looking for an experienced salesman. In the letter the statement was made, rather facetiously I am sure, that, if a person "were not afraid" of making up to $55,000 a year, he could get in touch with the company. I said jokingly to one of our men as we read the letter together, "I wouldn't be afraid of that, would you?" But, in thinking that over since then, I have realized that perhaps I should be afraid of that. Maybe it would ruin me to be receiving that kind of money. It has ruined a lot of other people. IT CERTAINLY GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT WE HEAR MORE ABOUT MONEY IN THE LORD'S WORK TODAY THAN WE DO ABOUT PRAYER. And when that happens, it should be a warning to everyone of us that things are not what the Lord wants them to be.

The money-changers in the Temple were robbing the people as they came to the Temple to worship the Lord by charging them exorbitant prices for the animals they were selling to be used as sacrifices.

Note that v. 46 is a quotation from Isa. 56:7, showing that this practice has been going on for a long time. Such purchasing of sacrifices was permitted by the Law, but it had been turned into

a profit-making business by greedy men. Thus, the Word of the Lord had been perverted again, and it was to bring judgment from a righteous God! Cf. Deut. 14:23-26.

C. The opposition of the chief priests and the scribes (Luke 19:47-20:26).

3/1/88

1. The situation in the Temple (Luke 19:47, 48).

We see the same contrast that had characterized the ministry of the Lord from the beginning:
1) He had His enemies who hated Him and wanted to do away with Him.
2) The people wanted to hear Him.

Compare this section with the two verses at the end of our Lord's public ministry in the Temple: 21:37, 38. The Lord was still popular with the people, but also He was hated more than ever by His enemies.

Luke's use of the word "taught" indicates continued teaching. While the Lord was intent on teaching the people, the hierarchy of the Jews was intent on murdering the Lord. "The chief of the people" were the elders. The three groups mentioned constituted the Sanhedrin. These men should have been interested:
1) In being taught themselves.
2) In having the people taught.
Instead, we see what the situation was.

The actions of the Lord in this instance teach us that it is not only necessary to clean out that which is wrong, but the wrong must be replaced with that which is right: the teaching of the Word of God.

Wilcock points out (p. 182) that at this point the Sanhedrin had more reason than ever to hate the Lord after He had cast out the money-changers because "the faults and evils of their traditional, distorted, religion are mercilessly revealed."

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

V. JESUS' MINISTRY IN JERUSALEM AND ITS VICINITY (Luke 19:28-21:38).

A. The royal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (Luke 19:28-40).
B. The Lord's concern for Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-46).
C. The opposition of the chief priests and the scribes (Luke 1947-20:26).
   1. The situation in the temple (Luke 19:47, 48).

   2. The question of authority (Luke 20:1-8).

Luke adds in v. 1 the fact that the Lord was not only teaching, but He "preached the gospel" to the people. Therefore, it must have been that this question of authority which the members of the Sanhedrin raised was not only against our Lord's cleansing of the Temple, but also against His teaching and preaching. Their teaching was one of works, and, like so many, they hated the teaching of the grace of God.

On Luke's presentation of the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, cf. 4:36; 7:8; 9:1. Cf. also Matt. 7:28, 29. See also Luke 19:17.

Authority carries with it the idea of power to do that for which authority has been given. Thus, the question that the Jewish leaders asked showed their rejection of the evidence that they already had since the power and authority of the Lord had been demonstrated by every miracle that He had per-formed. It was evident also in His teaching, because it also had been with power.

Notice the expression, "came upon him."

Matthew Henry said that we can learn two things from this:
1) They thought to take the Lord by surprise in asking Him this question, perhaps hoping that He had not thought about it.
2) Approaching Him as a body, they hope to intimidate and frighten Him.

20:2 Note the question(s). This, of course, was a very vital question.

Remember those grand words spoken by our Lord just prior to His ascension, recorded for us in the last three verses of Matthew's Gospel: Matt. 28:18-20.

20:3, 4 The Lord responded by asking His own question which in itself was an answer. It had to do with the baptism of John.

It would seem that the Lord was not mainly concerned here about the whole ministry of John to the thousands of people in Israel (although John's ministry had been a the forerunner of the Messiah. His main concern was in what had happened when He had been baptized by John. Had that been merely a human event? Was it "of men," or had it been more than that? Had it been "from heaven"?

Review Luke 3:21, 22.

Any of the people could have answered the Lord's question. The members of the Sanhedrin knew the answer. All of the events in the life of the Lord from the time of His baptism by John had confirmed what had happened them.

20:5, 6 And so the Lord had His enemies on the horns of a dilemma. Either way they answered the question they would be in trouble. How foolish is the wisdom of men when compared with the wisdom of God, and of Christ!

20:7 Here is an excellent example of the rebellion that is in the hearts of men concerning the truth of God. It is no wonder that the Lord taught in Luke 16:31 that "neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead"! Men cannot be reasoned into the kingdom of heaven.

Lit. translated the answer of the scribes, Pharisees, and elders, was that they did not know!

20:8 Plummer says, "Their refusal to answer His question cancels their claim to an answer from Him. This they admit by ceasing to press it" (p. 457).

The Lord never failed to answer the questions of sincere inquirers, and yet, at the same time, He would not "cast" His "pearls before swine" (Matt. 7:6).

Concl: It is important to note two things from this passage:

1) That the testimony of John the Baptist was still a very powerful one in Israel, even though he had been dead for possibly two years or more, and had died in such an ignominious way. That testimony is still alive today. The witnesses which the Lord has established for Himself never die.

2) That we need to be careful and discerning in our witness. When people are sincere, we need to spend all of the necessary time with them. But when they are not, we need to leave a testimony, and then go on to other things.

3. The parable of the wicked husbandmen (Luke 20:9-18).

The Lord then continued His ministry in the Temple to the people, but not to the Sanhedrin. The parable was directed at the Sanhedrin, and was prophetic of things to come. See v. 19. This is an indication that they knew more than they were willing to admit that they knew.

20:9 The parable pictures the spiritual history of Israel. Cf. Isa. 5:1-7. Thus, the "man" who planted the vineyard is God, and the husbandmen were the leaders of the nation. The attitude of the nation had covered "a long time." There really had been no change since the days of Moses when Israel had become a nation.

20:10-12 This would point to the coming of the OT prophets, the last of whom was John the Baptist. Cf. Matthew's account of our Lord's lamentation over the city of Jerusalem in Matt. 23:37, 38:

> O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets,
> and stonest them which are sent unto thee,
> how often would I have gathered thy children together,
> even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her winds,
> and ye would not!
> Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

20:13 Finally the owner of the vineyard (and it is important to remember WHO THE OWNER IS!) decided to send his son--which, of course, speaks of Christ.

Note that the hope of the owner is that the husbandmen would "reverence" his son. But let us remember, as Plummer has pointed out, that the owner in the parable "represents God, not by his perplexity, but by his long-suffering and mercy" (p. 460). God is never perplexed, or undecided as to what He should do. His works are determined from before the foundations of the earth. We must remember, too, that God was not surprised by the treatment His prophets received, nor by the treatment that His Son received. Nevertheless, we see that the purpose of God in sending His Son was that men would "reverence" Him.

What does "reverence" mean?

It means to repent, to humble themselves before him, and submit themselves to him. They were to respect him, and let him have the last word, instead of assuming that right for themselves.

The most crucial time in Israel's history was the period when our Lord was here on earth. He is the Father's "beloved Son." And this was what the Father had said at His baptism by John. The coming of every prophet was important, but all of them combined are not to be compared with the coming of the beloved Son of God!

20:14, 15a What did the husbandmen say and do?

Notice that they knew who the son was. And they decided to do away with him so they could have the vineyard, the inheritance which belonged to the son!

And so they killed him!

Did they succeed in doing what they wanted to do? Look at the latter part of v. 15.

20:15b This is the big question. What will happen to the purposes of the owner when the husbandmen try to overrule his purposes with their own?

The answer is very simple:

20:16a The answer is very simple, and very quick in coming.

His purposes are not overruled, but the husbandmen are. They will be "destroyed," and their place will be given to others.

This is what was to happen, as we learn from chapters like Rom. 9-11. God's purposes for Israel have been set aside for the present, and the attention of the Lord has been turned to the Gentiles.

Note: Here again, as in the case of our Lord's actions at the end of chapter 19, we see evidence of the tenderness and compassion of the Lord (and His great patience), as compared with His wrath!

20:16b This is the only instance of ___ _____ in the NT outside of the Pauline Epistles. Without the necessity of an explanation from the Lord, it seems clear that the people understood what the Lord was teaching in the parable. Coming here at this point in the parable it would seem to indicate that the people were distressed at the consequences of what the husbandmen did, not so much at what they did.

20:17 Here the Lord was getting into the meaning of the parable. The Word of God will stand! This is a quotation from Psa. 118:22, 23. Men may have their own ideas about the work of the Lord, but God's purposes will prevail in spite of all that men may do.

20:18 Then the Lord concluded this part with what Plummer suggested may be a combination of Isa. 8:14 and Dan. 2;34, 35, 44.

The verse, in its two parts, seems to point (1) to the people; (2) to the scribes and Pharisees and elders. If the people would stumble over Christ, they would be "broken." That is, they would be lost. But for those who were more aggressive in their opposition to the Son, wanting to kill Him (and eventually doing so), their punishment would be much greater. "It (the stone, Christ) will grind him to powder."

Doom awaits all who reject the Lord, although the nature of the punishment will be different. This is small consolation, however, to those who receive less punishment because to be in hell will mean being in hell. And thus this was a special warning to the people who might be inclined to be more passive in their rejection of Christ.

4. The question about tribute for Caesar (Luke 20:19-26).

3/7/88

This is a good passage for us while all of us are thinking about our income taxes. There are well-meaning Christians who feel that the government has no right to tax us. Others pay it, though they deeply resent having to do it. What is the teaching of the Word and of the Lord? This whole question has to do with what Americans call "the separation of the Church and the State."

20:19 The attitude toward the Lord was now more hostile than ever. The chief priests and scribes rightly believed that the Lord had spoken the preceding parable about the wicked husbandmen against them, and so they were more determined that ever to get the Lord to day something that would give them a reason to "deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor" (v. 20). Continued resistance against the Lord was causing them to be more and more hardened in their sin.

Note their cowardice. As John pointed out in our SS lesson last Sunday, the Pharisees were really slaves in their own system. "They feared the people."

20:20 Notice also their hypocrisy. They sent spies who would act like they were righteous men, interested in knowing the truth.

Notice also their treachery. They really wanted to do away with Him.

20:21 Notice also their flattery. "Master" means teacher. But they really did not accept the Lord as a teacher. They did not believe that He taught "rightly," Nor did they believe that He taught "the way of God truly."

We read in Prov. 29:5, "A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet." And that is exactly what the chief priests and scribes were seeking to do to the Lord--spreading a net for His feet!

Actually the chief priests and the scribes gave a solid definition of a

good teacher, and, by what they said, they condemned themselves. A good teacher ought to teach the truth, and he ought to do it in spite of what men might want or say or do. If they really believed what they said, then why did they not accept His teaching and follow Him? We need to look behind men's words to see if their actions, their lives, back up what they say. The Lord, of course, was not in the least deceived by them.

20:22 Here was their question. (Read.)

"Lawful" here cannot mean lawful according to Roman law. There was no question about that! The question they raised was, Is it right in the sight of God to pay tribute to Caesar, or is it wrong?

If the Lord said that it was wrong, then He would be in trouble with Rome. If He said that it was right, there was great resentment among the Jews about Roman taxation, and so that would cause trouble for Him with the people.

20:23 The Lord knew what they were up to. "Craftiness" is means being a master at deceit. He knew that this is where they excelled. How different the Apostle Paul was. He said in writing to the Corinthian church,

> Therefore seeing we have this ministry,
> as we have received mercy, we faint not;
> But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty,
> not walking in craftiness,
> nor handling the word of God deceitfully,
> but by manifestation of the truth
> commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God
> (2 Cor. 4:1, 2).

If the chief priests and scribes would treat the Lord this way, they were certainly doing the same to the people. What a lesson this is for all who are leaders in the church!

Remember also what Paul wrote to the Ephesian church about apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, as their aim in ministering to the people of God:

> That we henceforth be no more children,
> tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine,
> by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness,
> whereby they lie in wait to deceive (Eph. 4:14).

And so the Lord rebuked them with His question, "Why tempt ye me?" They were trying to get the Lord to sin. But James said "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man" (Jas. 1:13b). Neither can the Lord Jesus be made to sin for He is God!

20:24 To expose His enemies, our Lord asked for a Roman penny--a denarius.

Caesar did like most rulers used to do, and some still do--he put his "image" (his picture) on the Roman coins, and his "superscription"--which was his name and title. It was an expression of his authority over the people, and their acceptance of the coins was an indication of their submission to his rule.

So when our Lord asked the question recorded in this verse, all they could say was, "Caesar's."

20:25 Here we have the Lord's classic statement on the question of the responsibilities of a child of God. (Read.) There is no conflict between the two, but the child of God does have responsibilities in both areas--to God, and to his government.

This is a good time to read Rom. 13:1-7.

Plummer mentions that Paul in Romans took up both of these points. In Rom. 12:1, 2 he wrote about rendering to God the things that are God's--and that followed through the chapter. Then in Rom. 13:1-7 he spoke of rendering to Caesar the things that are Caesar's.

Rendering to God the things that are God's would have been a very uncomfortable subject for the chief priests and the scribes. This meant submission and obedience to God. This is where they failed tragically. They had ways of making the word of God "of none effect" by their tradition. Cf. Matt. 15:6. They did not want to get into that subject, especially before the people.

20:26 And so it is not surprising that they could not make anything out of the Lord's answer. And so they were defeated again! Matthew tells us that "they marvelled, and left him, and went their way" (Matt. 22:22).

Concl: And so, as hard as it may be for us to pay our taxes, we cannot refuse without being disobedient to the Lord.

But let us make sure that we consider both sides of our responsibility. It may be that most of us are more faithful about paying our taxes than we are rendering "unto God the things that are God's." April 15 is the deadline for filing your income tax. You cannot ignore that date and be a faithful Christian. But the deadline for our obedience to the Lord is today. When we make out our taxes we take inventory of all of our finances for the past year. How long has it been since we have really taken time to consider where we are in our relationship with the Lord? Do you realize that you are not your own, and that there is not a thing that you have that is really yours? We belong to the Lord, and all we have is the Lord's. May God give us grace to live as faithfully in the things of God as we seek to be in the things of our government. We cannot afford to fail in either area because they both have to do with God.

3/8/88

D. The opposition of the Sadducees (Luke 20:27-38)--the question about the resurrection.

It is interesting to see how in all of these instances of opposition to the Lord Jesus Christ there was evidence of opposition to and rebellion against the Word of God and against the works of God.

1) Going back to the end of chapter 19 we saw how the money-changers had corrupted for the profit of the hierarchy that which was allowed according to Scripture.
2) The chief priests and scribes and elders were concerned about their authority, but their hearts were closed to what God had been doing through the ministry of John the Baptist.
3) The parable of the wicked husbandmen showed Israel's rejection, not only of the prophets, but of the Lord Jesus Himself.
4) And then the question about tribute to Caesar, when these religious

leaders were as much in rebellion against God as they were against Caesar.

Now the Sadducees come to try their hand against the Lord.

Seeing the Pharisees and the Sadducees join hands was like what was to happen to Herod and Pilate later. They had been bitter enemies, but in their opposition against the Lord, they became friends. Cf. Luke 23:12.

20:27 The basic error of the Sadducees was their rejection of the doctrine of the resurrection. Note that this would of necessity mean that they would deny the Lord's claims that, after His death, He would be raised. Consequently this would mean a denial of the death and resurrection of Christ as essential for salvation.

20:28 Like other Jews, they attached greater authority to the books of Moses than they did to the other books of the OT. And so they approached the Lord with what seemed to be a fool-proof case in their favor. They cited what Moses had written in Deut. 25:5-10. And then they used an illustration of a man married, who died childless, and his seven brothers all married her one after another trying to produce an heir for their oldest brother without success. See 20:31. Such a thing could possibly happen, although it was very unlikely, but it seemed that this was a question that would really "stump" the Lord.

20:32, 33 Finally the woman died. Their question was, "Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife."

20:34 Luke did not give the first part of our Lord's response which we find in Matthew and Mark. Cf. Matt. 22:29,

> Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures,
> nor the power of God.

See the same in Mark 12:24.

This is the basic problem with all error: a refusal to accept the teaching of Scripture! If we begin with the Word of God, and stay with the Word of God, we will not be wandering off into false teaching.

Much of what Luke gave here is given only by him, although it agrees perfectly with what is recorded more briefly by Matthew and Mark.

The Lord began His answer by pointing out that marriage is universally a part of life in this world.

20:35, 36 But that is not true of the coming age. It will not be necessary for us to marry in heaven because there will be no death. We will be, in that respect, like the angels: they do not die, and so there is no need for angels to marry and have angel children. That was the first part of the Lord's answer. But the second part was to be even stronger.

20:37, 38 This was taken from Exodus, one of Moses' books, and from the life of Moses--which would have been the strongest proof the Lord could have produced for these Sadducees who ascribed to Moses the greatest authority. Cf. Ex. 3:6.

Matthew Poole (III, 105, 106) made some interesting comments about these words of our Lord.

1) He pointed out that the Lord in His words to the Sadducees declared

three doctrines which the Sadducees denied:
a) The doctrine of angels.
b) The doctrine of the immortality of the soul.
c) The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.

2) God did not say that He had been the God of Abraham . . . , but that He was their God at the very moment He was speaking to Moses. (Thus, as others have pointed out, this meant that at that moment Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were alive.)
3) The expression that God was their God, is an OT expression indicating that God was their Benefactor. How could that be if they were dead and gone forever.
4) In using their names He was speaking of the whole person of those men, their bodies as well as their souls.
5) These statements did not apply only to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but to their seed as well. Thus it is a truth which all of the people of God can claim and enjoy.

(Poole did not give these points in exactly the order I have given them, but this is the gist of what he said.)

"For all live unto him," the statement at the end of v. 38 probably means that "'in His sight all are living,' though long dead, buried, and removed from this world. There is no such thing as annihilation" (Ryle, II, 343).

Luke (20:39) and Mark (12:28) tells us that one and more of the scribes were pleased with the Lord's answer. Matthew (22:34) said that "he had put the Sadducees to silence." This meant that they had no way of answering the Lord, and so by their actions admitted that He had defeated them. Ryle mentioned that there is a fulness to Scripture which, if we cannot see (as in this case), is our fault, and not that of the Word of God.

What excellent illustrations we have in these events of the words of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians, "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" (1 Cor. 1:20)! And also,

> For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.
> For it is written,
> He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.
> And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise,
> that they are vain (1 Cor. 3:19, 20).

Even when we cannot understand what we find in the Bible, the wisest thing for us to do is to "let God be true" (Rom. 3:4a) and every man who rejects the truth "a liar."

E. The Lord's exposure of the hypocrisy of the scribes (Luke 20: 39-47).

20:39, 40 This put an end to the disputing between the Lord and His enemies. They could see that they would not be able to attain their goal by trying to discredit Him before the people. And so they would seek in other ways to see that He was put to death. God had evidently, as Poole remarked, given them over to ruin, so there was no thought of reconsidering their position. If they could not destroy the Lord in one way, they would do it in another--BUT THEY WERE INTENT ON DOING IT!

20:41-44 The Lord's question showed that they continued to be in the dark because they were rejecting Him as the Lord. And so He laid before them what David had written in Psa. 110:1. They believed

that the Messiah would be David's son, but they did not believe that He would also be the Lord.

This answers two important questions:
1) Did the Lord ever claim Deity for Himself while He was here on earth? The answer: That is what He was doing here, and He did the same on other occasions as well.
2) Did the OT teach that the Messiah would be God? Again, the answer is, "Yes."

Wilcock called this, "thoughtless religion" (pp. 184, 185). They took what they wanted from the Scriptures, but failed to think it all through. They were right in thinking that the Messiah would be the son of David, but, because they failed to take into consideration all that the Scriptures said about the Messiah, they failed to recognize Him when He came. Evidences of His Deity only infuriated Him and made them feel that He was a hypocrite, when it was they who were the hypocrites.

Luke simply concluded the Lord's comments there. Matthew said,

> And no man was able to answer him a word,
> neither durst any man from that day forth
> ask him any more questions (Matt. 22:46).

However, Luke went on to tell us what the Lord said to His disciples in the presence of "all the people."

20:46, 47 Here it is.

The Lord condemned the scribes with six exposing statements. Obviously they were to be a warning to the disciples in their ministry. The scribes were:
1) Proud.
2) Selfish.
3) Greedy.
4) Hypocritical.

They were just the opposite of what the Lord was, and just the opposite of what the servants of the Lord should be.

We are to be humble, self-denying (considering others better than we are), more intent on giving than receiving, and true, genuine, faithful.
Cf. Phil. 2:5-7;
Phil. 2:3, 4;
Acts 20:33-35; Phil. 4:11, 17;
Phil. 3:15-21.

God's judgment upon leaders who desecrate the holy office of the ministry will be the most severe of all: "the same shall receive the greater damnation" (v. 47b).

Bishop Ryle has written that the great judgment

> will fall on those who had great light and knowledge, but made no proper use of it; it will fall on those who professed great sanctity and religiousness, but in reality clung to their sins. In one word, the hypocrite will have the lowest place in hell. These are awful things. But they are true (II, 348).

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE
Chapter 21

V. JESUS' MINISTRY IN JERUSALEM AND ITS VICINITY (Luke 19:28-21:38).

F. The poor widow and her two mites (Luke 21:1-4)--a lesson on giving.

Chapter 20 ends with our Lord's comments about a widow, and chapter 21 begins with an account about a widow. In both the emphasis is upon money. But in the first we see the greed of the scribes who were devouring widows' houses; in this section we see the generosity of a poor widow, and what it meant to the Lord.

This account is also found in Mark 12:41-44, but not in Matthew, nor in John.

21:1, 2 Mark said that the Lord Jesus sat down in the area where the people were bringing their gifts to the Temple. He evidently was very tired after His day of controversy with the scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees. But He was very conscious of what was going on, and very interested. Luke's language indicates that the rich were coming in a steady line to cast their gifts into the Temple treasury.

But along with them came a poor widow. She cast in two mites--a mite being like our penny (the smallest coin in use). Nobody could have given less unless it had been a single "mite." Thus, as far as monetary value was concerned, her gift amounted to nothing in comparison with the many, large gifts of the rich men. The Pharisees and scribes would undoubtedly have been amused that she would even come to give so little.

But vv. 3, 4 are a good illustration of the OT truth that God's thoughts about such things are far different from ours. Cf. Isa. 55:8, 9,

> For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
> neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.
> For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
> so are my ways higher than your ways,
> and my thoughts than your thoughts.

21:3 "Truly I say unto you" is a statement which indicates that He was about to say something which was contrary to the popular opinion. We would normally think that the person who put the most into the Treasury would be giving the most. But that is not the case in the Lord's eyes. Take the total amount given by all of the rich men, and it would not amount to the value of the two mites which this widow had given.

Paul said the same thing in writing to the Corinthian church:

> For if there be first a willing mind,
> it is accepted according to that a man hath,
> and not according to that he hath not (2 Cor. 8:12).

This would seem to indicate, among other things, that the rich men were giving because they had to, but the widow was giving because she wanted to. They were giving according to the Law; she was giving according to grace.

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The next verse tells us why the Lord said what He did in this verse.

21:4 The rich still had a great deal left over when they had given. But the widow had nothing left. Her usual income was never enough ("her penury," her poverty). Godet said, " . . . in reality, with those two mites, she had cast in her heart." And then later on the same page he added, "This incident, witnessed by Jesus at such a time, resembles a flower which He comes upon all at once in the desert of official devotion, the sight and perfume of which make Him leap with joy" (II, 256).

This was like the gift which the Philippian church gave to the Apostle Paul. Note how he expressed his gratitude to them in Phil. 4:10-20. Paul wanted to impress upon their hearts what their gift meant to the Lord even more than what it meant to him, even though he was deeply grateful for their love in being so generous with him.

Read also what Paul wrote about the grace of giving in 2 Cor. 9:7:

> Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

Cf. Matt. 6:19:21. See also Prov. 11:24,

> There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth;
> and there is that withholdeth more than is meet,
> but it tendeth to poverty.

One writer pointed out that this widow could have given just one mite, but she gave all she had! She obviously did it, not because she had to, but because of her love for the Lord. How important it is for us to learn to give to the Lord--not because we feel that we have to, nor because of the blessing we feel that He will give us in return, but because we are grateful to the Lord for what He has done for us in saving us, and for all of the blessings that He loads upon us every day. Cf. Psa. 68:19,

> Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits,
> even the God of our salvation. Selah.

Contrast all of this with what the Lord did when He first entered into the temple in Luke 19:45, 46.

G. The Lord's prophetic message concerning the judgment of Jerusalem (Luke 21-5-36).

This discourse is found also in Matt. 24 and in Mark 13.

It significantly follows what we have seen about the corruption of Judaism during that time of our Lord's ministry. The scribes and Pharisees were hypocrites. The religious life of the people had been corrupted. The truth had been set aside because of their traditions. And, worst of all, they had no place for the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, it was inevitable that judgment would come upon them.

This section has three parts as I have indicated in the outline I have given to you:

1. The circumstances which led to the prophecy (Luke 21-5-7).
2. The prophecy (Luke 21:8-28).
3. The Lord's exhortation (Luke 21:29-36).

We could also say that this message by the Lord was prompted by a question which the disciples asked the Lord in response to a statement He made about the destruction of the Temple. It seems that Luke would have us to understand that from 20:45 on down through chapter 21 the Lord was speaking to His disciples. Matthew makes it very clear that it was the

disciples who asked Him about the Temple. Mark says that specifically it was Peter and Andrew and James and John.

Let us now consider the first part:

1. The circumstances which led to the prophecy (Luke 21:5-7).

21:5 The Temple that existed in the time of Christ was the Temple of Herod. Although it had been built by one they despised, the Jews took great pride in it, as is indicated by the comments made in this verse. In fact, the Temple was really an object of worship instead of being a place where God was worshipped. It indeed must have been one of the most glorious buildings ever to be constructed any place. The hopes of the people were attached to the Temple. The synagogues were places where the people met in the cities throughout Israel, but none of them could compare in their thoughts and in their hearts with the Temple!

But, as the Lord told Samuel a thousand years before this, "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7b). The Temple may have been beautiful, but what when on in connection with the Temple was not beautiful in the eyes of the Lord.

Therefore, we have the Lord's solemn words in v. 6.

21:6 Cf. Luke 19:41-44, just before the Lord went into the Temple to cast out the money-changers.

If you have travelled at all in the Middle East, you know how marvelous the ancient buildings were. Just how they got such massive stones into place (some of them as large as a railroad boxcar) is still a mystery. But as marvelous as it was, it was doomed to destruction.

In thinking of the lesson that this holds for all of us, Bishop Ryle, who was a bishop in the Anglican Church in the last century, wrote the following important words:

> Professing Christians will do well to remember our Lord's words, in the present day. It is meet and right, beyond doubt, that buildings set apart for Christian worship should be worthy of the purpose for which they are used. Whatever is done for Christ ought to be well done. The house in which the Gospel is preached, and the Word of God read, and prayer offered up, ought to lack nothing that can make it comely and substantial; but let it never be forgotten that the material part of a Christian Church is by far the least important part of it. (Italics mine.) The fairest combinations of marble, and stone, and wood, and painted glass, are worthless in God's sight, unless there is truth in the pulpit and grace in the congregation. The dens and caves in which the early Christians used to meet, were probably far more beautiful in the eyes of Christ than the noblest cathedral that was ever reared by man. The temple in which the Lord Jesus delights most, is a broken and contrite heart, renewed by the Holy Ghost (II, 357).

21:7 Is it not rather amazing that the disciples ask when and what rather than WHY?

However, the Lord proceeded to answer their questions.

2. The prophecy (Luke 21:8-28).

21:8 Notice that the Lord began with a word of warning.

The Bible contains a great deal of prophecy. It has been estimated that approximately 20% of the Bible was prophetic when it was written. Some of the prophecies have been fulfilled, but many of them have not. However, while this is a subject which has the promise of great blessing connected with it, yet it has also been a subject which has caused deep and lasting divisions in the Body of Christ. In many groups, agreement on prophecy is more of a basis of fellowship with them than the Gospel is. We have Bible teachers today who are considered "specialists" in Bible prophecy. But often these men manifest that they are very deficient in true spiritual life. None of us is a "specialist" when it comes to the Word of God. We all are looking at things "through a glass darkly." None of knows anything the way we ought to know it. We all need to be learners, praying continually that the Lord would open His Word to our hearts, and open our hearts to His Word.

Bishop Ryle, who lived in the nineteenth century, and did not know what was coming in the twentieth century, had this to say about this subject of prophecy:

> Dogmatism, positiveness, controversial bitterness, obstinacy in maintaining untenable positions, rash assertions and speculations, have too often brought discredit on the whole subject of the prophetical Scriptures, and caused the enemies of Christianity to blaspheme. There are only too many books on prophetical interpretation, on the title-pages of which might be justly written, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" (II, 358).

(That Scripture is from Job 38:2, the words of the Lord to Job.)

So we must not be like those who avoid prophecy altogether, nor like those who feel that they have the last word. But we ought to continue to search the Scriptures and to pray that the Lord will give us greater light on the prophetic Word. And along with this we need to take our Lord's words here to light, "Take heed that ye be not deceived."

The first thing that we need to be concerned about is Christ Himself. He is the Key to all prophecy. If we know what the Scriptures teach concerning Christ, then we have a good foundation for interpreting prophecy. But if we do not, then we are likely to get ourselves into trouble. So, speaking in theological terms, our first concern must be the understanding of Christology, not Eschatology! There is only one Christ, only one Messiah, and that is the Christ of Scripture. You and I are not to go after anyone else!

21:9 The second thing we need to be concerned about is current events.

And then we come to the second command that the Lord gave to His disciples concerning these times: "be not terrified." (The first is in v. 8, stated in a twofold way:

1) "Take heed that ye be not deceived," and
2) "Go ye not therefore after them."

A better translation for "deceived" would be to be led astray. As Plummer said in his commentary, "It implies no mere mistake, but fundamental departure from the truth" (p. 478). So it would mean departing from the true Christ, and following after a false Christ.

On the other hand, as we see in this verse, people are easily terrified by even hearing of "wars and commotions." "Commotions" are unsettled and unstable times. The word describes a time of confusion and disarray. We

can see it on our TVs. There is trouble in Panama, Nicaragua and Honduras, the Gaza strip, Iran and Iraq, and other places as well. We wonder how long it will stay away from our doors, and how long it will be before war will break out. Only the hand of the Lord is holding things back now. The world is ready to explode.

These things "must" (notice the word) be, i.e., they are ordained of God Himself. Things are not going to be getting better and better. But they in themselves do not indicate that the Lord is coming immediately.

"By and by" is the translation of the Greek word which is usually translated, immediately, forthwith, or straightway.

In the next two verses the Lord described something of what those "wars and commotions" would be.

21:10 The solemnity and importance of what the Lord was saying was pointed out by Luke with those words, "Then said he unto them." The wars will be international in character.

21:11 There will not only be "commotions" among the people of the earth, but also in nature itself. For the discerning heart it is evident that God has a hand in all of these things.

Cf. Luke 13:1-5. It does not mean that the people in these areas are worse than people in other areas, but judgments like these in any part of the world and designed to be warnings to all men to "repent." When men fail to listen to God, the judgments only get worse. What a picture all of this is of the sinfulness of man, and God's displeasure at the way man chooses to live.

AT THIS POINT THE LORD DISGRESSES FROM THE JUDGMENTS TO SPEAK PARTICULARLY TO HIS DISCIPLES. And He does this in vv. 12-22. What is to be the special concerns of the Lord's people in these times?

First, in vv. 12-15, THEIR TESTIMONY.

21:12 One reason, I believe, that many have trouble with this passage is because they do not distinguish between passages like 1 Thess. 4:13-18 and the coming of the Lord in this chapter. The two passages cannot be reconciled with each other if we are trying to say that they teach the same event. The full truth concerning the Church, the Body of Christ, had not yet been revealed. The coming of the Lord for the Church is called "a mystery" in 2 Cor. 15:51. That means that the Lord had not made that known until He revealed it to the Apostle Paul. The Lord had touched upon it in John 14:1-3, but not with the detail that Paul did in 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians. Here in Luke 21 the Lord was speaking of the Lord's coming "in power and great glory" (v. 27). That will be when He comes to the earth to reign. That comes after the Church has been taken out of the world, and we come to reign with Him.

But there is another problem here.

I do not believe that there is any question but that the Lord was speaking about a judgment that was closer at hand when the Temple that was then standing would be destroyed. That happened about 40 years after the Lord spoke these words--in 70 A.D. And so the verses that we come to now had a present application as well as a future application. These words of our Lord are for the people of God when they are faced with any persecution,

any trial, any period of distress.

Again, I do not believe that the Church will go through the Great Tribulation, BUT I AM NOT GOING TO SAY THAT WE WILL NOT HAVE SOME VERY DIFFICULT DAYS BEFORE THE LORD COMES FOR US. You talk to Christians today in some parts of the world, and they will tell you that they feel that they are already in the the Great Tribulation because of the things that they are going through. Remember that there are Christians among the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. What is taking place today must be very confusing and even terrifying to them.

But now, having said all of that, our Lord is answering the question that would be in any believer's mind in a time like what is being described here: WHAT HAPPENS TO THE WORK OF THE LORD IN TIMES LIKE THESE?

Two things can be said.

First of all, the Lord's people are going to be singled out for special persecution. This is in addition to the "wars" among the nations and the great judgments to be experienced in nature itself. Read v. 12.

"Before all these" means that the persecutions can be expected first! The child of God, whether we are talking about the redeemed of Israel, or in the Church, never has the promise that things are going to be easy here. And the more we seek to exalt Christ, the more we preach Christ, the more we insist that Christ is the only Saviour, the greater will be the persecution. Note the last words of v. 12: "for my names's sake," that is, because of the Lord Jesus Christ.

21:13 HERE IS THE KEY VERSE FROM VV. 12-15.

The persecution, the apprehension, being brought before the great men of the earth, is designed for a greater witness for the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The work of God is not on hold! In such times as these there are unheard of opportunities, and there may be glorious victories! This will be a wonderful time to speak of CHRIST!

It should be of interest to all of us here that the word for "testimony," or WITNESS, is the Greek word from which we get our English word, MARTYR.

21:14 This is the kind of a thing that you cannot prepare for. Therefore, don't try to! "Settle it" means to put this in your hearts. They were not to be in any doubt about this. It was not to be the cause of any anxiety. Why?

21:15 Now SS teachers, parents, pastors, THE LORD WAS NOT TELLING US HERE THAT WE DO NOT NEED TO STUDY, OR THAT WE DO NOT NEED TO MEDITATE ON THE WORD. These instructions were for the situation that the Lord was describing here. It is in times like these that some of the greatest preaching has been done. God has sovereignly and supernaturally given the message and the words to convey the message so that the enemies

1) Cannot "gainsay." That is, they have no rebuttal.
2) Nor can they "resist."

An illustration of this was in the preaching of Stephen in Acts 7. Read vv. 54-60. You see, it was at this very time that the Apostle Paul was brought under the powerful influence of the Gospel of the grace of God. See also what is recorded of Stephen in Acts 6:10:

> And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.

The second thing that we need to see is the severity of the persecutions will be intensified by what the Lord said in . . .

21:16 It is one thing to be ignored by "parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends," but to be actively persecuted by them is about the worst thing that can happen to us. If we have families where the members of our families love the Lord, we can be very, very thankful. Not every believer has that. And if your dearest friends love the Lord, be very, very thankful. Not every Christian has that.

And the hated experienced by some from their family members and friends will be such that it will end in death for the child of God.
--for "some of you."

21:17 The hatred will be widespread, but it cannot be universal, without exception. There will be other believers, and they will not hate each other. No, this "all" must mean all kinds of men. You will be hated not only by kings and rulers, but by parents and loved ones, by those high in society, and by those low, and by those in between. It will come from all directions.

21:18 How can we reconcile this verse with the statement at the end of v. 16, "Some of you shall they cause to be put to death"?

This must have been a proverbial statement to express absolute security. Cf. Acts 27:34, Paul's words to the men aboard the ship that was destroyed by the storm. He said,

> Wherefore I pray you to take some meat:
> for this is your health:
> for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any one of you.

We have it also when Saul was ready to kill Jonathan because he had eaten the honey. The people said to Saul,

> Shall Jonathan die,
> who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid:
> as the Lord liveth,
> there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground;
> for he hath wrought with God this day (1 Sam. 14:45).

The Lord probably used the expression in a spiritual sense. Perhaps Matt. 10:28 will help us. The Lord said on that occasion when He was speaking to His disciples,

> And fear not them which kill the body,
> but are not able to kill the soul:
> but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

As far as the final outcome is concerned, it is the believer who is the victor, not his persecutor. The body can be killed, but the body will be raised. Rom. 8:37 teaches us that even when the child of God is martyred he is "more than" a conqueror "through him that loved us."

See also Paul's statement in Phil. 1:21.

21:19 This seems to confirm our interpretation of v. 18.

It is actually a re-statement of vv. 9 and 14.

Lit. this verse says, In your endurance you will win your souls. Remember that "patience" is not just waiting, but enduring, persevering. Our

enemies may try to silence us, but we are to continue on bearing testimony of Christ even if it means death. It seems that Matthew and Mark have expressed this thought in these words,

> But he that shall endure unto the end,
> the same shall be saved (Matt. 24:13).

See also the same words in Mark 13:13.

We are not saved by enduring, but we endure because we are saved. Our enduring shows the reality of our salvation, while with many others, because iniquity and persecution about, their love grows cold and disappears.

AT THIS POINT THE LORD TURNED HIS ATTENTION AGAIN, NOT JUST ON THE TEMPLE, BUT ON THE WHOLE CITY OF JERUSALEM. Some who were there would live to see this. E.g., the Apostle John. BUT, as the Lord went on, it was apparent that He was speaking of a greater judgment immediately preceding His return to the earth to reign.

21:20 When you see this word "desolation," think of the Lord's words in Matt. 23:37-39. The word means that Jerusalem would be made like a desert. Not only would the Temple be destroyed, but also the city. And this was the judgment of God upon a people who had rejected the Messiah.

Have you noticed that more than one leader of Israel has said concerning the trouble that they are now having in the Gaza Strip that they are fighting for their very existence? We do not know when, but eventually they are going to lose. This will come about during the time of the Great Tribulation, called in . . .

1) V. 20, "the desolation."
2) In v. 22, "the days of vengeance."
3) In v. 25, the "distress of nations."

Matthew called it "great tribulation" (Matt. 24:21; cf. also v. 29). Some of these terms also would have their application in a lesser way to the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus in 70 A.D.

The real sign that these things are about to take place will be the surrounding of Jerusalem by alien armies.

21:21 It will be a time for people to seek to escape for the lives.

21:22 It will be a time of fulfilled prophecies, prophecies of judgment which were given, not only by our Lord, but also by the OT prophets.

21:23 Child-bearing will be especially difficult at that time because of the distress in the land and the wrath of God upon the people.

21:24 This speaks of the victory of Israel's enemies, and their dispersion among the nations of the earth--the judgment that Israel had been warned about in the days of Moses.

The extent of this will be "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Note the similarity between this verse and Rom. 11:25-27:

> For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant
> of this mystery,
> lest ye should be wise in your own conceits;
> that blindness in part is happened to Israel,

until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.
And so all Israel shall be saved:
as it is written, There shall come out of Sion a Deliverer,
and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:
For this is my covenant unto them,
when I shall take away their sins.

And so, as vv. 25-28 show, this terrible time of distress and wrath will culminate in the redemption of the people of God in Israel.

21:25 The signs in the heavens will accompany the distress among the nations.

21:26 This must be speaking of men generally throughout the world.

21:27 This is what the faithful in Israel have been expecting all through their history: "THE SON OF MAN COMING WITH POWER AND GREAT GLORY."

21:28 And the glorious thing about all of this suffering is that it will herald the coming of the Son of man, and the long-awaited "redemption." What a glorious, glorious day that will be, for all of the people of God! God's purposes will prevail, and the Lord Jesus Christ will be manifest upon earth with a glory seen only by Peter and James and John in the mount of Transfiguration.

For Israel it will be "redemption." The Word of God will stand. Ryle pointed out that it is far more likely that the Lord Jesus would come to reign than it was that He would suffer and die. And since we know that He suffered, died, and rose again, we can be sure that He will come again to reign as He has promised. And for the Lord to do this, we know that He will keep all of His promises, and that He will be faithful even though we, like Israel, have been unfaithful to Him. Thus, this is a great word of comfort for all of the people of God.

Now we come to . . .

3. The Lord's exhortation (Luke 21:29-36).

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We could say that the exhortation is three-in-one--three exhortations in one:
1) Things that the Lord wanted them to KNOW (v. 29-33).
2) A warning that they were to "TAKE HEED TO" (vv. 34, 35).
3) "WATCH . . . AND PRAY ALWAYS" (v. 36).

a. Things to KNOW (vv. 29-33).

21:29, 30 The Parable of the Fig Tree, and All the Trees.

This is an appropriate parable for this time of the year. The trees are beginning to put out their "leaves" (mentioned by Mark in 13:28). And so we know that Spring is here, "summer is now nigh at hand."

We need to distinguish in this passage those things which are signs of the age in which we live as compared with signs of the imminent coming of the Lord. In the latter we have vv. 25-28. And these are what the Lord had in mind when He gave the parable of the trees.

21:31 "The kingdom of God" here has to mean the millennial kingdom. Those who see those signs will know that the coming of the Lord is near. They will not be able to set a date, but they will know that the Redeemer is preparing to come--and that it is "nigh at hand."

21:32 There have been many interpretations of this verse, and the supporters of each seem to be equally dogmatic. The three most prominent seem to be:

1) That it referred to the generation existing on the earth at that time. Those who hold to this view believe that the prophecy was fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 A.D.
   But this could not be (1) because not all of the signs were given, and (2) because the Lord did not come. There has been no "redemption."
2) That is referred to the generation that would be existing on the earth at the time when these signs were given. I prefer this interpretation.
3) That it speaks of the Jewish nation. Bishop Ryle preferred this. It fits in with the context, but does not seem quite as likely as 2).

21:33 As David Brown suggested, these words could not truthfully have been uttered by anyone but our Lord. The Lord Jesus was the greatest of the prophets. His prophecies from a human standpoint were fantastic, but nothing could possibly stand in the way of their fulfillment.

While this saying had to do with the prophecies which He had just uttered, they apply equally to all that the Lord Jesus ever said during His time here on earth. We may not understand them fully, and we may not be able to see how they can be fulfilled, BUT WE MUST NEVER QUESTION THEM! THEY ARE THE WORDS OF THE SON OF GOD!

We could add to this the words of Psa. 119:89, "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven."

b. The warning to "take heed" (vv. 34, 35).

21:34 Every person has a full time job taking heed to himself, or herself.

We had this same warning back in Luke 17:3, "Take heed to yourselves." It means to beware. It is a warning to be on guard.

You see, the problem is the heart. Remember Solomon's familiar words:

> Keep thy heart with all diligence;
> for out of it are the issues of life (Prov. 4:23).

In Deut. 4:9 we read that Moses said,

> Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently,
> lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen,
> and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life:
> but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons.

"Overcharged" means to be weighed down, or to be oppressed.

"Surfeiting" has to do with the consequences of a dissolute life. And this would include "drunkenness, and cares of this life." It is interesting that the Lord put these two things together. Ryle wrote on this verse,

> Never, never let us forget that we may make spiritual shipwreck on lawful things, as really and as truly as on open vices (Luke, II,

p. 384).
We can get so caught up in the things of this world--its sins, its politics, its wars, its needs, plus all of our personal involvements, that we forget about the Lord, we forget about His coming, and we forget to be careful that we are doing what pleases Him in our daily lives.

Last night in our Bible reading together Lucille and I read the 3rd chapter of 2 Peter, which speaks of the coming of the Lord. And we read verses like vv. 11, 14, 17, 18. Peter was emphasizing the same things that the Lord was emphasizing as He spoke the words we are considering in Luke 21.

"That day" is, of course, the day in which the Lord will come. The Lord continued to speak about it in v. 35.

21:35 The Lord's coming will be "as a snare," like a trap suddenly catching an animal, like a thief suddenly coming into a house at night. It will all happen so fast that people who have thought that they would get ready, do not have the time to do it.

And this will not just be true of Israel, or of a few nations in a limited area, but it will "come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth."

How many Christians do you think are living with the expectation that the Lord Jesus would arrive at any moment? Probably very few! But we all need to be living that way.

c. "WATCH . . . AND PRAY ALWAYS" (v. 36).

21:36 These two commands belong together. We are not watching unless we are praying, but if we are praying, really praying, we are watching.

There are two judgments: God's judgment on the wicked, and His judgment of the righteous. We can only be "worthy" to escape the worse through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This exhortation meant that they were to examine their hearts to make sure that they actually did belong to the Lord and so would be able "to stand before the Son of man" in that Day.

Are you sure? Do you know?

H. A summary of the Lord's daily activities as His public ministry was coming to a close (Luke 21:37, 38).

There were obviously many other things that Luke could have written about those last days of ministry in Jerusalem--the last days of His entire public ministry. He knew that the end was near. Therefore, it is very important to see how He spent His time. There are important lessons for us here.

We can say that the Lord spent His time doing two things:

1. He spent His days teaching.

2. He spent His nights praying.

Life is uncertain for us. None of us knows how much time we have. The Lord knew how much time He had, and so He spent it in the most profitable

way--teaching the Word of God, and praying alone to God.

We obviously cannot stop our lives to do just what the Lord did. And we can be sure that the Lord does not want us to do anything like that. But what place do these two things have in our lives. Do we look upon these as the two most important things that we can do every day that we live?

Have you spent any time in prayer today?

You say, "But I am not a teacher." Maybe you aren't. But how long has it been since you directed the conversation with anybody to the Word of God. If the Word is really in our hearts, it is going to be upon our tongues. May the Lord enable us to speak with conviction and with love to others about our Saviour, and may we be so conscious of the needs we have, and of the terrible days in which we live, that we do not let any day go by without spending time with the Lord in prayer, pleading with Him for His blessing.

Let us pray, too, that the Lord will open the hearts of people to listen to the truth, as they listened to our Saviour. What a critical time it was for them! How many of them really realized it?

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE
Chapter 22

VI. THE FINAL EVENTS IN THE EARTHLY LIFE OF JESUS (Luke 22:1-24:53).

The earthly prophetic ministry of the Lord Jesus of the Lord Jesus had come to a close. The Lord was now entering upon the main part of His priestly ministry. When He comes as described in the preceding chapter, He will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

In contemplating the events before us in Luke's Gospel, let us make sure that we are thinking correctly about it. As in all things, it is important for us to see the hand of God in these events. When Peter was preaching later, on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), he said this about the death of Christ:

> Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel
> and foreknowledge of God,
> ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:
> Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death:
> because it was not possible that he should be holden of it
> (Acts 2:23, 24).

The men who were responsible for condemning and crucifying the Lord Jesus all bear their responsibility, but it is important to see that the saving purposes of God were being accomplished. It is very, very important to understand this, or we will have a distorted view of what was taking place at the Cross.

The Lord Jesus Himself said about His life:

> No man taketh it from me,
> but I lay it down of myself.
> I have power to lay it down,
> and I have power to take it again.
> This commandment have I received of my Father
> (John 10:18).

The death of Christ came at the time appointed by the Father, and it came in fulfillment of the many promises of redemption that had been given from the very beginning of time. The Apostle John tells us several times in His Gospel that our Lord's time had not yet come. But then it did come, and, when it did, things moved very, very rapidly.

This is the most important part of the Gospel of Luke, as it is the most important part of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John. Only Matthew and Luke give us the account of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, but all four of them give us a detailed account of what happened just before and at the time that the Saviour died. Historically, this is the heart of the Word of God. Everything before this points to this, and everything after this is dependent upon what happened when the Lord Jesus died. The Epistles expound for us the meaning of the Cross, and the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ portrays the final triumph of the Lamb--the title which is used in the book more than any other!

Let us read and re-read these three chapters while we are considering them. And let us pray that our hearts will be stirred with what we find here. It is so easy for us to become familiar with the facts, but unmoved in our hearts by what the Lord Jesus did for us when He went to the Cross. Let us pray for greater understanding, too. There is far more in these three chapters than you and I will ever be able to comprehend fully. But let us seek to know these things better than we do now.

Luke's account of these final hours in the life of our Lord begins with the account of . . .

A. The conspiracy against the Lord (Luke 22:1-6).

This was twofold:

1. By the chief priests and the scribes (Luke 22:1, 2).

2. By Judas Iscariot (Luke 22:3-6).

As we look at the events which led up to the arrest of our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:47-53), we can see a threefold preparation:
1) The plot was prepared by Judas and the Sanhedrin.
2) The disciples were prepared for what was ahead by our Lord. This preparation is to be seen under "B." in the outline.
3) Finally, the Lord was preparing Himself by prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane.

(This suggestion was made by Godet, II, p. 278.)

What a picture we have in this section of human depravity! And what a warning this should be to us! All of the religious training and experience that the chief priests and scribes had did not do anything to change their hearts. And even Judas, a disciple of the Lord, one who had preached the Gospel, one who had performed miracles, and one who had lived in the closest company with the Lord for the approximately three years of His public ministry, had not been changed. We need to be careful that the same is not true of us. These men were filled with jealousy, hatred, greed, selfishness, treachery. You and I never know, nor can we predict, what we will do when we are confronted with temptations if our hearts are not right with the Lord.

22:1 This was one way that Luke had of telling us that Jerusalem was crowded with people at this time. They had come from everywhere for the Passover.

It was also a most sacred time: the Passover. Although the observance of the Passover had become corrupted at that time, yet its meaning in Scripture was obvious, and the ministry of John the Baptist had taught the people what it was: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

22:2 But the "chief priests and scribes" had one big obstacle standing in their way: the people--"they feared the people." The Lord was very popular at this time with the people. Many of them had come from Galilee who were unknown to the members of the Sanhedrin, and they knew that there could be a great uprising if things were not handled carefully. Matthew reported in Matt. 26:5 that the chief priest and elders and scribes said,

> Not on the feast day,
> lest there be an uproar among the people.

Whether they hoped to act before the Passover, or afterwards, we do not know.

However, as Godet expressed it,

> . . . it was in exact keeping with the divine plan that Jesus should die during the feast . . . ; and the perfidy (faithlessness) of Judas, the means which the rulers thought they could use to attain their end, was that of which God made us to attain His (II, pp. 278, 279).

22:3 In this verse we learn that there was another involved in this dreadful plot--more than the Sanhedrin, and more that Judas. It was "Satan"--which means adversary. This is also mentioned in Matt. 26:14-16; Mark 14:10, 11: John 13:2, 27-30. John tells us that the Devil put this into Judas' heart first, and then later "entered into him." This did not free Judas of the responsibility, but it shows that he was a tool of Satan in what he did.

After the Devil was thwarted in trying to get the Lord Jesus to sin, Luke said in 4:13 that "he departed from him (the Lord) for a season." Now he was back, and ready to do the worst that he could do. If Satan cannot accomplish his evil designs one way, he will try another.

Judas' problem was money. John tells us that "he was a thief" (John 12:6). It was like any sin that we try to hide; sooner or later it will get the best of us. He had kept up a good front so that none of the other disciples suspected him, but his heart was not right! And that is what matters.

22:4-6 Judas went to the chief priests and captains. They were glad to hear what he would do, and they were glad to pay him for it, because they did not know what to do. This was their answer.

Judas was a hypocrite.

Bishop Ryle wrote this:

> Let the recollection of Judas Iscariot constrain every professing Christian to pray much for humility. Let us often say, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts" (Psa. 139:23). At best we have but a faint conception of the deceitfulness of our hearts. The length to which men may go in religion, and yet be without grace, is far greater than we suppose (II, 390).

Next we come to . . .

B. The last Passover and the events which followed in the Upper Room (Luke 22:7-38).

Keep in mind that events which we are now going to consider give us the various ways in which the Lord was preparing His disciples for His sufferings and death--His Passion.

The first way He sought to prepare them was at . . .

1. The last Passover (Luke 22:7-16).

Nothing could witness to the importance of the Passover more than for it to have the close connection that it has here with the approaching death of our Lord Jesus Christ. The first Passover had been observed 1500 years before this, and each time the Passover lamb had been slain through all of those years, it pointed to the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Passover lamb was the type of which the Lord Jesus was the antitype. It was most significant that the death of the Lord should, in the providence of God, come at the time of the Passover observance.

22:7 "Must" indicates that it was prescribed by the Law, and therefore it had to be done. There is some question regarding the particular time that the Passover was observed--the Lord observing one time; His enemies apparently observing another time. But Ryle seems to have a point

in pointing to the word "must" in this verse, saying that it must also mean that the Lord observed the right time. Many irregularities had developed among the Jews, and it is possible that they were not then observing the right time.

The Passover pointed to the birth of the nation Israel. It marked their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. But from this time on it was to have greater significance for the Apostles. It was to mark the sacrifice by which they were delivered from the bondage of sin and death, and the marvelous gift of eternal life.

Satan had his plan. Judas and the leaders of Israel were involved in that. But the Lord had His plan which would be fulfilled in spite of all that His enemies might do to the contrary.

22:8 Luke is the only one of the Gospel writers who mentioned the two disciples who were sent to prepare the Passover.

22:9 Preparing the Passover for such a large group would require a suitable and adequate place, and so Peter and John wanted to know "where" that would be.

22:10-14 The Lord's answer ought to remind us of the circumstances when the Lord was preparing for His entrance into the city of Jerusalem. Cf. 19:28-35. Everything was in readiness; Peter and John simply had to complete the preparations, which they obviously did.

22:15, 16 There is probably more in our Lord's words, "with desire have I desired," than we will be able to determine. But we can certainly see some things that will be for our edification and blessing.

The expression itself means, as several of the translations have indicted, that this was something that the Lord had been looking forward to with the greatest anticipation. We would say, "He would not have missed this for anything!" But why would He say this when both the Passover and the Lord's Supper which was to follow, pointed to and were typical of His death.

Perhaps His greatest delight in this was the fact that it was the expression of His submission to the will of God. We have those words of the Lord in Psa. 40:8, 9,

> Then said I, Lo, I come;
> in the volume of the book it is written of me,
> I delight to do thy will, O my God:
> yea, thy law is within my heart.

This is by far the most important point about our Lord's death. It was the will of God, and absolutely essential for the work of salvation.

When this passage was quoted in Heb. 10:7, 9, there are two points which were made--and these two could have been among the reasons why the Lord desired so fervently to observe the Passover with them:

1) Christ came to offer Himself as a sacrifice because the blood of bulls and goats could never have taken away a single sin. Their value was in what they pointed to, not in what they were in themselves.
2) It meant the end of the Law as an order under which the people of God had been living since Moses' day, and the establishing of the new covenant.

Isaac Watts wrote a wonderful hymn (#176 in the Trinity Hymnal) which

expresses the truth that is here. Listen to these words:

> Not all the blood of beasts on Jewish altars slain,
> Could give the guilty conscience peace, or wash away the stain.
>
> But Christ, the heav'nly Lamb takes all our sins away,
> A sacrifice of nobler name and richer blood than they.
>
> Believing, we rejoice to see the curse remove;
> We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice and sing His bleeding love.

But then, not the least of the reasons, was the fact that this would give Him another opportunity to set before them the truth of His passion. Note how graciously the Lord persists in teaching His disciples even though they are so slow to understand. We can see ourselves in this.

Finally (but surely there are other reasons), we see how the Lord delighted in the fellowship of His disciples. The Lord is self-existent and self-sufficient. He is not dependent upon any of us, nor upon all of us put together. We cannot add anything to the Lord. But nevertheless, it is clear in Scripture that . . .

> The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him,
> in those that hope in his mercy (Psa. 147:11).

Notice the words, "with you," in v. 15. And in Matthew's account of what the Lord said to His disciples after they had eaten of the Lord's Supper, we have those words, "with you," again:

> But I say unto you,
> I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine,
> until that day when I drink it new with **you** in my Father's kingdom
> (Matt. 26:29).

And so, as strange as it may seem to us, the Lord delights in those times of fellowship that He has with us. We see that in His prayer in John 17:24,

> Father, I will that they also, whom thou has given me,
> be **with** me where I am . . .

Do you remember the words of that hymn?

> He and I in that bright glory, one deep joy shall share;
> Mine, to be forever with Him; His, that I am there.

<u>22:17, 18</u> Having said what He said, the Lord told them to drink of the Passover cup, which was a cup of thanksgiving, indicating to them that the next time He would drink of the fruit of the vine with them would be when the kingdom was established.

From this the Lord went immediately to . . .

2. <u>THE FIRST LORD'S SUPPER--the betrayer mentioned</u> (Luke 22:19-23).

Luke's account of this is very brief, but it is full of rich meaning.

The Lord took the bread first, and then the cup. The bread spoke of His body; the cup, of His blood. Death is portrayed by both: the breaking of the bread, and the fruit of the vine which was in the cup. But we have other truths that are apparent in these symbols also.

The bread and the cup were symbols of the body and blood of the Lord, both of which had to do with His humanity. But the bread was also symbolic of

Christ as the One Who had come down from heaven. Jesus Christ became a man that He might die, and that He might bear the sins of men. And so we have in these elements:
1) An emphasis upon our Lord's Person--that He was both God and man.
2) An emphasis upon the Work that He would do on the Cross.

And to eat these symbols was a picture of salvation itself. Cf. John 6:52-60. To eat of Christ's flesh and to drink of His blood is to express our faith in Him as the God-Man, and in His blood as the only sacrifice that is sufficient for the removal of sin.

We have the establishment of "the new testament," or new covenant. And it is clear that it was to be established by the blood of Christ. Thus, by the sacrifice of Christ, the sacrifices offered under the Law were no longer necessary. The types were completed by the sacrifice so there is no longer any need for those sacrifices.

The Lord's Supper serves several purposes:
1) It brings us back to the remembrance of Christ and His work.
2) It emphasizes for us the message that we are to bring to the world.
3) It is a time for each believer to search His own heart in the presence of God, and, through confession and cleansing through the blood of Christ, to make things right.

Remember that all of the events in this section (22:7-38) were to prepare the disciples for the sufferings and death of the Lord.

3. The dispute among the disciples (Luke 22:24-30).

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It is really incredible that a situation like this should arise at such a time in the life of the Lord Jesus. And it is even more amazing that this happened because it had taken place before. See Luke 9:46-48.

Plummer expresses doubt that this occurred at this time at this time, and that he may have been repeating what had happened before. But my objections to that would be:
1) Why bring such a thing in here when it is so out-of-character with what was taking place? Luke has shown himself to be a very careful and accurate historian. I think such a suggestion does him a great injustice.
2) I think that Dr. Plummer, as fine a commentator was he was, underestimates the depravity and blindness of the human heart:
   a) Man's sin nature is always active, and self-seeking and selfish ambition are in all of us. And it shows itself at the most inappropriate times.
   b) Even though the Lord had spoken to His disciples a number of times about His death, they still did not understand. And so they did not realize how out-of-place this was. We are so slow in grasping spiritual truth.
3) How many times has the Lord had to teach us the same thing? I am not thinking now of what He had taught them about the Cross, but the fact that this had happened before. The patience of the Lord is one of His most amazing characteristics. And so He began again to teach them just like this situation had never come up before.

22:24 The Greek of this verse makes it clear, according to Plummer, that we are now going to hear about something of a different character

from what had just happened. Luke does not record how Jesus washed their feet at this time. Plummer thinks that this "strife" must have happened after that (in view of what the Lord said in v. 27 ("but I am among you as he that serveth"). And he remarked that it was "incredible" that such a thing could have happened then. I agree; it was "incredible." But it did happen then!

22:25 When the Lord spoke of "the Gentiles," He was speaking of the unregenerate Gentiles. The disciples were acting like the unsaved would act, or, as we would say today, as the non-Christian thinks and acts. The man at the top is the greatest. He calls the shots.

22:26 "But ye shall not be so." God's ways are not like the ways of men. The greatest in God's sight is the one who willingly and joyfully takes the lowest place. He does not expect others to serve him; he expects and desires to serve them. Notice the terms "younger" and "he that doth serve." Matthew Henry makes two good statements about this (Vol. V, p. 811):
1) "To do good is much more honourable than to look great."
2) "To do good is the surest way to be great."
If we want to be a true "benefactor" (v. 25) of men, it must be by serving them, and not by getting them to serve us or to do what we tell them to do.

22:27 And then the Lord made His point even stronger.

Note the question. And then see what He said about Himself. He was not asking His disciples to take a place that He had not taken. Perhaps, as I mentioned above, the Lord had just finished washing their feet. What could be lower than that, taking the place of a household servant? And yet that is exactly what He had done: "But I am among you as he that serveth."

Here is a lesson for all of us--those who are parents, those who are teachers, even for pastors. That which will give power to our teaching is the fact that we are doing what we ask others to do. Note how Paul made a point of this in Rom. 2:17-24. Paul told Timothy to be an example to the believers. That is what would cause people to believe what he was preaching.

The liberals have made too much of Jesus as being our Example. Many of them teach that salvation is doing what Jesus did. That certainly was not what the Lord taught. But we need to remember that He is our Example, not to bring us into salvation by what we do, but in guiding our lives after we are saved. Cf. 1 Pet. 2:21,

> For even hereunto wee ye called:
> because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example,
> that we should follow His steps . . .

and then Peter went on to tell how us the Lord was our Example.

The Apostle John wrote in 1 John 2:6,

> He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk,
> even as he walked.

This also is the whole point of Paul's teaching in Phil. 2:1-11.

22:28 And then the Lord did a very wonderful thing: He encouraged them by showing them that He knew what was in their hearts. They might have failed Him--and they did! They showed how weak they were. They did

not understand what He was about to do. BUT--THEY HAD CONTINUED WITH HIM THROUGH ALL OF HIS TRIALS. Others had forsaken Him; they had not! Strong doctrine or severe testings could make others give up, but not these men. They were "perseverers."

Cf. 1 John 2:19. I heard Dr. William Pettingill, one of the editors of the original Scofield Bible, teach this almost 50 years ago at Camp El Har in Dallas, and I have never forgotten how he read this verse. (Read.)

We may fail the Lord. And we may demonstrate our ignorance of His Word many times. And He is grieved with all of this. We may even falter for a time. BUT A TRUE BELIEVER WILL NEVER, NEVER LEAVE THE LORD. That is the whole point of Jude 24, 25. We continue, not because we are so great, but because He is keeping us.

Remember the Lord's words to Peter in John 6:67 after John had written,

> From that time many of his disciples went back,
> and walked no more with him.

The Lord asked Peter, "Will ye also go away?" And Peter answered, "Lord," (I like that), "to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

THE TRUE BELIEVER KNOWS THAT, IF HE TURNS AWAY FROM THE LORD, THERE IS NO OTHER ONE TO WHOM HE CAN GO TO FIND WHAT HE HAS IN THE LORD.

<u>22:29, 30</u> But now look at what was ahead of these apostles. They were not to live for what they could get for themselves now, because there was a kingdom yet to come. Had not the Lord taught His disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth." I want you to note that in that prayer the Lord taught us to pray for the coming of His reign upon the earth. If words mean anything at all, they surely mean that.

The verb "appoint" which the Lord used twice here is the verb from which we get the Greek word for <u>covenant</u>. So we could translate the 29th verse,

> I make a covenant with you that there will be a kingdom,
> as my Father has made that same covenant with Me.

This was the hope that the disciples had had which, for the present, was to be disappointed. The Lord did not come the first time to set up His kingdom upon the earth. He came to suffer and to die for their sins, for my sins, and for all of you who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and for all who ever had, or ever will believe in the Him. But we have the solemn covenant which the Father made with His Son, and which the Son made with His disciples--and it is utterly impossible that a divine covenant can ever fail!

At that time (v. 30) the disciples would have their honor. They would "eat and drink at my table in my kingdom," the Lord said. What could be a greater honor than this?

Let me give you <u>an OT illustration</u> of this. Please turn to <u>2 Samuel 9</u>. David wanted to know if there were anyone left of the house of Saul so he could honor him for Jonathan's sake. He wanted to show "the kindness of God" to him. He found Mephibosheth. What did he do to show him "the kindness of God"? See v. 7. Look at Mephibosheth's response in v. 8. And then see v. 13.

You know, they say that when you get older you remember the things that happened year and years ago, but you can't remember what happened this

morning. Well, I'll have to confess that I'm moving along in years, and it is also said that "confession is good for the soul." So I will acknowledge that I am getting old when I tell you something else that I remember from years ago. I heard Lewis Johnson preaching on this passage: 2 Sam. 9. And obviously I have not forgotten it. But one thing in particular remains in my mind, and that is the way that he concluded his message, speaking of v. 13. He mentioned that Mephibosheth not only had a place fixed for him at the king's table once or twice, but day after day after day. The Word says, "continually." But notice also the last thing that is said about Mephibosheth: "And (he) was lame on both his feet."

Dr. Johnson's closing thoughts were not about the disciples eating at the Lord's table in the kingdom, but about the privilege that you and I have of fellowship with the Lord every day. There is a place prepared at His table for you and for me. But you and I have the same problem that Mephibosheth had: WE, TOO, ARE LAME IN BOTH OF OUR FEET. We don't walk very well, do we? --spiritually, I mean. This was the problem with the disciples, too. They had lame feet. That is why they wanted to be the greatest instead of the least. And that was because they were still in these bodies of flesh and sin. They did not understand what the Lord had tried to tell them about His death, and so they continued to limp right up to the Cross.

All of God's people have lame feet. Just watch me for a little while, and you will see that I limp--I limp spiritually. And that is why I need to find my place at the Lord's Table every day. I need Him, and the amazing truth is that He wants me. But in that day when Peter and John and all of the other apostles sit down with the Lord at His table in His kingdom, they won't be limping any more. And neither will you and I be limping. The lameness will be gone, and we will walk just like the Lord Jesus walks. Oh, how wonderful it will be when that day comes!

And then the disciples will not lack for greatness because then they will "sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Do you mean that the redeemed of Israel will have fishermen, and at least one former tax man, and who knows what the others had been--sitting on thrones, ruling over them? Yes, that is what it means.

Oh, how marvelous is the grace of God.

What is the lesson that we need to learn from this last verse?

It teaches us that we are not to be living to have our honor here on earth, but we seek the honor that will be ours when we are with the Lord. The world is always honoring its own. The Oscars were presented last night to the Hollywood actors and actresses who were the most outstanding. A few weeks ago we saw young people from all over the world competing for the gold and the silver and the bronze medals at the Winter Olympics in Calgary. I never see that but what I think of Paul's words to the Corinthian church,

> Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown;
> but we an incorruptible (1 Cor. 9:25b).

Peter probably expressed this hope that we have as well as any of the NT writers. Let me give you two passages from 1 Peter as we complete our consideration of this text for this time. The passages are:

1) 1 Pet. 1:6-9.
2) 1 Pet. 4:12, 13.

We may never get our honors here, but we will when our Lord comes!

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4. The warning and encouragement for Peter (Luke 22:31-34).

This section shows us beyond any doubt that Satan was very active during these hours, bringing all of his powers against our Lord. This revelation began in v. 3 of this chapter where we read, "Then entered Satan into Judas named Iscariot . . ." Now, in this passage we see that he had designs on Peter, too. Remember that "Satan" means adversary. Whatever he does, it is always in opposition to God, to the Lord Jesus Christ, to the people of God, and to the work of God.

22:31 Both Matthew and Mark tell us that the incident recorded for us in these verses was preceded by our Lord's prediction, "All of you shall be offended because of me this night . . ." (Matt. 26:31; Mark 14:27). And this was in fulfillment of Zech. 13:7. The emphasis was upon all of them--not just Peter!

The "you" in our text is in the plural. The "you" in v. 32 is in the singular. All of them would be tried, but Simon Peter more severely than the others. The verb "desired" indicates not only a request, but a successful request. Satan had asked for them "all." He was not satisfied just to have Judas. But his request had been granted only in the case of Peter.

This should remind us of the experience of Job. See Job 1.

It is interesting, too, and probably very significant, that this matter came up just after the dispute among the disciples as to who would be the greatest. Luke in 22:24 made no attempt to say who was involved in the dispute; he just said "among them." It is very possible that Peter had been involved in it as one of the disputants, and perhaps he felt that he had the best claim on being the greatest because of what the Lord had said to him after his great confession in Matt. 16:15-19. (Read.) There is no question but that it was the Lord's plan that Peter should be the leader of the twelve--BUT NOT NECESSARILY "THE GREATEST" IN THE SENSE THAT THE DISCIPLES WERE DISCUSSING.

"Obtained" is stated in such a way in the original so as to indicate a successful request. Satan had asked for this, and the Lord had granted it.

Two things are encouraging here:
1) That Satan cannot get to us without the permission of the Lord. The story of Job also teaches us this.
2) The Lord never lets Satan do anything that he wants to do, or all that he wants to do. The Lord always limits Satan as to the intensity of his temptations, and to the length of them (i.e., how long they last).

Job 1 helps us to understand these encouragements.

Another encouragement is to be seen in the way that Lord addressed Peter: "Simon, Simon." Plummer says that this is "impressive" (p. 503) because it "conveys an expression of affection and concern" (p. 291). Bishop Ryle said that it "implies solemnity and importance in the statement about to be made, and deep concern on behalf of Simon's soul" (II, 414). The Lord knew that Peter would fail and fall, but He loved him nevertheless, and would not leave him alone at the mercy of Satan. Cf. 1 Cor. 10:13.

Still another encouragement can be seen in the Lord's reference to this as

a sifting. It was Satan's purpose to show that all of the disciples were like Judas, i.e., that they were all chaff, that all were hypocrites. But it was the Lord's purpose to winnow out the chaff so that Peter and all of the others would be stronger, even though they were to fail.

Lesson: The Lord always works our circumstances "together" so that the outcome is "good." Our failures are never justified, but they are always used to profit us. The Lord "knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust" (Psa. 103:14), BUT WE SO EASILY FORGET!

22:32 Still another encouragement: "But I have prayed for thee."

Cf. Heb. 7:25. The Lord Jesus prays for us, too.

What was His request for Peter? (And we can be sure that this is often His request for us, too.) " . . . that thy faith fail not."

This shows the objective that Satan always has in his attacks against us. He is out to destroy our faith, to get us to doubt God.

"But I . . ."--emphatic in the Greek. It is wonderful that we are able to pray for ourselves. It is also wonderful that others pray for us. BUT WHO CAN DESCRIBE HOW BLESSED WE ARE THAT OUR LORD PRAYS FOR US? Cf. John 17:9-24.

Lesson: The way the Lord prays for us gives us a most valuable guide as to how we ought to be praying for each other. Peter himself wrote in 1 Pet. 1:7 about "the trial of your faith," and indicated that this is what all of our "manifold temptations" (1 Pet. 1:6) are.

"And when thou art converted." This does not mean that Peter was not saved until after his great trial. Neither does it mean that he would lose his salvation, and be saved a second time. It simply means to be turned from something. When we as believers sin, we turn from the Lord and turn toward or sin. When we are "converted," we turn from our sin and turn back to the Lord. We can only be saved once; we may have to be converted many times.

This is why many teachers of the Word object to speaking of being saved as being converted. Conversion is not a synonym for salvation, but for being restored to fellowship with God.

"Strengthen thy brethren." Note:
1) The ministry to the others would only be after he had been converted.
2) God is so gracious in His dealings with us that, instead of being eliminated from ministry because of our sins, our failures are often the channel of an enlarged ministry.

It is very apparent from Peter's epistles that he profited a great deal from this tragic time in his life when he failed the Lord so miserably.

Dean Alford has pointed out that Peter used this Greek word for "strengthen" two times in his epistles: 1 Pet. 5:10; 2 Pet. 1:12. He has also used the word "steadfastness" which is a derivative of the word "strengthen."

This is what all believers desperately and continuously need. It is interesting to note also that when we are are "converted" from our sins,

we thing in terms of serving others, not in being pre-eminent over them and having them serve us. Cf. David's words in Psa. 51:11-13.

Lesson: Everywhere we look in the life of a Christian we see evidence of the grace of God.

22:33 It is interesting that the name "Simon," which the Lord used for Peter in this passage, is from the Hebrew, and it means a hearing. Here we see that Simon Peter was not hearing, but he was doing what he did best: speaking.

Lesson: How important it is for us to hear the word of the Lord. James gives us some good advice in Jas. 1:19, 20,

> Wherefore, my beloved brethren,
> let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak,
> slow to wrath:
> For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

Remember: "Swift to hear, slow to speak." Cf. also Paul's words in 1 Cor. 10:1-12, esp. v. 12.

Matthew tells us that when Peter had so boldly declared that he would be faithful to the Lord, "Likewise said all of the disciples" (Matt. 26:35).

We all have the same tendency about self-confidence. What a need there is in all of our hearts for that true humility which causes us to trust solely upon the Lord!

22:34 Matthew Henry said that in this verse the Lord was saying in so many words,

> "I tell thee, Peter," thou dost not know thine own heart,
> but must be left to thyself a little,
> that thou mayest know it,
> and mayest never trust to it again (V, 813).

Note that the Lord used the name "Peter" here. Bishop Ryle said, "It was surely meant to remind him (Peter) how weak even the strongest disciples are." When we think we are strong, we are weak, and when we know that we are weak, then we are strong because we are more inclined then to be trusting in the Lord.

Note the evidence of the Lord's omniscience. Not only would Peter deny the Lord, but he would deny him that very night, and, most amazing of all, he would deny the Lord THREE TIMES. The Lord's words as to time meant, "Before this night is past" (Plummer, p. 505).

Lesson: You and I can never know the depths to which we will go into sin if we are left to ourselves in circumstances that are too great for us. There is not a one of us who does not need to take this message from our Lord to Peter for ourselves.

5. The Lord's announcement of a change (Luke 22:35-38).

22:35 Here the Lord introduced a new subject, but, with a little thought we can see that it is related to what He had just been saying to Peter.

It is apparent that the Lord, in the words of Satan to the Lord about Job, who had "made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that

he had on every side" (Job 1:10), had done the same for the twelve. He had protected them, provided for them, and guided them by His very presence with them. They had been delivered from many dangers. They had not felt the brunt of the opposition of the world that had been directed toward the Lord. But the time had come when they were going to feel it. The Lord would not continue to provide for them in the same miraculous way that He had provided for them before. And so the instructions that had been given to the seventy in Luke 10 were to be changed. This did not mean that the Lord's care would be any the less, but that the means that He would use would not be the same.

Many have seen a parallel between this and the way the Lord provided for the Israelites during the 40 years of their wandering as compared with what they did when they got into the land. It was still the Lord who provided for them, but there would be no manna from heaven; no quails falling into their cities. They would need to work, and to trust the Lord for His blessing upon their work.

4/25/88

This 35th verse brings the response from the disciples that the Lord's previous arrangement with them had been satisfactory. They had lacked nothing! The Lord had adequately taken care of them.

<u>22:36</u> "But now" -- indicating a change.

This is obviously a very difficult passage. Most commentators do not deal with it at all. Some want to spiritualize it. It is obvious that the Lord was not talking of spiritual things here. When in v. 38 the disciples told Him that they had "two swords," He said, "It is enough." So He was talking about real swords!

It seems that the Lord was telling them that they would not find things as congenial after He was gone as they had found it while He was there. The Lord had enjoyed great popularity among the people. They had followed Him in great throngs, and their homes had been opened to Him. But from that point in time on things were going to be different.

Previously they had not needed money, nor garments, nor special protection, but from then on they would need it. The Lord was telling them that they would need money ("a purse"), "scrip" (their version of our suitcase), and "a sword."

This latter point presents the biggest problem. <u>Why would He want them to take a sword?</u>

They certainly were not to use a sword for the spread of the Gospel.

Nor is there any evidence that they were to defend themselves by going after their enemies with a sword. We have no instance where the Lord ever sanctioned that. When Peter used his sword and cut of the ear of Malchus, the Lord told him to put it up, and then He said this: " . . . all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:52). And the Apostle John records for us those words of our Lord to Pilate,

> My kingdom is not of this world:
> if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight,
> that I should not be delivered to the Jews:
> but now is my kingdom not from hence (John 18:36).

<u>So why have a sword at all?</u>

I have not read this in any commentary, or in any Bible encyclopedia, but I am going to suggest this: THE SWORD WAS NOT ONLY USED AS A DEFENSIVE WEAPON, BUT IT WAS USED TO PROTECT THEMSELVES AGAINST SNAKES (which were plentiful in the land of Israel), AND SMALLER WILD ANIMALS. Mark, in his Gospel (16:18) reported the Lord's words saying that they would take up serpents, but not be hurt. And that was true in the case of the Apostle Paul (see Acts 28:3-6). But that is no longer true. In California I have played golf on a golf course where there is a sign saying, "Beware of snakes. Keep a golf club in your hand for your own protection." And the men at the club house told us that every day somebody brings in a dead snake that they have killed in that area. What did we do? We carried golf clubs in our hands!

There were undoubtedly other times when swords were used to kill game for food.

So I do not believe that the Lord was telling them to be read to defend themselves with a sword, and possibly kill someone else. Going to war is a different matter. But the whole point of what the Lord was saying was that things were going to be different from that time on--different from what they had been before. God would still take care of them. He would still provide for them. But it would be done in a different way.

22:37 The reason for the change is stated here.

Our Lord's main purpose for coming into the world was about to be accomplished. Notice the word "must." He could not continue on with them. He would die, be raised, and return to the Father. The quotation is from Isa. 53:12, which reads,

> Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great,
> and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;
> because he hath poured out his soul unto death:
> and he was numbered with the transgressors;
> and he bare the sin of many,
> and made intercession for the transgressors.

This shows us the sense in which the Lord was, in the words of Luke, "reckoned with the transgressors." He was making intercession for them by His death. He did not die as a martyr for His own beliefs, but as a Substitute for the sins of the "many."

We see here the humiliation which our Lord suffered, being treated as a common malefactor. But we also see His purpose in dying: it was for the "many" who would be saved, those given to Him by the Father, those chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world. The Lord was not trying to accomplish something; He was accomplishing something. He was providing for the redemption of His own.

"The things concerning me have an end"--lit., "'are having an end,' or drawing rapidly to a close" (Brown, in JFB, V, 329). The Lord's death was at hand, and His resurrection and ascension would follow.

How carefully the Lord was preparing His disciples for the things that were to come.

C. The events in the Garden of Gethsemane and the Lord's arrest (Luke 22:39-54a).

THIS IS THE PERIOD OF TIME DURING WHICH OUR LORD'S PASSION BEGAN. IT CONTINUED UNTIL HE DIED ON THE CROSS. It can be said of the entire life of

our Lord, that there was no time like it in all of human history--nor will there ever be another time like it. But that is especially true of the Passion of our Lord. There was never any suffering like His suffering, either in its intensity, nor in its purpose. This is the focal point (the central point of attention) of all human history. Charles Wesley, whose dates were 1707-1788, expressed the marvel of our Lord's death in these words,

'Tis mystery all! Th' Immortal dies!
Who can explore His strange design?
In vain the firstborn seraph tries to sound the depths of love divine!
'Tis mercy all! let earth adore,
Let angel minds inquire no more.
Amazing love! how can it be that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

The first of the events in the Garden was . . .

1. The Lord's prayer in the Garden (Luke 22:39-46).

22:39 "And he came out," i.e., from the Upper Room. And so he left Jerusalem, and went to the Garden of Gethsemane "as he was wont." This means that it was His custom to go there.

John tells us that our Lord had just prayed that marvelous prayer which he recorded for us in John 17. Where He prayed it, we do not know. But it was somewhere between the Upper Room and the Garden. Would it be too much to say that He prayed as He walked toward the Garden, and that the disciples actually heard this prayer in its entirety?

However that may have been, there never has been, nor will there ever be, a prayer like that of John 17.

Immediately after He prayed, these are the words which John recorded in John 18:1, 2:

> When Jesus had spoken these words,
> he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron,
> where a garden was, into which he entered, and his disciples.
> **And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place:**
> **for Jesus ofttimes resorted thither with his disciples.**

What a rebuke it ought to be to us to see that prayer had such a large place in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son! Is there any place about which it can be said that you and I OFTEN go there, IT IS OUR HABIT TO GO THERE, TO PRAY? Think about that for a moment. What is your place of prayer? How often do you go there? We have our homes where we live, and the places where we shop, and the places where we play. BUT WHERE DO WE PRAY, AND HOW OFTEN ARE WE THERE?

The city of Jerusalem must have been quiet at this time, and most people were asleep. No one realized what was about to happen, and would happen, except our Lord. The enemies of the Lord were hopeful, but they could not be sure, but they had no idea of the role they were playing in the salvation of sinners. BUT THE LORD KNEW, AND HE WAS NOT SLEEPING. HE WAS GOING TO THE PLACE WHERE HE OFTEN WENT TO DO WHAT HE OFTEN DID: HE WAS GOING TO COMMUNE WITH HIS FATHER. THE DISCIPLES HAD OFTEN GONE WITH HIM THERE BEFORE, BUT THIS WAS TO BE THE LAST TIME.

22:40 Luke does not tell us that He left 8 of them first, and took 3 (Peter, James, and John) a little farther into the Garden.

Neither does Luke tell us that the Lord left the 3, and then came back to talk to them three times, only to find them sleeping.

Luke gives us more of a summary of what happened, and he showed more than the other Gospel writers what a toll our Lord's sufferings took upon Him physically. See v. 44.

Here we read that the Lord told the disciples to pray, and He told them what they should pray for: "that ye enter not into temptation."

Remember that this was a part of the prayer the Lord gave the disciples when they asked Him to teach them to pray:

And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil (lit., from the Evil One--Luke 11:4b).

Ryle (II, 424, 425) distinguished between being tempted and being led into temptation. It is the distinction between being tempted and sinning. We will always be tempted as long as we live in these bodies in this world with the Devil walking about. We cannot avoid that. But we must always seek to avoid SIN! And one major way we do that is by prayer!

The Lord knew that His hour of trial would be an hour of trial for them, too, and so He was warning them, and guiding them, to do as He was doing. If He needed to pray, how much more they needed to pray! Both Matthew and Mark tell us that while they were there in the Garden the Lord told them that "the spirit indeed is willing (ready), but the flesh is weak." They had boasted that they would die with the Lord before they would leave Him, but the Lord knew that they were dust, weak flesh, and that they needed to pray because of their weakness; they needed the Lord!

This word from the Lord ought to come to us each day before we begin our day's work. This is one reason that we need to begin the day with God. We never know what dangers we will confront on any day. The Devil is always at work, seeking our downfall. So let us be faithful in praying for ourselves, that the Lord would keep us from sin, from doing anything that would dishonor Him and displease Him.

22:41 Note the expression: "And he was withdrawn from them." It could be rendered, He was drawn away. His heart was so overwhelmed with grief that He hurried to get away from them. You and I know what that is like when we feel that we are going to cry. We rush away like something is dragging us away.

Note the Lord's posture: He "kneeled down." And then He prayed. Luke is the only one of the Gospel writers who mentioned that our Lord "kneeled down." Standing was a common way to pray, and still is acceptable. But it seems that kneeling expressed our Lord's humiliation, His submission, and His great burden.

This is the only posture in prayer that is mentioned from this point on in the NT. Stephen kneeled down as he was being stoned, and prayed with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60). And this was the last thing he did! Peter kneeled down by the bedside when he raised Dorcas from the dead in Acts 9:40. When Paul left the Ephesian elders, "he kneeled down, and prayed with them all" (Acts 20:36). When Paul left the believers at Tyre, he, the men, the women, and the children "kneeled down on the shore, and prayed" (Acts 21:5). Paul wrote to the Ephesian church, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:14). IT IS VERY LIKELY THAT OUR LORD'S EXAMPLE BECAME THE PATTERN FOR THE BELIEVERS IN THE EARLY CHURCH WHEN THEY PRAYED.

IT IS A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR US TO FOLLOW.

So we can say of our Lord,
1) He had a special practice: He prayed often.
2) He had a special place: the Garden of Gethsemane.
3) He had a special posture: He kneeled.
The same needs to be true of every one of us.

Matthew and Mark give us added light of interest concerning the posture of our Lord which show how overwhelmed our Lord was. Matthew says that our Lord "fell on his face" (Matt. 26:39), and Mark says that "he fell on the ground" (Mark 14:35). Both our Lord's posture, then His words, and finally the blood which oozed from the pores of His skin, show how intense His suffering was before He ever got to the Cross. What a scene it is that we have before us!

22:42 Here we have the Lord's prayer for Himself.

The Lord used two words here for "willing" and "will." The first is from βούλομαι; the second is from θέλω. Grammarians differ as to the difference between the two, but perhaps the way the Lord used them here is an indication of their meaning.

The second word, "Thy will," would be that which the Father had decreed from eternity past. The Son had been appointed to be the Redeemer. He would become a man, and suffer vicariously on the Cross particularly for those whom the Father has chosen to be saved. This is what the Lord Jesus had in mind when He said,

> For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will,
> but to do the will of him that sent me (John 6:38).

There He used θέλημα both times.

Our Lord did not mean by that that it was not His own will also, but it was the Father who ordained our salvation, and therefore it is the expression of His will.

But as the Lord drew near to the time when He would "be made sin for us," apparently in His flesh He was feeling the awful burden as never before--a crushing burden. And so using the other word He prayed, "Father, if thou be willing . . . ," meaning, If that which has been appointed for me could by a sovereign choice, overrule the way previously determined, then take this cup from me. WE MUST NOT TAKE FROM THIS THAT THE LORD JESUS WAS REBELLIOUS AGAINST THE FATHER, BUT WE NEED TO SEE HOW TERRIBLE THE REALITY OF THE CROSS WAS TO HIM AS THE HOUR DREW NEAR.

After all, who of us can possibly explain those words, "And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6)? What does it mean that He "was made sin for us" (2 Cor. 5:21)? What did He have to go through to be made "a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13)? Explain these words: "Christ also hath once (for all) suffered for sins." Who can possibly measure the sufferings of Christ?

Do you remember how the praying of the Lord Jesus as He approached the hour of His death has been expressed in the book of Hebrews? Listen to these words:

> Who is the days of his flesh,
> when he had offered up prayers and supplications
> with strong crying and tears
> unto him that was able to save him from death,

and was heard in that he feared;
Though he were a Son,
yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;
And being made perfect,
he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;
Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec
(Heb. 5:7-10).

And it was right at this point that the writer of Hebrews stopped to tell the Hebrew Christians to whom he was writing that he was having trouble teaching them because they were "dull of hearing" (v. 11).

OH, IF THERE IS ANY PLACE IN THE GOSPELS WHERE WE SEE EVIDENCE OF THE TRUE HUMANITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, IT IS HERE!

If you have ever doubted that we have a Great High Priest who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," I hope you will never doubt it again. Cf. Heb. 4:15.

22:43 The Lord could have called twelve legions of angels to deliver Him from that hour (cf. Matt. 26:53), but He didn't ask for that help. But the Father sent one angel to Him to strengthen Him. An amazing picture, isn't it? I can't explain it, but the sovereign, eternal Son of God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, was in trouble, and the Father sent Him help by an angel. No wonder that some men have trouble with this passage: a creature strengthening the Creator? Plummer said that the word, "appeared," means that the angel was visible to the human eye. See p. 509.

Do you remember that this had happened previously, after the Lord was tempted by the Devil? Cf. Matt. 4:11.

What did the angel do? How did he do it? I do not know. I only know he did it, and that the Lord needed it, whatever it was. Perhaps the next verse gives us some light as to how that strength was used.

22:44 It is very interesting that "Luke, the beloved physician," as Paul called him in Col. 4:14, is the only Gospel writer who mentioned these physical sufferings of Christ where He sweat great drops of blood.

There have been many attempts to explain this away. Normally reliable expositors have said that His sweat "looked like" blood, but that it was not actually blood. But there is in medical literature well documented evidence of a phenomenon called, Hematidrosis, or bloody sweat. As one doctor has explained it, "Under great emotional stress, tiny capillaries in the sweat glands can break, thus mixing blood with sweat." The result is great physical weakness and possibly shock--and you know how dangerous that can be.

The Lord was "in an agony," suggesting a violent struggle going on in the body and in the mind of our Saviour.

NO WORDS OF MINE CAN POSSIBLY DESCRIBE WHAT THE LORD WAS EXPERIENCING AT THIS TIME.

22:45 His prayers ended, the Lord went back to the disciples--and He found them sleeping. Luke showed His compassion for the disciples in such an hour when perhaps the reality of what the Lord had been telling them was beginning to get through to their hearts. And so Luke said that their sleep was brought on by prolonged and deep sorrow. He, the

physician, is the only Gospel writer who gave this explanation., Again we need to recognize that there was no sorrow like the Lord's sorrow.

22:46 This section ends with a word from the Lord that was both a rebuke and an encouragement. Again He called upon them to pray, and to pray for the same reason that He had given them at the first: "lest ye enter into temptation."

Ryle pointed out in his commentary on Luke that the Lord is gracious to give us such an account as we have here, thinking especially of the apostles. And his point was that, if they could fail, then so can we. If they needed to pray, then so do we. And it is even more important to see that, if the Lord needed to pray, so do we. A Christian who does not pray is an enigma. A person who never prays can hardly be a Christian. When we fail to pray, we show how little we know of ourselves, of the power of the Tempter, of the deceitfulness of sin. We display our ignorance, too, of the fact that the Lord is the only One Who can keep us from sinning. May our constant prayer be, "'Lord, teach us to pray,' and keep us faithful in prayer."

5/3/88

2. THE LORD'S BETRAYAL AND ARREST (Luke 22:47-54a).

There are a number of very important lessons in this section. The first has to do with Judas Iscariot.

22:47 Among men it would be hard to find one who would be superior to Judas in hypocrisy. There could hardly be a greater crime than what he did--showing affection for Christ, and yet doing so to give this pre-arranged sign to our Lord's enemies. Cf. Mark 14:44. And yet, as Bishop Ryle pointed out in his commentary on Luke, Judas was in a long line of traitors who, professing to love the Lord, have been guilty of some of the greatest crimes against the Lord. Cain was really the first. He brought his sacrifice to the Lord, but in his heart he was a murderer, and it did not take long to demonstrate that fact. Jezebel called for a fast, but her purpose was to put Naboth to death.

Matthew tells us this:

> And forthwith he (Judas) came to Jesus, and said,
> Hail, master; and kissed him (Matt. 26:49).

When the time came for the betrayal, there was no hesitation with Judas. He called the Lord, Rabbi, which was a title of honor for those who taught in the Jewish schools. It was like calling the Lord, doctor, or teacher, but Judas had never learned anything like this from the Lord!

Let us learn that an outward show of devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ may be a cover-up for a sinful heart. Not everybody who attends church regularly, and sings lustily (i.e., pretending to have great pleasure in it) and gives generously, and serves faithfully, is a Christian. There are even men in our pulpits who profess to be true servants of the Lord, but who would side with Judas if they had had the opportunity. Even those who do things like Judas did are deceived about themselves. We are reminded, in a situation like this, of our Lord's words in Matt. 7:21-23,

> 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.

And to add to his sin, notice that Judas did this while the Lord was still ministering to His disciples in the Garden.

Note also, as far as the Lord was concerned, that He made no attempt to escape from the hands of His enemies. According to His words in John 10:17, 18, no man was taking His life from Him; He was laying it down of Himself! He could have taken His disciples where Judas would not have been able to find Him, or the Lord and His disciples could have left before Judas got there, or He could have called "twelve legions of angels" as Matthew has recorded that He said to Peter when Peter cut off Malchus' ear (Matt. 26:52, 53). As Wilcock wrote (p. 193), "His enemies are carrying out their plans, but He is altogether in control."

22:48 Could it not have been the memory of this question that ultimately caused Judas to take his own life? Matthew has even recorded for us that the Lord called him, Friend--"Friend, wherefore art thou come?" (Matt. 26:50).

The Lord, of course, had not been deceived by Judas. But what He said to Judas was to make Him realize how terribly bad his crime was. It was as though the Lord had said, "Judas, is it possible that you who have been with me from the beginning, you who have seen so much, and heard so much, and done so much, could betray ME, 'the Son of man,' the Messiah, the God-Man, and do it in such a way--with a kiss?

The Greek is much more forceful than the English. The order of the words is like this: Is it with a kiss that the Son of man is the One you are betraying? It means, How could one like Judas betray One like Jesus into the hands of such as His enemies were, and so it in such a way--with a kiss?

Where could we ever find a greater example of the indescribable sinfulness and depravity of the human heart?

22:49 The other disciples were ready to fight to defend the Lord. Note that the motives were right, but their method was wrong. Perhaps they thought that this was the reason that the Lord had told them to buy swords. See v. 36.

22:50 The Apostle John has told us that this was "Simon Peter" (John 18:10, 11). We all need to learn the ways of the Lord. It is possible for us, in our zeal, to want to do the right thing, and yet do it in the wrong way.

22:51 The words of our Lord here are not easy to understand, and several good possibilities of translation have been suggested.

The verse itself would seem that the Lord was asking for permission to heal Malchus before He was bound and taken away by His enemies.

Or the Lord could have been telling His disciples to let His enemies have their way, and not to oppose them. This was the time when the Lord warned the disciples that those who take the sword will perish with the sword, and that He did not need their help because He could have called for

angelic help if He had wanted it. And besides, it was absolutely necessary that the Scriptures be fulfilled. Cf. Matt. 26:52-54.

The NASB translators have taken this as having been said to the disciples. They translate it, "'Stop! No more of this.'" The NIV is practically the same: "No more of this." The NKJV translates it according to the context: "Permit even this." That is, at least let me do this, i.e., heal Malchus.

What our Lord did here was consistent with His teaching in Matt. 7:43-48. Also cf. Rom. 12:19-21. And what an illustration of the grace of God! It portrays the very basis of our salvation. Malchus deserved to be struck down and cast forever from the presence of the Lord because of His part in the arrest of the Lord Jesus, but instead he experienced the grace of our Lord. May we never cease to marvel at God's wonderful grace.

Thinking of the disciples, note how quickly their fervor was turned to fear. It was only a very short time afterwards, a matter of hours, that this same Peter was vehemently denying that he even knew the Lord. As Ryle has pointed out, it is much easier to fight for Christ than to suffer for Him. It is much easier to serve the Lord than to endure hardness for Him.

22:52 Our Lord's final words in this section were directed toward His enemies.

His first words, for emphasis, were, "As against a thief . . . ?" It is almost humorous if it were not so tragic, that our Lord's enemies had gathered such a large force to take a Person like our Lord. But they were not at all sure that they would be able to accomplish their goal. Their timing could have been off, or the people could have heard about this and could have come to the aid of the Lord, or the Lord could have performed some miracle to escape, or at least to defeat them in some humiliating way. Plummer suggested these possibilities.

But, as usual, our Lord's question was designed to provoke His enemies to think!

22:53 This verse brings out two things:

1) The fact that the Jewish leaders had chosen this time to take the Lord because they were afraid of the people.
2) That all of these circumstances were under the control of a greater power than that of the Jewish leaders, or even the Roman leaders.

"This is your hour." It was their hour, but it was also His hour. It was their hour to do the evil work that they had long wanted to do. It was the Lord's hour to finish the work that the Lord had given Him to do. And the hours were set by God, not by man. Before the time came, the Lord's enemies were not able to do their work. And, as Ryle brought out, even when their time had come, they worked in chains. They could not start until He said, nor could they continue when their time was up. And all during their time it was He, not they, who was in control.

"Your hour, and the power of darkness." What an awful combination! This was the Lord's way of recognizing that there was an influence and a power behind what they were doing that was super-human. Satan had entered into Judas. He was the master-mind behind this plot. Of all of our Lord's enemies, Satan is the worst and the most powerful. And yet, even with

Satan, all that he did was within the limits of the sovereign purposes of God.

"The power of darkness" occurs also in Col. 1:13. There Paul wrote of the Father,

> Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness,
> and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.

Lit., it is the authority of darkness, a delegated authority, delegated by God!

Again we see the substitutionary character of our Lord's death. He was subjected to "the power of darkness" in order that we might be delivered from the same power. How thankful we should be, and how amazed and the love of God and the love of Christ! Who, in his right mind, could ever consider himself worthy of such love?

22:54a Here we see the Lord taken off for trial. And he was taken to the home of the one who should have loved Him the most, the one who should have desired above all others to serve and to glorify the Son of man. That one was Annas, as John 18:13 tells us. But soon afterwards He was taken to Caiaphas, the high priest. And in view of what was actually the case, we should never be surprised to find the Lord's greatest enemies among those whose position would indicate they would be the Lord's greatest friends.

NOW THE SCENE IS SET FOR ANOTHER GREAT TRAGEDY AS THE LORD'S PASSION BEGINS TO UNFOLD:

D. Peter's denial of the Lord (Luke 22:54b-62).

22:54b Matthew, Mark, and Luke all tell us that "Peter followed afar off." He undoubtedly had started to become fearful and apprehensive following the arrest of the Lord, and especially seeing that the Lord did nothing to resist His enemies. It is very likely that the Apostle John was with him at this time. See John 18:15. Many have commented on the fact that Peter followed "afar off," but we certainly need to recognize the fact that he was following the Lord! He had every intention of doing as he had said he would do, even if it meant prison and death. But we see the evidence of his weakness. The situation there must have been very, very tense. Peter had never been in a situation like this.

22:55 The word used here for kindling the fire indicates that it was a big fire, and thus it supplied light as well as heat. The night air was evidently cool, and many had gathered around waiting the outcome of the Lord's trial before Caiaphas.

Why Peter sat with them, we do not know. Was he trying to get lost in the crowd, or was it that he was cold and was seeking also to stay warm while he waited to see what would happen to the Lord? We cannot say for sure.

But this is where the unexpected began to happen.

22:56 The Apostle John wrote of this girl as "the damsel that kept the door" (John 18:17). The Jews evidently hired girls to act as attendants who were in charge of who was able to go in to the palace of the high priest.

She did not immediately recognize Peter, and perhaps sensed his uneasiness sitting among the others, and so she gazed intently at him to try to iden-

tify who he was. Finally she realized that he was one of the Lord's disciples., and so she said aloud to those who were around, "This man was also with him."

22:57 This evidently terrorized Peter, and so he quickly denied what she had said by responding with the words, "Woman, I know him not." It seems that this was a public denial to all who were present. Matt. 26:71 indicates that this was so.

22:58 Nobody else spoke for quite a while, and then another said, "Thou art also of them." And again Peter responded by saying, "Man, I am not."

22:59 Again there was a long period in which no one seemed to be paying attention to Peter--Luke says it was about an hour--and then a third one said, "Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilean." John recorded that this last one was "one of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off" (John 18:26).

Thus Luke reported that it was a woman and two men who said that Peter was one of the Lord's disciples. Matthew says it was two women, and then the third time a whole group said that Peter was one of them because his speech betrayed him. See Matt. 26:73. Mark agreed with Matthew.

The actual fact probably was that many were recognizing Peter. More and more he felt that he was on the spot, and could have gotten into trouble like the Lord was in, and so Matthew and Mark tell us that Peter began to curse and to swear, denying more strongly than ever that he even knew the Lord Jesus Christ. Luke did not mention Peter's cursing.

22:60 While Peter was making this third denial, the cock crew (still recognized as good English). Mark related that the cock crew two times (Mark 14:68, 72).

22:61 Peter is the only Gospel writer who recorded this incident. What the actual circumstances were here, we cannot say. The Lord was obviously standing where He could see Peter, perhaps at a window. Whether He had been able to hear Peter's denials, we cannot say, BUT HE KNEW! The Lord turned, and turned specifically for the purpose of looking upon Peter. A. B. Bruce in the Expos. Gk. Test. (I, 633) was right when he said that it was "that look, not the cock crowing, (which) recalled the prophetic word of Jesus, and brought about the penitent reaction."

The Greek does not say that "Peter remembered," but that Peter was reminded, and it was the Lord's look that reminded him.

CAN ANYONE DESCRIBE WHAT THAT LOOK WAS LIKE? It must have been worse than a thousand beatings. The Lord knew that it was going to happen, but His heart was deeply grieved when it did. And yet we must also say that it was a look of compassion. The Lord knew that Pete loved Him. And the Lord knew that Peter never thought that he would do such a thing. And yet the Lord also knew that, as sad a lesson as this was, it was something that Peter had to learn. His future usefulness depended upon it.

22:62 Mark just said that "he wept." John did not mention Peter's tears. But Matthew said the same thing that Luke said: "And Peter went out, and wept BITTERLY." He was cut to the heart. He had never before felt such inner pain, a pain for which there seemed to be no healing. Thayer (p. 509) uses the words, "poignant grief" (pronounced, poiyant)--a grief that

was stinging in its pain. Peter had to get away from the crowd so he could weep.

SPECIAL LESSONS FROM PETER'S DENIAL:

Obviously this account of Peter's denial is recorded to be of help to us. We could not even begin to estimate how many of the people of God have been spared from a similar fate by Peter's experience. What are the main lessons?

1) It would seem from the statement in Luke 22:61 that Peter was reminded of what the Lord had predicted in v. 34, that up to that moment it had been completely forgotten! The fact that he knew he was lying, did not stop him. The earlier crowing of the cock did not register with anything in his mind. IT WAS NOT UNTIL HE SAW THE LORD LOOKING ON HIM THAT HE REMEMBERED!

   What a picture this is of the blindness of our hearts! We are all guilty of sinning against the Lord, and yet not being bothered by it in the least at the time. How important it is for us to pray that we will remember what we need to remember. Could this not be one of the main reasons for the Lord's Supper: "This do in remembrance of Me"? How wonderful are those words of the Lord Jesus, spoken in the Upper Room,

   > But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit,
   > whom the Father will send in my name,
   > he shall teach you all things,
   > and bring all things to your remembrance,
   > whatsoever I have said unto you (John 14:26).

   Peter felt that he could be faithful to the Lord "on his own," and so the Lord left him to find out how blind and sinful he really was! But there was one glimmer of hope: the Lord prayed for Him! If the Lord had not prayed for him, there is no telling what would have happened.

   And so we see another lesson:

2) How foolish it is for us to be so proud and self-confident. We are so sure that we will not fail. The Lord remembers that we are just dust (Psa. 103:14), but we forget so easily. Let us remember that the safest ground to be on is the ground of humility.

3) Peter's experience teaches us what close attention we should give to the Word of God. Take every bit of it to heart. Note carefully its warnings, and rest on its promises. It is the very Word of God. And let us pray that our hearts will be open to the Holy Spirit in those times when He is reminding us of the very Scriptures that will guard us and keep us from sin.

4) Looking back to the time just preceding this, we can see that Peter had gotten careless about his praying. What a lesson this ought to be for us! We can so easily neglect our times with the Lord, and no one but the Lord and we know about it. But, if it continues, soon everyone will know. Be faithful in prayer.

Ryle has many helpful suggestions and lessons which he has drawn from Peter's tragic denial of the Lord. One that he made, although stated a little differently from the way I am going to give it to you is . . .

5) We need to be very careful when we are in the company of those who do

not know the Lord. They are not going to help us please the Lord. They are going to set every obstacle they can in the way. Peter had no idea of the dangers that were surrounding him at that very moment.

6) Never underestimate the power of our Enemy, the Devil. He knows how to set the right trap for us, and he will do any and every thing that he can to ruin us.

7) Peter's experience teaches us the bitterness of sin. You can see how, in Peter's case, one sin led to another--and the end of it all was the excruciating agony of soul which he expressed in his bitter tears. He boasted, he neglected prayer, associated with the enemies of the Lord, he lied, he cursed--AND THEN THE LORD LOOKED AT HIM AND HE WAS REMINDED OF WHAT THE LORD HAD SAID. HE LEARNED THAT THE LORD IS NEVER WRONG.

Finally,

8) How thankful we can be for the intercessory prayers of our Lord Jesus on our behalf! Cf. Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34. Peter sinned, but his faith did not fail--and the only reason that it did not fail was because of the Lord's prayers for him.

Judas betrayed the Lord, and when he realized what he had done, he went out and took his own life. Peter denied the Lord, but he went out and wept bitterly--AND THEN CAME BACK! Judas had no hope! Peter had Christ as his hope.

E. THE TRIALS, SUFFERINGS, AND DEATH OF THE LORD (Luke 22:63-23:49).

5/16/88

Following the arrest of the Lord Jesus, He was taken first to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest, and then He was taken to Caiaphas. See John 18:13, 24. Luke did not see fit to mention these appearances.

The first thing that Luke did mention was:

1. The Lord blasphemed by His captors (Luke 22:63-65).

To speak blasphemously, as our Lord's enemies did (see v. 65), means that they treated Him with contempt. They were scorning Him, despising Him. It would have been cruel treatment if our Lord had only been a mere man. But for Him to have been the Son of God makes this a crime of the highest and worst order! The Apostle Paul was probably guilty in the same way that these men were because he said, about his persecution of the Church, that he "did it ignorantly in unbelief" (1 Tim. 1:13b). But it was also in that same passage that he called himself the chief of sinners. See 1 Tim. 1:15.

The only way that men could possibly be forgiven of such sins as these men were guilty of, was on the basis of our Lord's words on the Cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). To be forgiven is to be released from the consequences of sin.

Again we have appalling evidence of the sinful hearts of men. When men are free to do what they want to do, they stoop to the lowest depths of wicked behavior. If any of the Lord's attackers were ever saved, how it

must have grieved his heart that he had, even in ignorance, dared to lift his own defiled hand against the spotless Son of God.

But another thing should attract our attention here.

We should not miss the way in which the Lord submitted Himself to all that His enemies wanted to do. He could have called twelve legions of angels, and there would have been nothing left of His enemies. He could have just spoken the word, and those men would have been ushered into eternal night. But He did neither. What evidence of the truth of Isaiah's prophecy:

> He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
> yet he opened not his mouth:
> he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter,
> and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb,
> so he openeth not his mouth (Isa. 53:7).

He had come to do the Father's will, and He would drink of the cup which the Father had given to Him.

But there is also a lesson in this for us. Peter brought it out in 1 Pet. 2:21-23:

> For even hereunto were ye called:
> because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example,
> that ye should follow his steps:
> Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:
> Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again;
> when he suffered, he threatened not;
> but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.

We have no greater example than our Lord in this, and we need to remember what He did, and, by His grace, follow Him.

Verse 54 tells us that they were questioning His wisdom. They were seeking a sign, but the Lord did not give it to them. The ways of the Lord are different from our ways. It would appear to us that that would have been a good time for Him to display His wisdom in the hope of convincing them that He was the Messiah. And the Lord was to have other challenges hurled at Him, such as we find in 23:35 and 37 and 39. But He did not respond to any of them. If men will not accept the word of the Lord, they will not believe even if one were to rise from the dead. So said our Lord in Luke 16:31.

We can learn a lot from the Passion of our Lord about the ways of the Lord.

But let us go on to . . .

2. The Lord before the Council (Luke 22:66-71).

This is the meeting of the Sanhedrin. According to their own rules, they could not conduct business during the night, and so they had to justify what had been done the night before when the Lord was arrested.

22:66 The Sanhedrin was made up of the three groups that are mentioned here: the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes.

22:67 Their question, "Art thou the Christ?", was not prompted by a desire to know, but in the hope of bringing a charge against Him. It would only have been blasphemy for our Lord to claim to be the Messiah IF HE WERE NOT THE MESSIAH! The Lord had given abundant evidence to them that He was the Messiah in all of the miracles that He had performed, as

well as in all of the teaching that He had done. But they had not accepted the evidence. John, the Apostle, has told us about the man born blind. He recognized that the Lord was certainly a prophet (John 9:17), and he went on to tell the Jews (meaning the Jewish leaders), "If this man were not of God, he could do nothing" (John 9:99--see vv. 30-33). Their response to him was, "Thou was altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?" And then John wrote, "And they cast him out."

And so the Lord rightly responded, "If I tell you, ye will not believe."

And he exposed them in another way, as we see in . . .

22:68 They would not listen if He told them, neither would they answer Him if He asked them questions. That was demonstrated by the account that we have in Luke 20:39-44.

And an earlier illustration of this was Luke 20:1-8.

Obviously they were not willing to accept the evidence, nor were they willing to discuss the evidence. So the Lord was exposing their hypocrisy. They were trying Him, but it was really they who were on trial.

22:69 What did the Lord mean by this?

He must have been referring to the same Psalm He had referred to when, with the scribes, He raised the question about the Messiah being David's Son and his Lord: Psalm 110. That Psalm begins,

> The LORD said unto my Lord,
> Sit thou at my right hand,
> until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

The members of the Sanhedrin knew that that was a Messiahic Psalm. The following statement was made by G. Campbell Morgan in his book on Luke, p. 256:

> No language could have been to those men a more definite and clear-cut and final claim to Messiahship than this. Thus He claimed Messiahship in terms of their own Scriptures, with a clarity that could leave no room for misunderstanding on the part of the men to whom He spoke. . . He claimed definitely and positively that He was the One referred to, Who should sit at the hand hand of the power of God.

22:70 From our Lord's response it was very natural for them to go on and ask, "Art thou then the Son of God?"

The Lord had not referred to Himself as "the Son of God," but as "the Son of man." The "then" is this verse shows that they were at least following the logical conclusion of what the Lord had been saying. He did not merely answer by saying, "I am," but He said, "Ye (lit.) are saying that I am." They recognized that He was, and yet envy had so filled their hearts that they were rejecting, were sinning against, the light that God had given to them.

But understanding even this would not save them. Many have recognized that Jesus Christ was the Son of God who will be in hell. The Apostle John, years later, gave the meaning of the miracles of Christ, and what was necessary in order to have eternal life. Cf. John 20:30, 31. Notice that we not only must believe that He is the Son of God, but we must trust Him to give us eternal life. Both of these things are necessary before a person is truly saved.

22:71 What words of self-condemnation these are: "We ourselves have heard"! For all eternity they will remember that they had not only heard about the Lord Jesus Christ, but they had heard directly from Him. They will never be able say that they did not have the opportunity to hear. But their hearing did them no good.

This brought the ecclesiastical trial to an end. And Matthew 26:66 and Mark 14:64 tell us that they all condemned him to death. Now it only remained for the Roman government to come to the same condlusion. But let us keep this in mind: This was the purpose of God being carried out. It is the Lord Who uses His own Word. He sends the light, and enable people to see.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Chapter 23

VI. THE FINAL EVENTS IN THE EARTHLY LIFE OF JESUS (Luke 22:1-24:53).

E. THE TRIALS, SUFFERINGS, AND DEATH OF THE LORD (Luke 22:63-23:49).

1. The Lord blasphemed by His captors (Luke 22:63-65).
2. The Lord before the Council (Luke 22:66-71).

3. The Lord before Pilate (Luke 23:1-7).

The Lord's trial before the Sanhedrin had come to an end, and they had accused Him of blasphemy because He claimed to be the Son of God. For this He was condemned by them. And so they led Him away to Pilate to get Him condemned there.

23:1 "The whole multitude of them" probably means the entire Sanhedrin. There is no indication that the people were involved in the proceedings at this point.

"Pilate" was the procurator of Judea. This means that he had been appointed by Tiberius Caesar as administrator over Judea, personally responsible to the Emperor. He had "civil, military, and criminal jurisdiction" (ISBE, IV, 2396). One major area of his work was that of finance. We also have this information from ISBE (Ibid.):

> As a rule a procurator must be of equestrian rank (skilled in riding horses <my comment>) and a man of certain military experience. Under his rule the Jews were allowed as much self-government as was consistent with the maintenance of imperial authority. The Sanhedrin was allowed to exercise judicial functions, but if they desired to inflict the penalty of death, the sentence had to be confirmed by the procurator.

Pilate was appointed as procurator in either 25 or 26 A.D., and served for ten years.

From what we learn in Scripture it seems that Pilate sought to be fair in trying the Lord, but he was weak in following his convictions, and those of his wife (see Matt. 27:19). He sought in every way possible to acquit the Lord of the charges that had been brought against Him. But, when it looked like the people would riot, he backed down, and delivered the Lord over to the soldiers for crucifixion. He hated the Jews and undoubtedly was humiliated in being forced to give in to them.

23:2 The Sanhedrin brought three charges against the Lord, and they are all mentioned in this verse:

1) He was charged with sedition. This meant that He had been trying to get the people to rise up against Roman rule. This was the very thing that Barabbas had been charged with, and found guilty. See Luke 23:18, 19.
2) He was charged with tax evasion, and for teaching the people not to pay taxes to Rome.
3) He was charged with seeking to set Himself up as a King in opposition to Tiberius.

For any one of these charges, the Lord could have been put to death. All three were the worst possible accusations that could have been brought against Him.

23:3 All four of the Gospel writers recorded this question, but only John tells us about the dialogue between Pilate and our Lord.

In the question, the pronoun "thou" is emphatic. Lit. put into English it would read like this: "You are the King of the Jews?" It is evident from Pilate's question that our Lord did not look like a king.

The conversations between the Jews and Pilate, and then between Pilate and the Lord are given in John 18:28-38. (Read.) This helps us to understand how Pilate could say, "I find no fault in this man" (v. 4). Pilate was convinced that the Lord was no threat to the Roman Empire.

From the words, "Thou sayest it," we see that the Lord did claim to be the Messiah, and, as in 22:70, the Son of God. But Pilate would not be concerned about this latter claim. But we can be sure that he would have been swift to act against the Lord if he felt that the Lord had been seeking to start an insurrection.

Note: In these days when revolts against the government have become very popular, even among some professing Christians, it is interested to see how the Lord was clear of any such charges.

22:4 "No fault" means that Pilate had judged that the Lord was not guilty of any criminal action.

22:5 Fearful of losing their case against the Lord, they strengthened the charge of conspiracy, and tried to show that it was more widespread than Pilate realized. They said that it had started in Galilee, and then to Jerusalem, and to the whole nation: "throughout all Jewry."

Galilee was known as the source of much trouble for the Empire. Luke 13:1 mentions "the Galileans, whose blood had mingled with their sacrifices." Evidently this has been to put down a revolt of some kind. And Luke, in Acts 5:37 mentioned a man by the name of "Judas of Galilee" who "rose up" (in rebellion) "in the days of the taxing," or the enrollment, "and drew away much people after him."

So it seems that, if there had been a major trouble-spot in Israel, it had been in Galilee.

22:6 The mention of Galilee did not change Pilate's mind, but he saw in this an opportunity to avoid being the one who would condemn the Lord to death. And so he made sure that the Lord was from Galilee. Most of our Lord's ministry had been in Galilee. That meant that the Lord was under Herod, and not Pilate.

22:7 Herod just "happened" to be in Jerusalem at this time, and so Pilate "sent him to Herod."

Lesson: The Lord was being made the victim of a smear campaign. But He had experienced this at the hands of the Jews many times before. They could bring no truthful charges against Him, and so they resorted to lies.

John 8 tells of one of those bitter battles that the Lord had had with the Jews, but they could not touch Him at that time "for his hour was not yet come" (John 8:20b). But as their denials of the truth and their false charges continued, the Lord finally told them this:

Ye are of your father the devil,
and the lusts of your father ye will do.
He was a murderer from the beginning,
and abode not in the truth,
because there is no truth in him.
When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own:
for he is a liar, the the father of it.
And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.
Which if you convinceth me of sin?
And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?
He that is of God heareth God's words:
ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God
(John 8:44-47).

From David's experiences we see many things which were typical and prophetic of what our Lord would experience. Cf. Psa. 35, especially vv. 1-16.

David also wrote in Psa. 27:12,

Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies:
for false witnesses are risen up against me,
and such as breathe out cruelty.

Thus, while these men who opposed the Lord were certainly responsible for their actions, yet we trace their words and deeds back to the father of liars. We see that when all other methods of stopping the work of the Lord fail, he resorts to lies! Joseph experienced this. Elijah experienced this (1 Kings 18:17). Jeremiah experienced this (Jer. 38:4).

This ought to be a warning to all of us to walk carefully and obediently that the Enemy may not have some cause to blaspheme God because of us. But let it also be a warning that, when the Enemy cannot find anything against us, he will speak evil of our good. We can only do what the Lord did in such cases, as mentioned by the Apostle Peter,

Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again;
when he suffered, he threatened not;
but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously
(1 Pet. 2:23).

And, as the following verse shows, this was a part of what it cost the Lord to provide salvation for us.

Who his own self bare out sins
in his own body on the tree,
that we, being dead to sins,
should live unto righteousness:
by whose stripes ye were healed (1 Pet. 2:24).

And so the Lord was sent to stand before Herod.

48. The Lord before Herod (Luke 23:8-11).

Luke is the only Gospel writer who mentioned our Lord's appearance before Herod. This was Herod Antipas who had beheaded John the Baptist. Cf. Luke 9:7-9. And later (Luke 13:31) the Pharisees told the Lord that Herod was going to kill Him. It was then that the Lord used a term which described the character of Herod. (The Lord never engaged in slander.) He said he was a "fox." This meant that he was crafty and cruel, and, in reality, a "cruel enemy of God's innocent servants" (Brown in JFB, V,

282). Remember all of this as you read Luke 23:8.

23:8 Herod was not a Jew, but he had become a convert to Judaism. And so it is not surprising that he wanted to see a sign. It sounds like Herod was really interested in the Lord, but the Lord knew his heart, that he was evil and not at all interested in the truth. The Lord never performed miracles just for the sake of winning some person. Many miracles had been performed, but Herod was like most people: he wanted to actually see something spectacular take place.

People have a real interest in the sensational and the spectacular. But the Lord never planned that that should be used to evangelize the world. We put on our great productions, and depend upon all kinds of activities to attract people to the Lord. However, the only way that people are saved is through the Word. They cannot be won in any other way. And so, although it may seem slow and ineffective at times, yet that is the instrument that the Lord has given us to win people to Christ.

23:9 Here we learn that not only did the Lord not perform any miracles before Herod, but He did not even answer his questions. What Herod asked, we do not know. Maybe the Jews brought before Herod the charge of blasphemy because, although an Idumean by birth, he was a circumcised Jew by religion. So they may have felt that he would have been sympathetic with them on that point.

But the Lord knew that Herod had rejected the truth before, and he would not be benefited by anything that the Lord would say now. After all, he had had the testimony of John the Baptist in addition to everything else, but he had stayed the same.

23:10 Again the Jews flew into action, and the word "vehemently" indicates that they "pulled out all of the stops" to get Herod to condemn the Lord.

23:11 Here we see the true Herod in action.

"Set him at nought" means that they despised Him, they treated Him with the utmost contempt. And then to show their contempt and scorn, they mockingly worshipped Him--and then sent Him back to Pilate.

David Brown (JFB, V, 464) wrote this:

> But a day is coming, O proud Herod, when He who now stand before thee, to outward appearance a helpless prisoner, shall from His great white throne "laugh at thy calamity, and mock when thy fear cometh"!

This Scripture is from Prov. 1:26. Read Prov. 1:2-33.

5. The Lord before Pilate the second time--at this time the Lord was sentenced to die (Luke 23:12-25).

23:12 What a dreadful and ominous thing to become friends when Christ is the enemy!

We have no right to expect anything but hatred from the world in the light of what the Lord said in John 15:18-25. If the world hated Him, it will hate us because we are His people.

23:13, 14 Pilate summoned the Sanhedrin, and announced to them that his decision had not changed. He was still convinced that the Lord had done nothing worthy of death. "I" and "before you" are emphatic

in the Greek text. This indicates not only that Pilate had examine all of the evidence thoroughly, but also that the Sanhedrin members knew that they had no case. They had observed Pilate's investigation.

23:15 Herod also had come to the same conclusion. This made his treatment of the Lord that much more despicable. Why mistreat Him as they did if He were not guilty?

23:16 Pilate was just as unreasonable. If He were not guilty, why "chastise" Him? This was the terrible scourging, and it was sometimes fatal. Plummer thought that the Jews realized that if Pilate would scourge Him, with a little more pressure He would condemn Him to death--and they were right!

23:17 This verse is not in some MSS, but we know it is a true verse because it is found in Matt. 27:15 and Mark 15:6. This was a concession made to the people of Israel at the time of the Passover.

23:18 Mark 15:11 tells us that "the chief priests move the people, that he (Pilate) should rather release Barabbas unto them." Matt. 27:17 tells us that Pilate gave them a choice of Barabbas or Christ.

23:19 Barabbas was a guilty criminal. He was guilty of both sedition and murder.

23:20, 21 Pilate kept trying to release the Lord Jesus, but the people continued to insist that He be crucified.

23:22 For the third time he tried to free the Lord, declaring again His innocence, but also expressing his willingness to scourge the Lord.

23:23 THIS VERSE MARKED THE TURNING POINT. "Instant" means insistent. It became very clear to Pilate at this time that the Jews were not going to take "no" for an answer. And they, lit., began to prevail.

23:24 And so Pilate decided to follow the will of the people.

23:25 He released Barabbas the criminal and condemned Jesus, the sinless Son of God!

Lessons:

1) Notice the growing evidence of the Lord's innocence.
   a) Judas told the Sanhedrin, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood" (Matt. 27:4).
   b) The Jews were unsuccessful in bringing any true charge against the Lord. The best they could do was to bring false witnesses.
   c) Three times (v. 22) Pilate had declared that he found no fault in Him.
   d) Herod agreed with Pilate about the innocence of the Lord.
   e) Pilate's wife even told him, "Have thou nothing to do with this just man . . ." (Matt. 27:19).

   This certainly confirms the testimony of Scripture:
   a) Peter said that He "did no sin" (1 Pet. 2:22).
   b) Paul said that He "knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21).
   c) The writer of Hebrews said that He was "without sin" (Heb. 4:15).
   d) The Apostle John said that "in him is no sin" (1 John 3:5).

e) The Lord Jesus Himself challenged the Jews with the question, "Which of you convinceth (convicteth) me of sin?" (John 8:46).

We will have more evidence before we are finished, but for now remember what the centurion said, and what the thief on the Cross said. The evidence is overwhelming, even from the enemies of the Lord that He was <u>not guilty!</u>

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR US TO KNOW THIS BECAUSE, IF THE LORD WERE NOT ABSOLUTELY PERFECT, THE SON OF GOD IN THE FLESH, HE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN OUR REDEEMER!

2) Notice the corruption of the religious leaders of the Jews:
   a) They were liars.
   b) They were plotting murder.
   c) They sanctioned one who was a seditionist and a murderer. Peter said in Acts 3:14,
      But ye denied the Holy One and the Just,
      and desired a murderer to be granted unto you.
   d) They refused to accept the evidence that Jesus was innocent.

3) We continue to see in the trials of our Lord, His willingness to do the will of His Father. He was voluntarily laying down His life.

4) There is a beautiful picture of the Gospel in these events: Christ took the place that Barabbas deserved to have, and Barabbas went free! Before we get too indignant about Barabbas, let us remember that a much more amazing thing was done when the Lord Jesus took our place that we might have His, and be set free from our sins forever! Christ was Barabbas' substitute, and He became yours and mine, too.

6. <u>The procession to Calvary</u> (Luke 23:26-32).

9/19/88 -- First Class in the Fall of '88.

We are in the sixth and last section of Luke's Gospel: THE FINAL EVENTS IN THE EARTHLY LIFE OF JESUS (Luke 22-24)--the final three chapters.

We have seen several things thus far:
1) The CONSPIRACY that was formed against the Lord by the chief priests, the scribes, and by Judas, one of the Lord's disciples. Cf. Luke 22:1-6.
2) The LAST PASSOVER and the FIRST LORD'S SUPPER. These two events with some of the things that happened immediately after are recorded in Luke 22:7-38.
3) The LORD'S PRAYER in the GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE, followed by His BETRAYAL AND ARREST. See Luke 22;39-54a.
4) PETER'S DENIAL of the Lord in Luke 22;54b-62.
5) Chapter 22 concludes with the Lord blasphemed by His captors, and then taken before the Council. Cf. Luke 22;63-71. This marked the beginning of the Lord's TRIALS, SUFFERINGS, AND DEATH BY CRUCIFIXION.

In chapter 23 we covered the first 25 verses. This included three trials:
1) The Lord before Pilate (vv. 1-7).
2) The Lord before Herod (vv. 8-12).
3) The Lord before Pilate for the second time (vv. 13-25).

Although Pilate wanted to release the Lord because he found no reason why he should condemn Him, the Jews were so insistent that He be crucified

that Pilate gave in to the pressure and condemned the Lord to be crucified.

And so now we are ready for the procession to Calvary, followed by the CRUCIFIXION of our Lord. Please turn to Luke 23:26, and we will read down through the end of the chapter. (Read.)

The Lord, of course, is the central figure in all of these verses, but there are five other individuals mentioned by Luke:
1) Simon, the Cyrenian, who was forced to carry the Lord's cross.
2) The two malefactors.
3) The centurion.
4) Joseph of Arimathaea.

Also note that we have four times that the Lord spoke which were recorded by Luke:
1) That which He said especially to the women in vv. 28-31.
2) Three of His seven sayings from the Cross:
   a) "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (v. 34).
   b) That which He said to the repentant malefactor: "Verily, I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (v. 43).
   c) "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (v. 46).

And so we have some very important events, and truths connected with those events, as we come to the final hours of our Lord's life before He died on the Cross.

And now we are ready to consider "The procession to Calvary" (Luke 23:26-32).

23:26 John recorded that the Lord bore His own Cross. Cf. John 19:17. He did not mention Simon of Cyrene, a city of Libya, where a large colony of Jews had settled (cf. Edersheim, II, p. 587). Evidently on the way to Golgotha, the Lord, wearied by the scourging He had received, became very faint and was unable to continue. And so, as Matthew said, they "compelled" Simon to bear His Cross. John did not mention Simon, but all three of the other Gospel writers did mention him.

It seems that we can assume that Simon was not a believer in Christ at that time, but Mark's mention of his two sons, Alexander and Rufus (see Mark 15:21), seems to indicate that he may have become a believer after this terrible experience in his life. It seems that we can rightly assume that Alexander and Rufus were well-known to the original readers of Mark's Gospel, and that they were believers. Thus, this seems to be Mark's way of telling how they came under the influence of the Gospel through their father. There is an Alexander mentioned in Acts 19:33, and a Rufus mentioned in Rom. 16:13. These may be (we cannot say for sure) the sons of Simon the Cyrenian. If they were, then Paul was acquainted with the wife of Simon, the Cyrenian. If these things are true, they are illustrations of the amazing ways of the Lord. Those wicked Jews had no idea that, in their hatred of the Lord, they were being used by the Lord to bring one of God's chosen ones to the Saviour.

23:27 Luke alone mentioned the women.

Bishop Ryle quoted a man by the name of Burgon who had this to say about women during the lifetime of our Lord Jesus Christ:

> That no woman is mentioned as speaking against our Lord in His life, or having a share in His death. On the contrary, He was anointed by

a woman for His burial,--women were the last at His grave and the first at His resurrection,--to a woman He first appeared when He rose again,--women minister to His wants,--women bewailed and lamented Him,--a heathen woman interceded for His life with her husband, Pilate,--and, above all, of a woman He was born (Luke, II, p. 465).

Luke may have mentioned this because it was certainly contrary to custom, and probably also to the law of the day, for women to make such demonstrations in public. But, as Bruce remarked in the EGT, I, p. 638, "Great grief heeds not rules."

23:28 This, and the following three verses, give us the Lord's message to the women who were grieving over Him.

"For me" and "for yourselves" and "for your children" are emphatic in the Greek. The Lord was not being unkind, but He as a Prophet from God was sounding a warning. Men were doing their own will (see v. 25), but their judgment was certain (even in this life).

23:29 Perhaps the greatest joy that a woman has is that of bearing children. It is so great, in fact, that it makes her forget the burden and the pain once the child is born. But the trials ahead for the city of Jerusalem would make people say that it would have been better is no children had ever been born than for them to have to go through such terrible judgments as were ahead for that city.

23:30 This may have been partially fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., but our Lord's words in Matt. 24:19, similar to these, make us know that this will also be true in the Tribulation period.

When such conditions prevail as were coming, death will be preferred to life.

This does not seem to be parallel with Rev. 6:16 because there we have men seeking to hide from the Lord. Here it is to escape the awful judgments that will come on the earth.

23:31 The Lord stated this as a proverb.

He obviously was the "green tree." They, and all people, even the greatest of saints, are but dry trees in comparison with Him. He is the living One, strong and fruitful, ministering for the benefit of others. If the world will do what they were doing to the Lord Jesus Christ, then dry trees can expect the same and worse (if such be possible).

The sufferings and death of Christ were the greatest portrayal ever made of the hearts of men. They hate righteousness. They have no place for God in their lives. They delight in doing their own will. They are "dead in trespasses and in sins" (Eph. 2:1). Men never prefer that which is holy and right in God's sight. We can learn a great deal by meditating on the death of Christ.

In the words of this verse, was the Lord not saying what He had told His disciples on the way from the Upper Room to Gethsemane?
If the world hate you,
you know that it hated me before it hated you.
If ye were of the world, the world would love its own:
but because ye are not of the world,

> but I have chosen you out of the world,
> therefore the world hateth you (John 15:18, 19).

(Read on down through v. 25.)

Keep in mind that the Lord was ministering to those women in His weakened condition, bleeding from the scourges He had received from the Romans. And Luke is the only one of the Gospel writers to record these words of our Lord spoken on the way to Calvary.

23:32 Luke introduces what he would tell about the two men who were crucified when the Lord was crucified.

A "malefactor" is an evildoer, and the word usually indicated that this was the prominent characteristic of one who is so described. Matthew said that they were "thieves" (see Matt. 27:38). Mark said the same. So our Lord not only died "for the unjust" (1 Pet. 3:18), but with the unjust. As Isaiah wrote, "He was numbered with the transgressors" (Isa. 53:12), as Mark recognized in Mark 15:28.

The Lord was humbled by coming to the earth as a man. He was humbled when men saw no more than humanity in Him. He was humbled by the constant rejection which He received. He was humbled by the accusations that were charged against Him. He was humbled by being crucified with real criminals. He was humbled by death, and even more so because that death was by crucifixion. Oh, what devotion to the Father and the Father's will. And, oh, what love He manifested for you and for me by the humbling and humiliation which He suffered!

E. THE TRIALS, SUFFERINGS, AND DEATH OF THE LORD (Luke 22:63-23:49).

7. THE LORD'S CRUCIFIXION (Luke 23:33-49).

At this point in Luke's Gospel we come to the focal point of all of Scripture. Everything in the OT looked ahead to this. This was the reason for the incarnation of Christ. The death of Christ was the theme of all Apostolic preaching. It is the theme of the epistles of the NT. Even in the book of the Revelation we are constantly reminded of Christ's death. Without the death of Christ there would be no Gospel, no salvation, no forgiveness of sins, no eternal life for any man, no hope beyond the grave, no Bible, no Church, no reason to seek God to worship Him and to serve Him. Paul would have had nothing to preach because he told the Corinthians,

> For I determined not to know anything among you
> save Jesus Christ, and him crucified (1 Cor. 2:1).

He told the Galatian churches,

> But God forbid that I should glory,
> save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
> by whom the world is crucified unto me,
> and I unto the world (Gal. 6:14).

Nowhere do we have the heart of God more clearly revealed than in the death of Christ on the Cross. And nowhere do we see the nature of man, and the need of man, more clearly portrayed than in the crucifixion of Christ. Here is God's greatest glory; here is man's greatest shame. And yet here is man's only hope. Jesus Christ had to come, and He had to die, because there was no other way that the righteousness of God could be satisfied. God, by the death of His Son, has put away the sins of all for whom our dear Lord died. God forbid that you and I would ever get over the amazing grace of God. We did not deserve any part of what our

THE SEVEN SAYINGS OF CHRIST FROM THE CROSS

I. "Then said Jesus, FATHER, FORGIVE THEM; FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots" (Luke 23:34).

II. "And Jesus said unto him, VERILY I SAY UNTO THEE, TO DAY SHALT THOU BE WITH ME IN PARADISE" (Luke 23:43).

III. "When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, "WOMAN, BEHOLD THY SON! Then saith he to the disciple, BEHOLD THY MOTHER! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home" (John 19:26, 27).

IV. "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI? that is to say, MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?" (Matt. 27:46).

"And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABACHTHANI? which is, being interpreted, MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?" (Mark 15:34).

V. "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I THIRST" (John 19:28).

VI. "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, IT IS FINISHED: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost" (Greek: the spirit) (John 19:30).

VII. "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" (Greek: He expired) (Luke 23:46).

Matthew and Mark each recorded only one saying--the same one: #4.
Luke recorded three sayings: #1, #2, and #7.
John recorded three sayings: #3, #5, and #6.

A. T. Robertson, in his book, A Harmony of the Gospels, pointed out the division that is apparent in the sayings (cf. pp. 228, 232):

1) His first three sayings were for others:
   #1, for the soldiers and the crowd.
   #2, for the repentant thief.
   #3, for His mother and the Apostle John.
2) His last four sayings were for Himself.

Dr. Robertson also gave the seven sayings the following titles:
#1, The Prayer for Christ's Enemies.
#2, The Promise to the Repentant Robber.
#3, The Charge to the Mother of Jesus and to the Beloved Disciple.
#4, The Cry of Desolation.
#5, The Cry of Physical Anguish.
#6, The Cry of Victory.
#7, The Cry of Resignation.

Lord did. We should have been banished forever from the presence of God. Instead, we have been made heirs of eternal life, made members of God's family, and promised that we will not only be with the Lord some day, but we will be like Him, "for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

Let us consider this most important of all events which have ever taken place.

23:33 The nails were driven. The Cross was erected. The deed was done.

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But the will of God had been done. The Lord came to drink from the cup that the Father had given Him. Let us never lose sight of the sovereign, overruling hand of God in all of the circumstances connected with our Lord's death. We will even see as we go on to vv. 39-43 that the providence of God was to be seen in the fact that the Lord was crucified with those two thieves.

Mark mentioned that it was the third hour of the day when the Lord was crucified. Cf. Mark 15:25. It got dark at the sixth hour, and He died about the ninth hour. Cf. Luke 23:44. So the Lord was crucified about 9 a.m., and died around 3 p.m.

Our Lord was here engaged in His priestly ministry. He did not come with the blood of bulls and goats and sheep, but by His own blood. He did not offer a sacrifice for His own sins because He had none. Instead, it is as the Apostle Peter wrote in 1 Pet. 2:24:

> Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree,
> that we, being dead to sins, should life unto righteousness:
> by whose stripes ye were healed.

Also the Apostle Paul wrote,

> For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin;
> that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21).

Let me read also from Isaiah's prophecy, chapter 53. And note how the theme of substitution runs throughout that chapter. That gives such a clear exposition of the work of Christ on the Cross that you would think that it could only have been written after the Lord died. But it was written over 700 years before the death of the Lord.

But let us go on to consider what was happening as the Lord died.

23:34 Luke recorded for us three of the seven sayings spoken by our Lord on the Cross. They are found in vv. 34, 43, and 46--as most people arrange them, #1, #2, and #7. It would be very profitable for us to stop our study of only Luke at this point, and consider all seven sayings of the Lord from the Cross. But we are studying Luke, and so I am going to limit myself to these three. The sheet that I have given you gives all seven of the sayings so you can see the place that the three that Luke has given us have in relation to the others.

Why did Luke choose these three?

I do not know if anyone can give all of the reasons; we can only assume that we know. Most of the commentaries I have consulted do not even attempt an answer to this question. In fact, most of them ignore it altogether. But it seems clear that the three which Luke recorded would fit in with the general purpose of his Gospel more than the other four.

One thing we can say is that they all show the sovereignty of the Lord, and, as such are expressions of His Deity:
1) With respect to forgiveness.
2) With regard to heaven.
3) With reference to His death. Cf. John 10:17, 18.
We must remember that Luke was writing particularly for Theophilus, and he was writing to strengthen Theophilus' faith--"that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed" (Luke 1:4). Nothing could be stronger evidence that our Lord was truly the Son of God than the truths expressed in the sayings which Luke recorded.

Michael Wilcock, in his book, The Message of Luke, pointed out two things:
1) Luke has shown that he attached great importance to the words which were actually spoken by the Lord. And so it is not surprising that he would be one of the two who gave three sayings as opposed to one.
2) Luke placed a special emphasis on the Gospel and its application to people throughout his Gospel, and these quotations have a great deal to do with the Gospel. The only other one that might qualify would have been, "It is finished." But it is so closely related to the third quotation that Luke gave, and probably was spoken about the same time, and so Luke chose the last saying.

These are only suggestions, although they do seem to be worth considering. However, the main reason that Luke chose the three that he did was because the Holy Spirit directed him to do so.

But what does the first saying teach us?

It should be mentioned that this saying is not found in some of the early MSS, but Hendriksen pointed out in his commentary that there is, nevertheless, strong textual evidence that it belongs here. It certainly is consistent with what you would expect from the Lord at such a time, and personally believe that they were spoken by the Lord. And so we will deal with them.

The word, "Then," at the beginning of verse 34 seems to indicate that the Lord spoke these words soon after He was nailed to Cross and just after it was erected above the ground. Bishop Ryle commented in his commentary (II, p. 467),

> It is worthy of remark that as soon as the blood of the Great Sacrifice began to flow the Great High Priest began to intercede.

These are words which we would expect from our Lord--no bitterness or resentment against His enemies, no calling upon God to deliver Him, but the greatest expression of grace and compassion.

Was the Lord asking the Father to save all of the people who were there? Many questions are raised if we take it to mean that.

No, it seems that we come to the meaning if we apply here the basic idea in the word, "Forgive." Forgiveness is a release. One who is forgiven is no longer under the penalty of his sin. And it seems that this is what the Lord had in mind. If the sin of crucifying the Son of God were charged against any man's account, there surely would be no hope that he could ever be saved. That would go not only for those who actually nailed our Lord to the Cross, but for those who pursued Him until Pilate delivered Him up to be crucified, and also for the people in that great mob around the Cross who took such a sadistic delight in seeing the Lord die. I take it that the Lord was not asking for some special

dispensation for those people so that they could be saved apart from faith in Christ, but that this greatest of all charges would not be registered against them in the courts of heaven. The Lord said, "Father, release them, for they know not what they do."

It is very likely that many who were in that mob on that day when the Lord was crucified, were saved on the Day of Pentecost, or on one of the days following when there was such a large harvest of people turning to the Lord.

Stephen's prayer, when he was being stoned, reflected the same attitude that our Lord showed on the Cross. In fact, Stephen prayed two prayers that were very similar to our Lord's prayers on the Cross:
1) "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 8:59).
2) "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 8:60).

Godet said (II, p. 333),

> The wrath of God might have been discharged upon them at the very moment.

But instead, the city of Jerusalem was given 40 more years before it was destroyed by the Romans, years in which these people had the opportunity to hear the Gospel as it was preached by the apostles.

The words, "For they know not what they do," were confirmed later by the Apostle Paul when he wrote to the Corinthians as he did in 1 Cor. 2:7, 8:

> But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery,
> even the hidden wisdom,
> which God ordained before the world unto our glory:
> Which none of the princes of this world knew:
> for had they known it,
> they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Peter confirmed that he was speaking to some of the very people who were there at the Cross when He died when he said these words recorded in Acts 3:17:

> And now, brethren, I wot (know) that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.

And he had just charged them with killing the Prince of Life.

The Cross shows us the depravity of man. The Cross also shows the spiritual blindness and ignorance of man where the things of God are concerned.

What words of grace these are, and at the same time the soldiers were gambling over who would get the Lord's garments.

<u>23:35</u> Here we see the blasphemy of the people. Ignorance does not change what they were doing and saying, nor does it excuse them. They had had the light. They said, "He saved others." But our Lord's miracles meant nothing to them. They were presuming to make the Lord prove Himself to them, mere creatures of the dust that they were.

"Derided" means that they were laughing at the Lord, scorning Him--lit., turning their noses up in contempt at Him. At last the rulers of the Jews were getting what they had wanted for such a long time. Luke is the only one in the NT who used this word. We have it one other time in Luke 16:14 where the Pharisees "derided" the Lord because He had told them, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

23:36, 37 The soldiers kept it up with mockery. This is another form of scorning, but it suggests that they were laughing and mimicking the Lord, acting like they were kings.

Ryle wrote (II, pp. 468, 469),

> The difference between the mockery of the Jewish rulers and of the soldiers ought to be noticed. The Jews mocked our Lord as a helpless "Christ," or Messiah unable to save Himself, and therefore unfit to be the Saviour of Israel.--The ignorant Gentile soldiers, on the contrary, mocked Him as a helpless "King of the Jews," without a crown, a kingdom, or an army, and therefore only fit to be ridiculed.--The Jew scoffed at His claim to be called the Messiah: the Gentile scoffed at His claim to be regarded as a King. The cross and the apparent weakness were, as usual, the stumbling-stone in both cases.

Cf. 1 Cor. 1:21-31. (Read.)

23:38 Providentially the charge attached to the Cross over our Lord told the truth. John recorded that the chief priests wanted Pilate to change the superscription to add the words that He said that He was the King of the Jews. But Pilate refused, saying, "What I have written I have written" (John 19:22).

The differences between the Gospel writers as to what the superscription said may be explained by the fact that it was written in three languages, and Matthew may have used the Hebrew for the Jews, Mark the Latin for the Romans, and Luke the Greek for the Gentiles throughout the world, or those Jews who only spoke the Greek language. The three languages testified to the fact that our Lord is the only Saviour for all men, whoever they are, wherever they may live, and whatever language they may speak.

23:39 At this point we come to Luke's account concerning the two malefactors. This section goes down through verse 43 and the second word of Christ from the Cross.

The one malefactor took up the railing of the Jews in verse 35, ridiculing the Lord's claim to be the Messiah.

But a different message came from the other malefactor.

23:40, 41 At first both of the malefactors were ridiculing the Lord. Cf. Matt. 27:44 and Mark 15:32. But then one of them changed. Why? Here is an excellent example of the distinguishing grace of God. The Holy Spirit was working in the heart of one of these men; He was not working in the heart of the other. Suddenly the one began to fear God. He knew that the two of them were getting exactly what they deserved, but he also knew that the Lord had done nothing deserving of death. Perhaps the very composure of the Lord had impressed him. There on the Cross he became convinced that Jesus was their King and their Messiah.

And so he cried out to the Lord in the words of the following verse.

23:42 Notice the faith expressed in his words. He addressed the Lord as "Lord," and the words which he had just spoken indicate that he was acknowledging the Deity of the Lord. Some MSS indicate that he said, "Jesus." But this would give further evidence that he believed that the Lord was indeed the Saviour. That is the meaning of the name, Jesus. Cf. Matt. 1:21.

In all of the commotion of that hour, the Spirit of God was at work, and a sinner was passing from death to life. The Lord had taught, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). This ought to encourage us to realize that in the last hours, even minutes, of life a person can be saved.

And so we come to the Lord's second word from the Cross.

23:43 This was the Lord's firm promise to him. (Read.) What the penitent thief might be some time off in the future, the Lord said would take place that very day! The Lord got there before he did, and so was waiting to welcome him into heaven. Cf. about the breaking of the bones in John 19:31-34.

The Lord had prayed to the Father; now the thief prayed to the Lord.

"Remember me." In this connection there is a very wonderful passage in the prophecy of Isaiah, chapter 49, verses 13-17.

The Lord said in John 17:12, "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost."

We learn some wonderful lessons from this statement:
1) Salvation does not take a lot of time.
2) Salvation is eternal.
3) Salvation is by grace. We may deserve to die, but we receive eternal life.
4) Salvation is through Christ.
5) Salvation is by faith.
6) Death for one who is saved means being immediately in heaven with the Lord.
7) Assurance is through the Lord's promise. The fact that there was no further conversation between the thief and the Lord indicates that the thief was at peace.

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23:44 At this point Luke turned from what he had been saying about the repentant thief and spoke of two miraculous things which took place in connection with the death of the Lord:
1) The three hours of darkness during which time the sun was darkened. This takes us into the first part of v. 45.
2) The rending of the veil in the temple. Cf. v. 45b.

In a very real sense these two events give two widely separated and distinct messages.

The darkness should remind us of the plague of darkness which fell over the land of Egypt in the days of Moses: the ninth plague. Thus it is a picture of judgment. There are at least three ways in which this darkness could have been, and probably was, a message to the people of that generation, and to all the following generations down to the present day:
1) In Luke 22:53 we have the record of what the Lord said to the chief priests, the captains of the temple, and the elders when they came to arrest Him in the Garden of Gethsemane. He said, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." The Lord, of course, was talking about the authority of spiritual darkness, that those religious leaders of the Jews were actually servants of the Devil and the demons of hell

in all that they were doing to destroy the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as men could not see how God was dealing with His Son, neither could men see the unseen spiritual forces of hell that were at work that day as never before. The Devil was behind it all!

2) God was expressing His great displeasure with what was happening to His Son. I read many years ago that one man said that all creation seemed to be revolting at the treatment being given to the Creator while He was on earth. It was the will of God that the Lord should die, but everyone, whether men or demons, who had a part in crucifying the Lord Jesus Christ would be faced with the awfulness of divine judgment.

But was there not also a third message?

3) Can we not see in that darkness the fact that God was dealing in judgment with His Son, not for the Son's wrongdoing, but because His death was a substitutionary death for all of the people of God? I believe we can.

But what about the last part of v. 45?

23:45 "And the veil of the temple was rent in the midst."

Both Matthew (27:51) and Mark (15:38) mention the rending of the veil, but they add the words "from the top to the bottom." And they both said that it happened just after the Lord died. This, too, has great significance.

It was not only unusual for that veil to be torn, but it was amazing that it was torn from the top to the bottom. It is not being farfetched to say that the Lord reached down and tore it apart. But why? Here is a very precious truth. Let me point out several truths connected with this event.

1) Again, it was apparent that God was speaking.
2) The veil hung between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The Law restricted anyone from going into the Holy of Holies except the high priest, and he could only go in once a year on the Day of Atonement. The death of Christ put an end to that. The Jews were no longer under the Law. The way into the Holiest of all was opened by the death of Christ. Now it is our privilege to come to God by this "new and living way."

The only place the veil is mentioned in the NT after we leave Matthew, Mark, and Luke is the book of Hebrews. Cf. Heb. 6:19; 9:3; 10:20. The way into the presence of God was opened up through the death of the incarnate Christ. The Levitical priesthood came to an end. The sacrifices were no longer required. All of the animal sacrifices anticipated the coming of the Saviour, and pictured His death. With the Antitype, we no longer need the types. Tremendous issues were involved here, and it would be a grave mistake for us to pass over this event and the message it conveyed without spending time on truth it portrayed.

At this point we have the last words spoken by our Lord which are recorded by Luke--and these undoubtedly were His last words.

23:46 Surely these are the words of the Son of God. The Lord did not die as we die. We have to die when our time comes. The Lord died voluntarily. His work was finished, and He placed His spirit in the Father's hands.

These words are written by David in Psalm 31:5a:

Into thine hand I commit my spirit:
thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.

David obviously must have spoken prophetically, and our Lord's use of David's words surely establish their authority as the Word of God. And Matthew Henry made the observation from these words of our Lord that the Lord was here teaching us to have the Word of God in our hearts and on our lips. Even in death itself, nothing can give greater peace than the precious Word of God. "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Psa. 119:165), that is, cause them to stumble, not even death itself!

And while we see the Deity of our Lord in this final prayer from the Cross, we also see His Humanity. The Lord Jesus was committing His spirit to the Father, showing His absolute trust in the Father. His work was finished. He had done His Father's will. And so without bitterness toward men, He looked forward to being with His Father. And this is a lesson for us, too.

John Newton wrote those wonderful words which ought to be the prayer of everyone of us. He expressed it this way:

Show me what I have to do,
Ev'ry hour my strength renew:
Let me live a life of faith,
Let me die thy people's death.

23:47 If we were reading the words of this verse for the first time, we would surely do it with amazement. Can it be that this man would do what he did, and say what he said?

Matthew and Mark give us the same account, but Matthew (27:54) recorded it, "Truly this was the Son of God," or, more literally, a son of God. Mark (15:39) said the same as Matthew. It is very likely that the centurion spoke of our Lord more than once, and that he made both of these statements.

Do you know what a centurion is? He is the commander of 100 men. It seems that this must have been the leader of the men who were charged with crucifying the Lord and the two thieves. How amazing that he, of all people, would say such a thing about the Lord! But here, again, we have evidence of the sovereignty of God. We probably are going to see this man in heaven. God's hand was in the circumstances because it was there, as he was taking part in killing our Lord, that the Lord was the Person that He claimed to be, and that He should not have been put to death!

Have you ever gathered the statements that were made about our Lord at this time in His life of earth?

1) Judas said, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood" (Matt. 27:4).
2) Pilate's wife said,
   Have nothing to do with that just man:
   for I have suffered many things this day
   in a dream because of him (Matt. 27:19).
3) Pilate himself said when the people cried out for the Lord to be crucified,
   Why, what evil hath he done?
   I have found no cause of death in him . . .
4) One thief on the Cross said to the other thief,
   . . . we receive the due reward of our deeds:

but this man hath done nothing amiss (Luke 23:41).

5) Immediately after Pilate had given his opinion he told the chief priests and rulers and the people what Herod's verdict had been:

> No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him;
> and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him
> (or, by him) (Luke 23:42).

6) Added to all of this we have the statement of this centurion in Luke 23:47, "Certainly this was a righteous man."

7) Finally, notice in Luke 23:48 what "all the people did" as they watched the Lord dying on the Cross:

> And all the people that came together to that sight,
> beholding the things which were done,
> smote their breasts, and returned.

This was a sign of repentance, as we will see in a moment. How many of them truly repented and were saved, we do not know, but at least we see that the prevailing idea among the people was that a terrible mistake had been made in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The best that the enemies of the Lord could do was to bring false witnesses against Him. The evidence is overwhelming that, when people considered the Lord honestly and in the light of all of the evidence, He did not deserve to die!

23:48 This is perhaps as startling as anything that Luke recorded about the attitude of people toward the Lord in His last hours: the fact that many of the Jewish people who were witnessing our Lord's death began to feel the same way that the centurion felt. We learned from the story of the rich man and Lazarus that smiting the breast was one way that people in those days repented of their sins and sought the mercy of God. Cf. Luke 23:13. Can we take it as meaning anything else here? With some it may not have gone farther than the outward appearance of repentance, but it seems likely that many were really seeking the Lord's mercy and forgiveness.

And so again we see evidence of the working of a sovereign God bringing people to Himself right in the shadow of the Cross, so to speak.

23:49 Luke alone recorded this. By "all his acquaintance" Luke probably was including the apostles as well as the faithful women who had ministered to the Lord during His ministry. They were standing "afar off," but they were there! They were a fearful group, but the Father was keeping them.

Simeon, in Luke 2:34, 35, told Mary, the mother of our Lord,

> Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again
> of many in Israel;
> and for a sign which shall be spoken against;
> (Yea, a sword shall pierce through your own soul also,)
> that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

Some witnessed all of the circumstances surrounding our Lord's death, and went away unmoved. They fell! But in other hearts God was at work, and they were "revealed," made known. They could not conceal their thoughts. God was claiming more and more victories by His grace.

F. THE LORD'S BURIAL (Luke 23:50-56).

23:50 In coming to the account of Joseph of Arimathaea, we come to another miracle of the grace of God.

All four of the Gospel writers wrote about him. The Apostle John, in his

account, said that Nicodemus was with Joseph, and he brought special ointments to anoint the body of the Lord for burial. Both of these men appear here as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, but they had not made their faith known before.

Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin, but Luke mentioned in . . .

23:51 that he did not agree with the verdict that had been passed against the Lord. (Read John 19:38-42.) He was a believer, and "also himself waited for the kingdom of God." It is interesting to note that, although he had believed secretly, yet the time came when he could no longer hide his true identity.

23:52 And so he went to Pilate to ask if he could bury the body of Jesus. The reality of his faith was seen in the fact that he would do what he did at such a time and in such a way. We do not hear any more about Joseph after this event, but it seems most certain that he and Nicodemus would both have been expelled from the Sanhedrin because of what they did for the Lord. But is it not interesting to see how the Lord was working even in this. The tomb was evidently one which Joseph had prepared for himself, but he lovingly provided it for the Lord.

23:53 Pilate granted Joseph's request, and the Lord was buried. This was proof of his death. People may try to explain away the Lord's resurrection by explaining away His death, but the Lord's enemies as well as His friends knew that He was dead.

23:54 That day of preparation was probably for the Sabbath. How ironic that, having killed the Lord of the Sabbath, they would prepare to observe the Sabbath!

23:55, 56 For the second time in this chapter Luke mentioned "the women . . . which came with him from Galilee." See v. 49. After anointing the Lord's body, they left the tomb to rest on the Sabbath Day. It would be some time before the truth of the death of Christ would have the effect upon their lives which it eventually had to have.

Wherever the Gospel is proclaimed, the death and burial of the Lord Jesus Christ are proclaimed. Paul, in 1 Cor. 15:3, 4 made it clear that the death and burial were the Gospel, along with the resurrection. This was the price of our salvation. Nothing less than this would have been sufficient because nothing less could satisfy the righteousness of God. It is because of the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord that God is absolutely "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26b).

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Chapter 24

VI. FINAL EVENTS IN THE EARTHLY LIFE OF JESUS (Luke 22:1-24:53).

G. THE LORD'S RESURRECTION (Luke 24:1-49).

1. The empty tomb (Luke 24:1-12).

In coming to the last chapter of the Gospel of Luke we have:
1) The resurrection of the Lord (vv. 1-12).
2) Two of His post-resurrection appearances (vv. 13-35 and 36-49).
3) The ascension of the Lord (vv. 50-53).

24:1 Luke was speaking here of "the women" mentioned in 23:55. Mark recorded that it was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less, and Salome, who probably was the mother of James and John. (See also Luke 24:10.) They had observed the Sabbath, and then came "very early," lit., at deep dawn, to anoint the body of the Lord. Their faithfulness to the Lord ought to be an example and inspiration to all who know the Lord.

24:2 The stone was rolled back from the entrance to the tomb. Mark related (16:3) that the women had been wondering who would roll the stone away from the entrance to the tomb so that they could get it. Matthew recorded (28:2) that there had been "a great earthquake," and that "the angel of the Lord" had rolled the stone away from the tomb, "and sat upon it."

24:3 When they entered the tomb, the body of the Lord was not there. Perhaps the angels were not visible when the women into the tomb. If they had been, the women would probably have been afraid to enter. However it was, the women were soon thrown into great turmoil when they realized that the body of the Lord was gone!

24:4 Luke said that they were "much perplexed." They did not know which way to turn, or what to do. They had not expected an empty tomb. It left them surprised and confused.

Two men were there "in shining garments." Mark (16:5) mentioned one young man. Matthew (28:2) called him "an angel of the Lord descended from heaven." John (20:12) mentioned that there were two angels sitting where the body of Jesus had been placed, one where His head had been; the other where His feet had been.

So it seems best to believe that there were two angels, who had taken on the appearance of men, to tell the women what had happened to the Lord.

24:5 But before the angels could speak, the women fell down in fear with their faces to the earth. The fear of the women when they came to the tomb, and found it empty, the unbelief of "the eleven" and of "all the rest (vv. 9, 11), and the astonishment of Peter (v. 12) even after he went to the tomb, are all examples of what Bishop Ryle called, "our fallen and corrupt condition" (II, p. 493). Wilcock, in his commentary, (pp. 206, 207) mentioned that the evidence of what the Lord had said to them, which obviously meant nothing to them at this point, left them frightened and bewildered.

It ought to be a lesson to us that all of us have a tendency to hear the Word of God, and yet we really do not hear it. We soon forget it, and that is what causes us such distress in our times of need. How we need to pray that our hearts will be opened by the Holy Spirit as we read the Word, and as we hear it taught, that we may understand the truth and believe the promises of God.

How gracious it was of the Lord to send the angels, and to have them waiting for the women as they came to the tomb early on that Sunday morning! And, by the way, this is why we worship the Lord now on the first day of the week instead of continuing to observe the Sabbath Day.

The angels began to speak to the women, and to comfort them, as they lay on their faces in fear and confusion. They said, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" This was the first indication the women had that the Lord Jesus had been raised from the dead. And as the angels continued to speak, the message became very clear.

24:6, 7 Angels were the first to proclaim the resurrection of our Lord.

Please turn to 1 Timothy 3:16. (read.) Notice particularly the expression, "seen of angels." A very interesting study connected with the life of Christ on the earth is that of His relationship with angels. "The angel of the Lord" spoke to Zacharias, to Elisabeth, and to Mary. Angels were the first to announce His birth, and they did this to the shepherds. Angels were present at His temptation, and ministered to Him at that time. No man saw the Lord come out of the tomb, but the angels did. The Lord was constantly under the eye of the angels. And it was two of these heavenly beings who carried the glorious message to the women. It is great to have the testimony of all of those believers to whom the Lord appeared after His resurrection, but why is it that we pay so little attention to the testimony of the angels.

And isn't it interesting that the angels reminded the women of what the Lord had told them while they were still in Galilee? To the angels the Word of the Lord was the great confirmation given to the disciples that the Lord would not stay in the tomb, but would come out victoriously. If the Lord said it (and He did), then there should not have been confusion when the women saw the evidence, but this is what they and all of the other disciples should have expected.

They even quoted the Lord in v. 7.

We can see from the angels' words that what the Lord had said about His resurrection had been meaningless to the women, but also what He had said about His death by crucifixion. This is a mystery that I cannot explain, how they could be saved, as they certainly were, and yet not understand the meaning of the Cross, nor the necessity of the resurrection.

The Lord had first spoken of His death and resurrection when He was with His disciples in Caesarea Philippi, and on several occasions after that. Cf. Luke 9:21, 22.

24:8 THEN "THEY REMEMBERED HIS WORDS."

One of the older commentators (Cecil) was quoted by Ryle as saying, "It is not sufficiently considered how much more we need recollection than information" (II, p. 496). This has always been the greatest problem of the people of God. It is not, in many instances, that we are ignorant

of the truth, but we forget what we have heard, and probably this is because we do not take the time to make sure that we really understand what we have heard.

24:9 Augustine pointed out that these women were the first human beings to preach the resurrection of our Lord.

24:10 Luke here confirms who the women were.

We do not need to be disturbed by the differences in the various Gospel records regarding how many angels there were, or how many women there were. Each writer has limited himself to that part of the circumstances, or to that part of what was said, that would fit in with his purpose in writing his particular account. A record does not have to tell all who were there, or all that was said, in order to be perfectly reliable in what was recorded.

24:11 This refers particularly to the apostles. "Idle tales" means silly talk, or nonsense. They thought that what the women were saying had no meaning at all. Robertson (II, p. 291) wrote: "Medical writers used (this word, "idle") for the wild talk of those in delirium or hysteria." It was like the apostles were saying, "You are out of your mind." Imagine! Here were the very men who were to be used by God in spreading the Gospel throughout the known world, and their first response to the message of the resurrection was that it was dumb.

24:12 John recorded (20:3-10) that both he and Peter "ran" to the tomb to see for themselves. When they did, they found everything just as the women had reported--except for the angels. And Peter was left "wondering in himself at that which was come to pass." John 20:10 says that Peter and John went home.

"Wondering" -- He was both amazed and astonished at what he saw. Undoubtedly in his mind he was going over the things which he remembered that the Lord had said to them.

What a lesson for us! There are many things in the Word of God that we do not understand, things which seem utterly impossible. But the safest thing to do is to take the Word as it is. God is true, and He is faithful to all of His promises. Not a word of His will fail. It is "for ever . . . settled in heaven" (Psa. 119:89). Therefore, it is never His Word that is nonsense; we are the fools if we do not believe what the Lord has said.

10/17/88

2. The post-resurrection appearances of the Lord (Luke 24:13-49).

At least ten post-resurrection appearances of the Lord are mentioned in six books of the NT: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, and 1 Corinthians 15. Luke mentioned four; one, with just a reference to it (vv. 33, 34); another, which I have included in the final division of the book: THE LORD'S ASCENSION (Luke 24:50-53). See the outline.

The first one that Luke mentioned is our Lord's appearance . . .

a. To the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35).

Mark is the only other writer who mentioned this event, but he only devoted two verses to it. See Mark 16:12, 13.

24:13 The two that are mentioned here were not apostles, but two of "the rest who were referred to in verse 9. They refer to this in verses 22, 23.

One of them was named, Cleopas, as we are told in verse 18. The other was not identified.

We do not know exactly where ancient Emmaus was, but it was just a short distance from Jerusalem: "threescore furlongs," about 6 or 7 miles. It was a mile or so farther to the northwest of Jerusalem than Bethlehem was to the south. Verse 28 makes it clear that they were on their way back home. They lived in Emmaus.

24:14 It is interesting to see that, although they were among those who considered the report of our Lord's resurrection as "idle tales," silly talk, yet they could not get it out of their minds. And so they were going over in their conversation the things that had happened in Jerusalem with regard to our Lord's death. The Lord will not let His truth die. He will not let His own forget about Him.

24:15 Note that it was "while they communed together and reasoned" that the Lord Himself drew near to minister to them.

Notice two parallel instances: one in the OT, and the other in the NT.
1) Moses at the burning bush in Ex. 3:3, 4.
2) Peter and the vision that was given to him in Joppa. See Acts 10:19.

What is the lesson? This shows not only the importance of meditating on the Word, but indicates that, when we do, the Lord will open our understanding to what He has revealed. It is so easy for us to read the Word, and then set it aside and think no more about it. Or we run into some problem in Scripture, and turn away from it. The Lord is obviously delighted when we commune and reason about Him and His work as recorded in His Word. Perhaps we can see from this that there is special blessing awaiting us when we meditate in particular upon the death and resurrection of our Lord.

This passage, therefore, not only encourages personal meditation on the Word, but also that, as we get together as believers, our conversation should always turn to the Lord and to His Word. The Lord will surely meet with us and teach us when we do.

Cf. Mal. 3:16,
> Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another:
> and the Lord hearkened, and heard it,
> and a book of remembrance was written before him
> for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.

We notice also an illustration of what the Lord had taught earlier in His ministry as expressed in Matt. 18:20,
> For where two or three are gathered together in my name,
> there am I in the midst of them.

For the Lord Jesus to join Himself to them, and go with them, was surely a sign of His pleasure in what they were doing, and of His desire to bring them out of their confusion.

24:16 Mark said that the Lord "appeared in another form unto the two of them." He was then in His glorified body. It was the same body that He had had before His death, but, being glorified, there was a difference which we are in no position to describe.

But there are a couple of instructive points to be made from this verse:
1) The first, that the Lord is often present to minister to us when we do not realize it.
2) Secondly, He is the One Who conceals the truth from us, or reveals it to us. Cf. Matt. 11:24-27. Also 1 Cor. 2:9, 10.

"Holden" means that held their ability to see in His own power. What a testimony to the sovereignty of our Lord!

It was not an unusual thing for the Lord to walk with them. People were continually walking back and forth on the roads in those days, and so it did not surprise the disciples when He began to question them about their discussion with each other.

24:17 The Lord noted their sadness! He is mindful of our needs, and He is touched with them.

The first part of our Lord's question suggests that, although they were sad, their conversation with each other was heated. They evidently were arguing. Grief and disappointment often produces contention, and it had in this case. Their hopes had been dashed with the death of Christ, and it seemed like torturing them further to think that the Lord might be raised from the dead.

THEIR ANSWER TO THE LORD'S QUESTION IS GIVEN IN VERSES 18 THROUGH 24.

24:18 Cleopas was the first to answer. He was amazed that the Lord would have to ask such a question. Everybody was talking about the events of the past days! So he asked the Lord a question.

24:19 The Lord still wanted them to tell Him exactly what was bothering them. Did He not know? Of course He did! But this teaches us that, even though the Lord knows the things that we have need of before we ask Him (see Matt. 6:8, 32), yet He desires that we cast our burdens upon Him--telling Him all that is of concern to us.

Think of this as an illustration of how the Lord orders our trials so that we will turn to Him, and tell Him. So this is a lesson in prayer.

Their concern was about "Jesus of Nazareth." They believed that He was "a prophet" of God because they had seen His great works and they had loved His teaching. For them to have seen Him only as "a prophet" meant that there was much about the Lord that they still needed to know.

24:20 Note how they blamed their Jewish leaders for the death of the Lord. And yet they did not speak of them in a condemning way; they were only relating to the Lord what they knew had happened.

24:21-24 They had hoped that Jesus was the Messiah. However, their hope of redemption shows that their understanding was deficient here also, as it had been with reference to Christ Himself.

Their reference to "the third day" seems to have been an indication that they remembered that the Lord had said something about the third day.

Perhaps they remembered His teaching that He would be raised on that day. They had heard the report from the women as is mentioned in the next verse, but they had not seen Him, and those apostles who had gone to the tomb had found that His body was gone, as the women had said, "but him they saw not" (v.24b).

It is interesting to see that nothing was going to satisfy them but for them to be able to see the Lord Himself!

THEN IT WAS TIME FOR THE LORD TO SPEAK TO THEM.

24:25, 26 The Lord asked another question which was in the form of a rebuke. (Read.)

"Fools" -- This may be too strong of a translation into English. The Lord certainly was not scorning His disciples, as is the case when men use the word, fools. He was simply pointing out that, although they had a certain grasp of the truth, the truth had not really be understood, thought through, because, if it had, it would have had a corresponding peaceful effect upon their lives. Truth to the Jews was not just an intellectual matter, but it was moral, practical, leading to a change of heart and life. The Lord was telling His disciples that they were un-knowing.

"Slow of heart" -- Thayer, on p. 72 under ἀργός, said that the word suggests putting a purely temporal meaning on the truth. This had been apparent when the men had spoken the way they did about redemption in verse 21.

These two words suggest two things which ought to attract attention from all of us:

1) That our main problem as Christians is ignorance of the truth. And, as we can see in this passage, we do not know a truth until it has a practical effect upon our lives. The truth produces peace, not confusion.
2) We have a tendency to put our own interpretation on the truth, and that usually is in the direction of human wisdom and the ways of men, not toward God.

Cf. Heb. 5:11-14.

Notice another danger that we need to avoid. It is to be seen in that little word, "all." They were un-knowing and "slow of heart to believe ALL that the prophets have spoken." They took what it had to say about His glory, about His power, about His reigning over the nations of the earth. But they had rejected what the prophets said about His suffering. This was their problem.

False teaching from the Scriptures is usually the result of not taking all that the Bible says about any truth, whether it be of Christ, or of God, or of the Holy Spirit, or of salvation, or of sin, or of the Church, or of the coming of the Lord. It is a common fault of the people of God that they take part of a truth, and start to teach it as the whole truth.

But it is especially troublesome when we are not clear about the doctrine of Christ. He is the Key to understanding the Word of God--from Genesis to Revelation. And that is what the Lord was pointing out by what He did according to verse 27.

Cf. Acts 17:1-3; 1 Pet. 1:10,11.

But notice the Lord's question in v. 26. (Read.)

The question means, Was it not necessary that the Messiah suffer these things, and enter into His glory? (This is practically the same as the NASB rendering of this verse.) The Williams translation: "Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and thus enter into His glory?" We could express it this way: Must not the Messiah suffer these things, and enter into His glory? The Lord was indicating that He had to die. There was no way out of it!

Why?

There are several reasons:
1) Because the Scriptures predicted it. That is what He went on to show, according to v. 27. The promises made to Adam, Abraham, David, and others in the OT required it.
2) Because this was the Father's will. This is why He had come.
3) Because He had said that He would. The Lord's word cannot fail.
4) Because there would have been no salvation without His death and resurrection.

Plummer, in his commentary on Luke, spoke of "the Divine decree respecting the Messiah as expressed in prophecy," and then went on to say that these two things, the decree and the prophecy, which seemed to destroy their faith, had been the confirmation of their faith (p. 555).

"And to enter into his glory?" Isaiah predicted in Isaiah 52:13,

> Behold, my servant shall deal prudently,
> he shall be **exalted** and **extolled**, and **be very high.**

There is a strong possibility that Isaiah was declaring that there would be three phases to the exaltation of the Lord:
1) His resurrection.
2) His ascension.
3) His being seated at the right hand of the Father.

So, as the Lord met with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, He had entered into the first phase of His glorification.

24:27 Note how the Lord began to clear up their misunderstanding. He did not perform a miracle. Nor did He immediately reveal Himself to them in the flesh. Many feel that their friends would believe if only they could see some tangible evidence that Christ is alive. No, He did none of that! He did what any of us ought to be able to do: He began "at Moses and all the prophets . . ."

What is meant by beginning "at Moses"? "Moses" is used here for the books of Moses, or the first five books of the Bible: the Pentateuch, meaning, five books. That is where the Lord started, and that is a good place for us to start.

What do you think the Lord pointed out?

Did He speak of Gen. 3:15? Did He point out the significance of the skins that were used to clothe Adam and Eve? Did He speak of Abel's sacrifice? Did He talk to them about Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac? Did He speak of the time that he wrestled with Jacob at Peniel? Did He speak of that first Passover? I once took a course in Baylor University called, Christ in the Pentateuch. And He is there! You find Him all through those five books.

What about "the prophets"?

By that term the Lord was including the remainder of the OT. Christ can be seen all through "the prophets." Sometimes in type. Sometimes He appears as a theophany. Sometimes the prophets made predictions of His first coming; sometimes, of His second coming. You can see Christ in Isaiah 53, in Psalm 2.

We do not know all that the Lord said, but that must have been one of the greatest Bible classes our Lord ever conducted!

"He expounded" -- This simply means that He explained the Scriptures. In Thayer's words (p. 147), He unfolded the meaning of what the Scriptures said. This same word was used in Acts 9:36 of interpreting a foreign language. The Bible is just like a foreign language until someone teaches. And then the teaching is only effective as it is used and blessed by the Holy Spirit.

But do you see what it teaches us? It teaches us:

1) That our greatest need spiritually is to know the Word of God, and especially to see how Christ is found throughout the Word, and He is the Key to it all.
2) It teaches us that, if we want to help people to understand that Jesus is truly the Christ, the Saviour of the world, we need to take them to the Word of God, and teach them about Him. No miracle will be as convincing. And let me say it reverently, but let me say it, not even the personal appearance of Christ will be as convincing as getting the Word of God into a person's heart. Of course, the Lord has to do it, but that is what people need: THE WORD OF GOD. That is one reason it is so important for us to be teaching the Word in our homes, and in our churches. People need to learn of Christ.

24:28 By the time the Lord had finished, they had arrived in Emmaus, which was probably a walk of about two hours.

The Lord made no indication that He would stay with them, but . . .

24:29 "They constrained him." They would not take "no" for an answer. They insisted that the Lord stay with them. The Lord ordered the circumstances here to bring out the desire of His disciples. Would it be that they wanted to hear more about the Messiah, the Christ? Remember: They still did not know Who He was, but they wanted Him to stay with them.

So He went into their home with them.

And then it was that the glorious moment came.

24:30, 31 This was not the Lord's Supper. They Lord had told His disciples that He would not drink from the cup any more until He drank with them in His Father's kingdom. This was just a plain meal. But notice that the Lord did the serving, and it was then that "their eyes were opened, and they knew him."

You see, we are all blind until the Lord opens our eyes. He does it when it pleases Him, and His time is always right.

But they had no sooner recognized Him, than "he vanished out of their sight." They saw Him, and then He was gone!

24:32 You would think that they would have been grief-stricken. The Lord was there, and then He was gone. But instead of starting a frantic search to find Him, they gave expression to the great joy that was in their hearts.

What is a burning heart?

It is a heart in which there is a strong emotion of warmth and joy. Remember that these men were sad when the Lord began to speak with them. But He left them rejoicing because of what they had learned from the Word about Himself.

Nothing gladdens the heart of a child of God like seeing the Lord in the Word. Every Bible teacher needs to remember this. Every parent teaching his or her children needs to remember this. Christ is the cure for all sadness. Every time we open our Bibles, whether it be our personal and private reading, or family devotions, or in coming to church to hear the Word, let us pray that we will see Christ in the Word.

24:33 As tired as they must have been, they found that even their physical strength, and they headed back for Jerusalem with their good news.

24:34 The joy was overflowing, and their words were with conviction.

24:35 And then they told how the Lord Himself had ministered to them, how He had taught them and what He had said, and that they had realized Who He was as He broke bread for them.

When we see the Lord as He is in the Word, no one can keep us from telling others about the One we have seen. This is what is needed to make us feel that inner constraint to spread the Gospel of the grace of God.

10/24/88

b. To **ten** of the apostles (Luke 24:36-49).

(Correct the outline where I said, "eleven.")

This is the appearance recorded by John in 20:19-23 when Thomas was not with them. And so this was the first appearance of the Lord to the apostles as a group. Paul, in 1 Cor. 15:5, indicated that the Lord had appeared to Peter before He appeared to the ten. The two disciples who brought the report to the ten were there, too.

24:36 The Lord appeared just as suddenly as He had left the two disciples in Emmaus. This was because of His resurrection body.

What wonderful words they were with which the Lord greeted His disciples: "Peace be unto you."

In the Upper Room, and then on the way to Gethsemane, the Lord had spoken to His disciples about peace. Cf. John 14:1. See also John 14:27:

> Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you:
> not as the world giveth, give I unto you.
> Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

In John 16:33 He said,

> These things have I spoken unto you,
> that in me ye might have peace.

In the world ye shall have tribulation:
but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Ryle said this (Vol. II, p. 510):

> This was a wonderful saying, when we consider the men to whom it was addressed. It was addressed to eleven disciples (actually, ten), who three days before had shamefully forsaken their Master and fled. They had broken their promises; they had forgotten their professions of readiness to die for their faith; they had been scattered, "every man to his own," and left their Master to die alone: one of them had even denied Him three times; all of them had proved backsliders and cowards,--and yet behold the return which their Master makes to His disciples! Not a word of rebuke is spoken: not a single sharp saying falls from His lips. Calmly and quietly He appears in the midst of them, and begins by speaking of peace: "Peace be unto you!"

I have been reading an article by the Puritan, Richard Sibbes, on the text,

A bruised reed shall he not break,
and smoking flax shall he not quench,
till he send forth judgment unto victory (Matt. 12:20).

He said that in every Christian we see grace mingled with corruption and weakness, and that is why the Lord calls us, "the smoking flax." He does not extinguish the fire that is there, even though there may be more smoke than fire. But He strengthens what is there because, as small as it may be, He kindled the fire that is there, and it is to the glory of His grace to see what the final result will be.

It is wonderful, isn't it, that the Lord never gives up on us, even with men who are destined to be leaders of the Church. It makes not difference how weak we may be now, the Lord is our sufficiency, and He is able to perfect us in spite of all of the failures and setbacks we might have.

How thankful we can be that we are saved, from start to finish, by grace! And we ought to love Him more and more because of His grace. Cf. Phil. 4:6, 7.

By this benediction upon them, the Lord was wishing them the full enjoyment of every blessing which was theirs in salvation.

24:37 But what was their response? It was like the Lord had not said to them anything about peace. "They were terrified and affrighted." And this was because they thought that they had seen a spirit of some kind. Both of these words mean terrified, and so the two together are meant to convey to us that they were really terrified, beside themselves with fear, shaking uncontrollably.

24:38 And so the Lord asked them about it. The Lord knew their thoughts even though we do not have a record of anything that they said.

24:39 The Lord does not always confirm our faith by satisfying us through our senses, but He did on this occasion. He appealed to their sense of touch, and their sense of sight. One thing we can see in this is that there is no conflict between faith and that which is a reality. We have evidence here that our Lord's resurrection was physical, not just a spiritual resurrection. And we have evidence here that the Lord was raised in the same body He had when He was crucified--but now it was a glorified body, and He was not known to His disciples until He made Himself known.

24:40 And so He showed them His hands and His feet.

24:41 Luke seems to indicate here that, while they rejoiced in what they were seeing, yet they had not fully understood it. It was a case of,"Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24). It was at this point that the Apostle John gave that great statement: "The were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord" (John 20:20b).

But to give added support to their faith, the Lord asked for food.

24:42 They gave it to Him.

24:43 And He ate it in their presence so that they could see what He was doing.

But then we come to the important part of our Lord's dealing with the apostles.

24:44 He did with them what He did with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. HE TOOK THEM TO THE SCRIPTURES. The testimony of the Word of God is the mightiest testimony we have of the death and resurrection of our Lord!

The Jews divided the OT into three parts: the Law, the prophets, and the writings. The Book of Psalms was the largest of the books of writings, the Hagiographa, and our Lord used it here for that whole section. Thus, the Lord was saying that He had told them before He died of all of the things written in the Old Testament Scriptures which "must be fulfilled, the things that had to do with Himself.

And so we have here a repetition, essentially, of that which the Lord did on the road to Emmaus with the two disciples, as we read in verse 27.

24:45 The Lord has to do this every time we read the Word of God, and every time we hear it taught or preached. This is the now the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The most educated preacher or theologian will not begin to enter into an understanding of the Word of God, if he is only trusting in his education or study, like a humble, prayerful child of God who is looking to the Lord to each him. See John 16:12-15.

24:46 Here, for the fourth time in this chapter, we have that little Greek verb, . It means that which must be done. We have it in verses 7, 26, 44, 46.

Here we see the evidence that God was sovereignly working out His will, and that His purposes would continue to be fulfilled. Those purposes included:

1) The sufferings of Christ, culminating in His death.
2) The resurrection of Christ.
24:47 3) The preaching of the Gospel to all the nations, beginning with the Jews.
24:48 4) The part that the apostles were to have in it as those who had been witness of Christ's death, and of His resurrection.
24:49 5) The ministry of the Holy Spirit who would literally clothe, endue, the servants of the Lord with the power to accomplish the mission that the Lord has given to His people.

And so here we see all of the essential parts of the work that the Church

has been commissioned to carry out in every generation until the Lord comes:

1) The message is of a crucified and risen and glorified Son of God, Who died in fulfillment of OT prophecy, and Who, by His death, has provided salvation for Jews and for Gentiles.
2) The field of labor is the whole world.
3) God calls and sends His messengers to proclaim His Word.
4) All of the work is to be done in dependence upon the Holy Spirit Who uses the Word, and brings conviction to sinners according to the will of God.

Let us make sure that we understand this, and that we are involved in this glorious work of making the Lord Jesus Christ known.

11/1/88

"The promise of the Father" was given by the Lord in John 14:16, 17. But notice what His work is in John 14:26; 15:26, 27; 16:7-15.

Cf. what our Lord said in Acts 1:8. This promise was fulfilled in Acts 2.

In these days when we have either no emphasis on the Holy Spirit, or so much that is false, we need to get back to the Biblical teaching about the Holy Spirit so as to give Him the place that He should have in our lives, and in the work of our churches. There can be no real Christian living without the Holy Spirit, nor can our ministry see true blessing unless the Holy Spirit is initiating that work, blessing it, and bringing it to fruition by His mighty power.

And let us remember that the Holy Spirit is a Person, just as much of a Person as the Father or the Son. He is just as much God as They are. And so He is worthy of our worship, obedience, and complete trust.

H. THE LORD'S ASCENSION (Luke 24:50-53).

Luke gives us in these four verses the final appearance of the Lord to His disciples, and the account of His return to the Father. This is repeated by Luke in the first chapter of his other book, the Book of Acts.

(Read Luke 24:5-53, and then Acts 1:1-12.)

24:50 Luke did not mention here how long the Lord was with His disciples before His ascension; He did that, as we have seen, in Acts 1. But here we see where our Lord went, and what He did just before His ascension. Here Luke did not record anything that the Lord said, as he did in Acts 1, only what He did.

He took them to Bethany, where He loved to go, the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. Ryle suggested that these three were most likely present when the Lord went back to the Father.

" . . . he lifted up his hands, and blessed them."

The Lord was acting here as their Great High Priest. Cf. Lev. 9:22-24. Remember also the prayer that Aaron was to pray for the people. Cf. Num. 6:22-27. Perhaps this was the prayer that the Lord prayed for them. Whatever may have been the case, it is wonderful to see that the last act

of the Lord on earth was the blessing of His people. The first message in this Gospel was the message of the angel who announced the birth of John the Baptist to Zacharias, which was a message of the greatest possible blessing.

Cf. Eph. 1:3. Remember that the greatest blessings, the blessings that we should seek more than any other, are the spiritual blessings.

24:51 As He was blessing them, He ascended back to the Father.

(Review what the Lord had said to Mary Magdalene in John 20:17.)

Mark (16:19) recorded that the Lord "was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." When Peter was preaching on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, he quoted from Psa. 110:1 where it is recorded that the Father said to the Son,

Sit thou on my right hand,
Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

And the writer of Hebrews wrote,

Seeing then that we have a great high priest,
Jesus the Son of God,
Let us hold fast our profession.
For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched
with the feeling of our infirmities;
but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.
Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace,
that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need
(Heb. 4:14-16).

Four times in the Book of Hebrews we have a reference to this great truth, that our Lord is at the Father's right hand:

1) Heb. 1:3.
2) Heb. 8:1.
3) Heb. 10;12.
4) Heb. 12:2.

Cf. also Heb 7:25, 26.

Cf. also 1 John 2:1, 2. Note also Paul's last request in his prayer found in Eph. 1:19-23, esp. v.20. And Col. 3:1, 2:

If ye then be risen with Christ,
seek those things which are above,
where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.
Set your affection on things above,
not on things on the earth.

Cf. 2 Cor. 5:16:

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh:
yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh,
yet now henceforth know we him no more.

When we couple this with our Lord's words in John 16:7, "It is expedient for you that I go away," "expedient" meaning, profitable, or to one's advantage, we can see that our position today, with Christ in heaven at the right hand of the Father, is much better than even when the disciples had Him present with themselves here on earth! He is there as our Great High Priest, as our Advocate, our Paraclete. The Holy Spirit occupies a new relationship with the people of God, different from that which He ever had before. And so we must rejoice in the risen glorified Christ, and learn as much as it is possible for us to know about seeking "those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

24:52 As hard as it must have been to see the Lord go from them, yet there was worship and "great joy" in their hearts as they made their way back to Jerusalem.

24:53 The Gospel of Luke began with an event which took place in the temple; it ends telling us that day by day the apostles and other disciples made their way to the temple where they spent their time "praising and blessing God."

Let me conclude with some very significant and practical words from Bishop Ryle (Vol. II, pp. 527, 528):

> How shall we account for these joyful feelings? How shall we explain the singular fact, that this little company of weak disciples, left for the first time like orphans in the midst of an angry work, was not cast down, but was full of joy?--The answer to these questions is short and simple. The disciples rejoiced, because now for the first time they saw all things clearly about their Master: the veil was removed from their eyes; the darkness had at length passed away. The meaning of Christ's humiliation and low estate; the meaning of His mysterious agony, the cross, the passion; the meaning of His being Messiah and yet a sufferer; the meaning of His being crucified, and yet being Son of God,--all, all was at length unravelled and made plain. They saw it all: they understood it all. Their doubts were removed; their stumbling-blocks were taken away: now at last they possessed clear knowledge, and possessing clear knowledge felt unmingled joy.
>
> Let it be a settle principle with us, that the little degree of joy which many believers feel arises often from want (lack) of knowledge. Weak faith and inconsistent practice are doubtless two great reasons why many of God's children enjoy so little peace; but it may well be suspected that dim and indistinct views of the Gospel are the cause of many a believer's discomfort. When the Lord Jesus is not clearly known and understood, it must needs follow that there is little "joy in the Lord."
>
> Let us leave the Gospel of St. Luke with a settle purpose of heart to seek more spiritual knowledge every year we live. Let us search the Scriptures more deeply, and pray over them more heartily. Too many believers only scratch the surface of Scripture, and know nothing of digging down into its hid treasures: let the Word dwell in us more richly; let us read our Bibles more diligently: so doing we shall taste more of the joy and peace in believing, and shall know what it is to be "continually praising and blessing God."