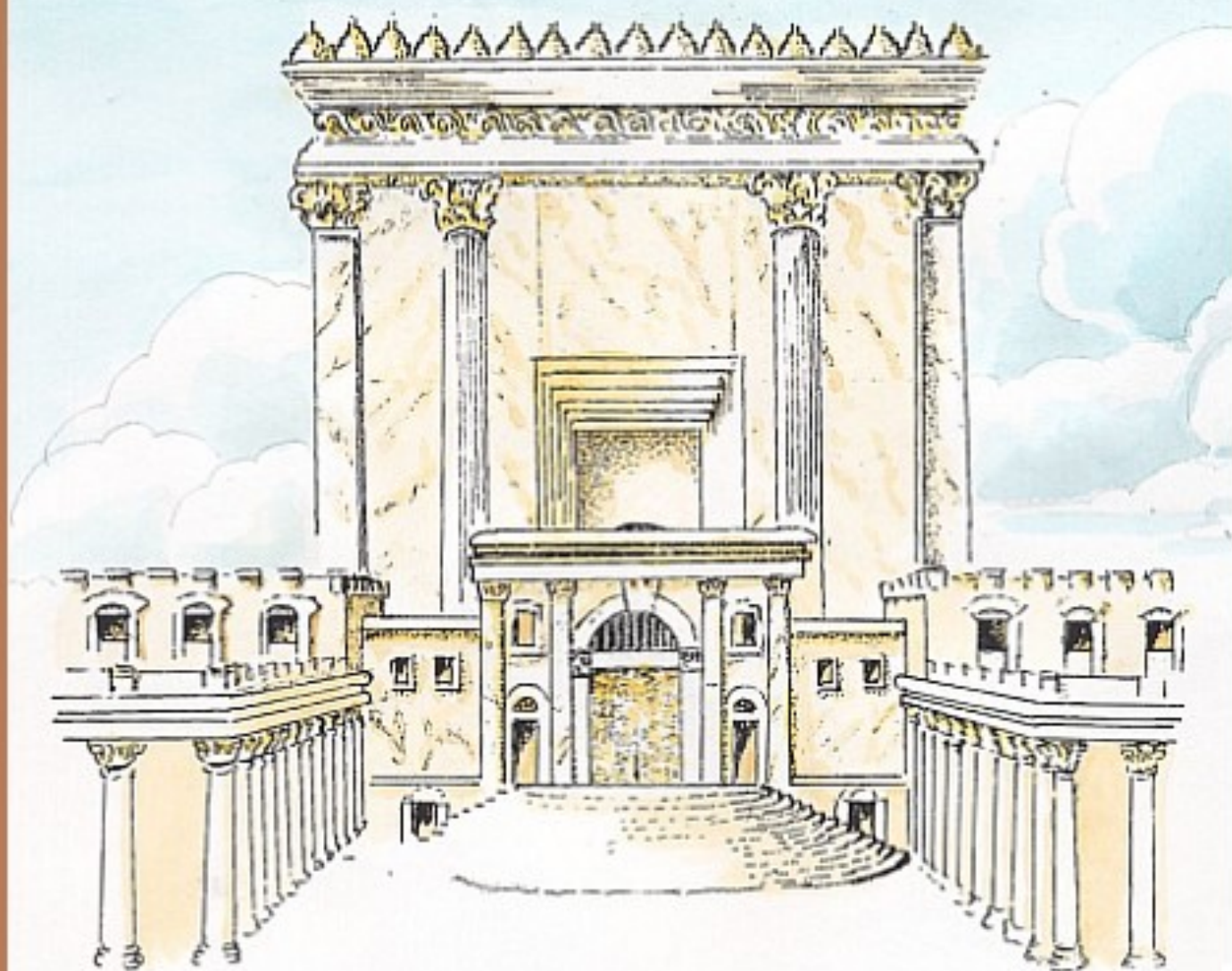


# **THE NEW TESTAMENT BIBLE STORY**

## **VOLUME 2**



# **THE NEW TESTAMENT BIBLE STORY**

## **VOLUME 2**

**THE GOSPELS AND  
THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST  
(PART 2)**

**Keith Hunt**

# PREFACE

I would like to give much thanks and appreciation to Roger Waite for the work of reading, correcting spelling, grammar, and the final editing of this manuscript. I would also like to thank Muriel Crawford for her part in the illustrating this New Testament Bible Story.

Especially, of course, I give praise and thanks to the heavenly Father for answering my prayers for help and guidance. As a human being I realize this work may not be without errors. If errors can be proved, may they be found and corrected by those who come after me.

The main desire of this work is to lead people to Jesus as personal Savior, to make the Gospels a very readable story for children and youths as well as adults, and to bring out the fact that Jesus was BOTH human and divine, Immanuel, God in the flesh, and the sinless Savior, the perfect sacrifice to save all who will come to the Eternal God through Him.

Truly it is written: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16, KJV)

This work is dedicated to all the children and youths who may read this story, and all the children of God and disciples of Jesus Christ everywhere.

Keith Hunt

## FROM THE EDITOR:

A favourite book series amongst young people in the Worldwide Church of God in my teen years was a 6 volume series called “The Bible Story” written and illustrated for children by the late Basil Wolverton. This Bible series for children brought the Bible alive for many children.

The 6 volume series covered the Old Testament except for the prophetic and wisdom books ([http://www.herbert-w-armstrong.com/bible\\_story.html](http://www.herbert-w-armstrong.com/bible_story.html)).

A New Testament Bible Story series was began around 1990 but did not get very far before the Good News magazine was cancelled.

Following that there was great turmoil as the new leadership of the Worldwide Church of God, following the death of Herbert Armstrong in 1986, rejected those key doctrines that clearly distinguished the church from mainstream Christianity.

This led to a breakup of the church with many new groups forming who still felt convicted that those key doctrines that differentiated the Church of God from mainstream Christianity were the true doctrines taught by the Bible. I was amongst those and currently attend the United Church of God in Brisbane, Australia.

Our author, Keith Hunt, attended an earlier split-off group during the 1970’s before Herbert Armstrong’s death until circumstances led him away from that group and he currently pastors as an independent minister in western Canada.

This New Testament Bible Story has its genesis in my lamenting the fact that the old Bible Story series never got as far as the New Testament. I was discussing this with my late friend, Richard Nickels, who used to publish a newsletter entitled “Giving and Sharing”. As I was backed up with a series of other projects and felt that trying to do it myself would be too time consuming, I ended up placing an ad in Richard’s newsletter calling for a volunteer writer and artist.

I was delighted with Keith Hunt’s capability and eagerness to take on the project and that he has done such a magnificent job with what he has written. He has done a wonderful job following on from Basil Wolverton’s past legacy with this New Testament Bible Story which we hope will make the New Testament come alive for children as well as those young at heart!

I have added editorial notes where I have wanted to further expand on some key points as well as offer an alternate point of view where I occasionally have a differing point of view.

One of the projects that I created at the time that Keith was writing this New Testament Bible Story was a 12 lesson Young Adults Bible Study which covers the major doctrines of the Bible ([www.rogerswebsite.com/CD.htm](http://www.rogerswebsite.com/CD.htm)) and is available on my website. It can also be ordered on disc. Keith also has many informative articles available on his own website ([www.keithhunt.com](http://www.keithhunt.com)) which he makes reference to in many of his comments.

Currently another volunteer, also from Canada, Muriel Crawford, has done a number of the early illustrations. I have filled the rest of this series with other illustrations that

I have searched for on the internet. These illustrations will be phased out over time as Muriel and possibly other volunteers create others which will replace these.

Once we have replaced all the images in this online version with illustrations we have ownership to I have a couple of organisations in mind to approach to fund a hard copy print run of this series and make it more widely available not just within the greater Church of God but also to a much wider audience by offering it at cost price on amazon.com.

I asked Keith to give an overview of each of the New Testament epistles and slot them in chronologically (as when they were written) into the Book of Acts before covering the Book of Revelation. He has covered all the New Testament epistles in much detail.

I have since changed that order to the original order of the New Testament canon which differs from the order of the New Testament in most Bibles. In the original New Testament canon the general epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude follow the Book of Acts and then comes the epistles of Paul starting with those written to whole churches and finishing with the pastoral epistles written to individuals such as Timothy and Titus. Following that, of course, is the Book of Revelation.

The writers of the general epistles had seniority over Paul within the early church and that was one reason for their epistles being included first.

The second reason that motivated my change of order with this New Testament Bible Story was that the general epistles cover fundamental themes such as faith (James), hope (Peter), love (John) and truth (Jude) before Paul covers more complex subjects finishing with how ministers are to run the church in his pastoral epistles such as those to Timothy and Titus.

Putting this New Testament Bible Story in that same order with its gradual rise from the simpler to more complex subjects made perfect sense for this series aimed at teaching children the wonderful truths of God's Holy Bible.

Volume 1 covers the story of Jesus ministry in the Gospels up till His last Feast of Tabernacles.

Volume 2 covers Jesus ministry in the Gospels in His last 6 months and after His resurrection.

Volume 3 covers the Book of Acts and the general epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude covering the fundamental themes such as faith (James), hope (Peter), love (John) and truth (Jude).

Volume 4 covers the epistles of Paul written to whole churches.

Volume 5 covers the pastoral epistles of Paul and the Book of Revelation.

We truly hope that this New Testament Bible Story makes the Bible come alive to you and that you enjoy it and learn much about the wonderful truths of the Bible through it!

Roger Waite

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## CHAPTER 1

### MANY IMPORTANT THINGS FROM THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

#### Seventy Are Sent Out To Do God's Work

Jesus called seventy of His disciples together and sent them out two by two to every town and village that He was planning to go visit. They were to go ahead of Him and teach the Kingdom of God and heal the sick. This was very much like what He had told the twelve to do earlier. Luke records and mentions a few things that was either not recorded or not specified when He sent out the twelve in an earlier Gospel preaching mission.

They were not to go "from house to house." If people received them, they were receiving Him, and in turn receiving the Father. Again, it was a woe to the cities that did not receive them.



**Sending Out the Seventy Men**

Then the seventy returned with joy, telling Jesus how even the demons were subject to them through His name. He then told them that He saw Satan one day in the distant past, fall from heaven like lightning.

This was probably at the time Satan rebelled and took one third of the angels with him in that rebellion, to fight God in heaven, but was defeated and cast down to the earth (see Revelation chapter 12). All of that took place before mankind was created, for when we read Genesis chapters one and two, Satan or the Devil, is already there in the garden of Eden, ready to tempt Adam and Eve. Two other parts of the Scriptures that talk about who Satan was at the beginning and what entered his heart, are found in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28.

Jesus had given the seventy authority over serpents, and scorpions, over the powers of the enemy, so that nothing was to hurt them. But He told them that they needed to rejoice not in having such authority and power of the evil one and danger, but that they should rejoice that their names were written in the book of life in heaven. And that is the important thing, for this authority Jesus had given them was for that particular time and event He sent them out on. Later times showed that Christ's disciples did not always have protection from harm or danger or losing their lives in His service. The book of Acts will show us all this when we go through it.

The important thing is as Jesus said, to know that whatever this physical life may hand out to us in a physical way, we have our names written in heaven, that we are God's children, and will be in His family Kingdom.

Jesus at that time when the seventy returned to Him, gave thanks to the Father in heaven, that these wonderful truths had been revealed to them by Him, that they had been hid from many of the wise and prudent of this world, and revealed to babes so to speak, ones who had simple belief and faith.

He reminded them again that they were blessed for many prophets of old had desired to see these days that they were seeing and to hear the words they were hearing (Luke 10:1-24).

### **Way To Life And Good Samaritan Parable**

A lawyer stood up to put Jesus to the test. He asked Him this question, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus answered, "What is written in the law? how do you understand it?"

The lawyer answered, "I understand it as saying, that you are to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your life, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and you are to love your neighbor as yourself."

"You have answered correctly, do this, and you shall live," Jesus told him.

But, the lawyer was not fully satisfied, he then asked Jesus who his neighbor was, and Jesus gave this reply:

"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho [Jerusalem is on a higher ground level than Jericho], and robbers beat him up and stole his money, leaving him half-dead. Now by chance a priest came along the same road; and when he saw him, he just passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him lying there, he passed by also on the other side.

"Then a Samaritan as he journeyed by, came upon the man lying there half-dead, but when he saw him he had compassion upon him. He went over to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he sat him upon his own beast of burden and brought him to an Inn, and took care of him there. The next day he took out of his pocket his own money and gave it to the Inn-keeper, saying, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you need to heal his recovery, spend it on him, and when I come back this way on my return home, I will repay you.' Now, which of these three do you think proved to be neighbor to the man who fell among robbers?"





**The Good Samaritan**

The lawyer answered, "Why, of course, the one who showed kindness and mercy to the man."

"Yes, indeed. Go and do you likewise to anyone," Jesus told him and all who were present there.

Being a neighbor in the full sense of the overall law of God as taught by the whole Old Testament, is doing unto any other, no matter what race, religion, education etc. what you would like them to do to you, especially if in dire circumstances as the man in Jesus' parable. That is what God teaches and expects, for one half of the conditions to receiving and inheriting eternal life. The other half is to love God with everything you have, your mind, your life, your all. This we have seen explained and amplified in Jesus' Gospel work and teaching, in past chapters.

### **Putting Priorities In The Right Place At The Right Time**

Jesus and His disciples had over the time they had been travelling up and down the country-side, preaching and healing, made many friends in many towns and villages. They were coming to such a village where lived two sisters, Mary and Martha. They received them into their house. Mary sat at Jesus' feet hanging on to every word He spoke, listening intently.

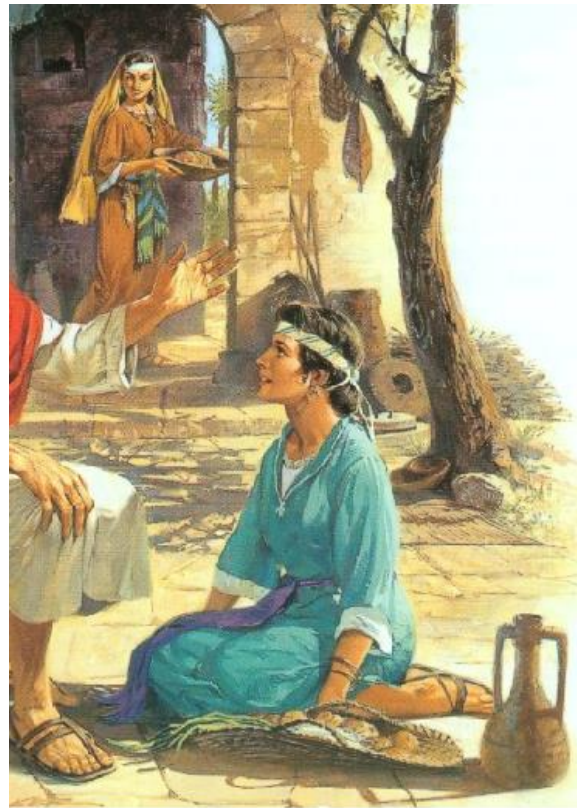
But Martha was working her fingers to the bone in the kitchen, just consumed with all the material things that she thought needed to be done to look after the physical needs of them all.

She finally had had enough of doing it all by herself. "Lord, do you not care that my sister Mary has left me alone to do all this physical work?" she said to Jesus with some exasperation in her voice.

But the Lord answered her saying, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful at this time from you. Mary has chosen the correct good priority here, which shall not be taken away from her (Luke 10:38-42).

Under this situation where Jesus was wanting to teach and expound the truths of the Kingdom of God, it was the correct thing to do, as Mary was doing, to sit and listen and drink in the spiritual truths being taught. The physical could wait, when it was time for the physical then it was time, and many would then pitch in and help look after that physical need. But at this moment the priority was to listen to the Son of God teaching the word of God.

So it is with us, we have to develop the sense and ability to know what priorities must come first and when they should come first.



**Mary and Martha**

### **Teaching On Prayer**

Jesus was praying in a certain place and after He had finished one of His disciples asked Him to teach them to pray even as John taught his disciples to pray.

He then took the opportunity once more to repeat much of what He had taught early on in His ministry, which we covered under the chapters on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus did add something new this time:

"Which of you who has a friend and will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, please lend me three loaves of bread, for another friend of mine had arrived on a long journey, and I have no bread to offer him'; and he will answer, 'Do not bother me; the door is shut, and my children and I have gone to bed; I cannot get up and give anything to you.' I tell you, though in his mind he does not want to get up and give him anything, he will rise and give him whatever he desires, because of his continual importunity, asking and asking, and not giving up."

Jesus was teaching us that we also must ask, keep on asking, and not give up until our Father in heaven answers us.

## **Doing God's Work Through The Devil?**

Once again when casting out a demon Jesus was accused of doing it by the prince of demons. It was a repeat of a similar incident that occurred earlier and that we have covered. A woman did this time cry out from the crowd, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you have sucked!" Jesus once more took the opportunity to tell people what was really blessed and important, "Blessed rather are those that hear the word of God and obey and keep it!"

He again told the people that in the main this was an evil generation that they all lived in, and the only sign He would give them was the sign of Jonah to the men of Nineveh. He at this time, did not go into the part about the three days and three nights He would be in the grave.

He told them that many from the past who were not given salvation and offered repentance, would rise in the great judgment period with many of that generation who could see all that He was doing, and would condemn it to shame, for they will readily repent while those around Him at that time, were hard-hearted and unbelieving.

He went through again the parable about the body, making sure that it was full of light, and setting that light upon a stand that all would see the light of your life.

## **Plain Talk While Dinning With A Pharisee**

And while He was speaking and teaching, a certain Pharisee pleaded with him to come to his home and dine with him. So Jesus went and sat down to eat. The Pharisee marvelled that He had not washed before sitting to eat.

Jesus knew of course what the Pharisees taught and practiced as a ritual before eating any meal, and we covered all that before. It was time for Jesus to lay the cards on the table and be very frank about this and other such things that were relatively small, but what the Pharisees made into a huge production of "spiritual importance." Jesus said:

"Now, you Pharisees make clean to a fault, the outside of the cup and the plate; but your inward parts and motives and attitudes are full of extortions and wickedness. You fools, is it not that He which made the outside made also the inside? But give to the needy what you greedily possess, and you will be clean all over. But it will be terrible for you.

"Woe to you Pharisees! For you are so careful to tithe even the tiniest part of your income and produce, but you completely forget and ignore true justice and the love of God. You should tithe, yes, but you should not leave undone the more important things. Woe to you Pharisees! For how you revel in respectful greetings from everyone as you walk through the market place, and how you love to have the seats of honor in the synagogues. Yes, how terrible it will be for you all. For you are like the hidden graves in a field. People walk over them without knowing the clandestine corruption they are stepping into and getting involved in."

"Well Teacher," spoke up an expert in religious law, "you have insulted us, too, in what you have said."

"Yes," replied Jesus, "that is very true. Woe to you also, you lawyers of religious law. For you burden and crush people under impossible religious demands, and you never lift a finger to ease their burden. It will be terrible for you also, for you build graves and tombs for the very prophets your ancestors killed ages ago, so sanctioning them and their deeds.

"Murderers! You are then actually agreeing with your ancestors that what they did was correct. You would have done the same if you had been in their boots so long ago. And this is what God had said in His wisdom about you, 'I will send prophets and apostles to them, and they will kill some, and persecute the others.' And you of this generation will be held responsible for the murder of all God's prophets from the creation of the world - from the murder of Abel to the murder of Zechariah who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary (2 Chron. 24:20 ,21). Yes, because your attitude is the same as past murderers, it will surely be charged against you. Yes, woe to you experts in religious law! For you hide the keys to true knowledge from the people. You will not enter the Kingdom yourselves, and you prevent others from also entering."

The attitude of mind for many of these so-called "religious lawyers" or experts of the law of the Old Testament was no different that the mindset of others who had in the past, even from the beginning, killed God's honest and faithful people. So in that respect they accumulated all their sins into their minds. Jesus had shown them that their deeds with the people was like killing them, ruling and governing them in such a heavy handed way that they might just as well have taken a sword and killed them. The power that religious leaders have used over the centuries to burden and chain up people, emotionally, spiritually, and even sometimes physically, is all over the history books for all centuries of the past ages.

Such people who have ruled others in this religious way, are ones who have found the many clever and deceitful ways to lock away the true keys of knowledge and are able to keep others under a kind of spell, we might say. They are what is known today as "cult" leaders. They often exhibit profound technical "letter of the law" knowledge of God's word, being able to remember and recite whole chapters of the Bible. And because it has been and still is so prevalent in the 20th century, many books have been written on either escaping from cults or how not to get involved with them in the first place. It is not only the cults we need to be careful with, even many in so-called "orthodox" Christianity, with their PhD's in religion, have it wrong and have entrapped millions with their false theology. They also are guilty of not lifting a finger to undo the chains from the people. They also are guilty of keeping the keys of the Kingdom locked away from the common person in the darkness of false ideas and false traditions.

But the bottom line is always "buyer beware" - it is up to the individual to obey Isaiah 8:20, no matter who comes to you in religious clothes, even if they are recognized by the world of Christian religion as "experts in their field" because their field may be full of weeds and thistles.

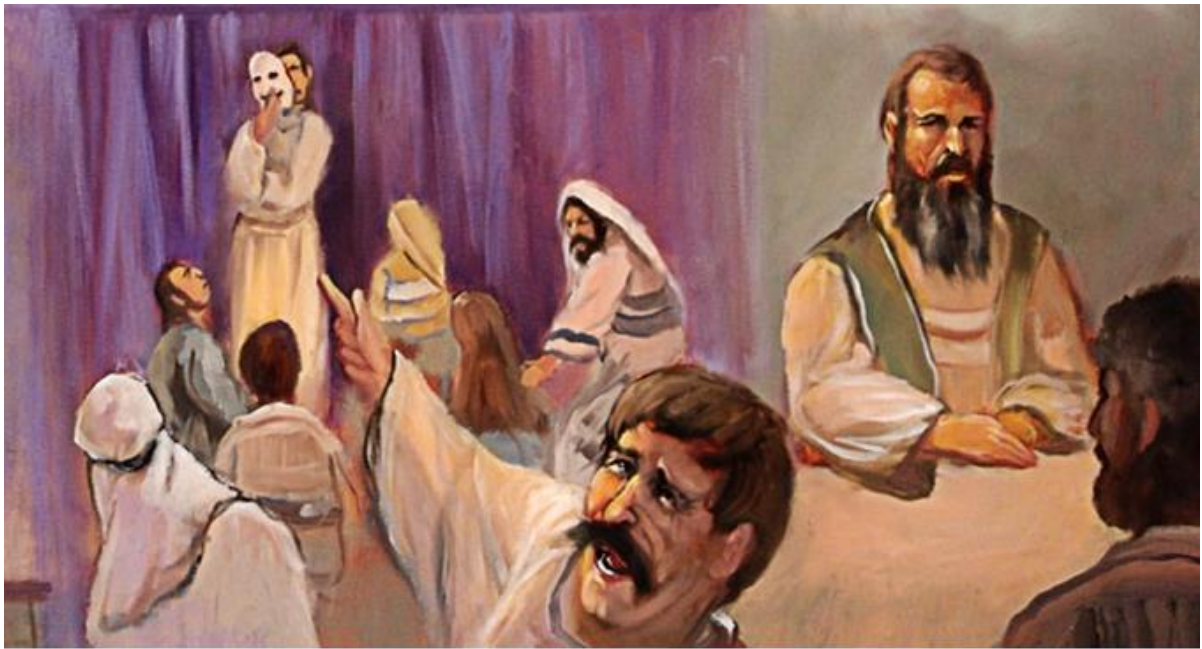
As Jesus spoke these things the Pharisees and teachers of the religious law were furious. And from that time on they continued to hound Him with hostile questions, trying to trap Him, and hoping He would say something they could use against Him, in the eyes of the people and the governing secular authorities of the land (Luke 11:37-54).



## Trust And Watchfulness

The crowds of people were so multiplied that they were falling over each other and even trampling on one another under foot. It was a good time for Jesus to warn His disciples about the "leaven of the Pharisees" which He had done on an earlier occasion.

This time He used a slightly different metaphor, saying, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy, mere play acting, pretending to be godly when they are anything but. Nothing is covered up that will not be finally revealed and shown to be what it really is, or hidden away from people that will not be seen openly. Whatever you have said in the dark and behind closed doors will be heard in broad daylight, and what you have whispered in private rooms behind closed doors, shall be proclaimed upon the housetops with loud speakers."



**Beware of the leaven of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees**

The truth can be known. People do not have to "pull the wool over your eyes" or keep your brain washed from the truthful reality and righteousness of the Lord. Jesus had said in His Sermon on the Mount that they who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled. Those in Acts 17 who heard Paul preach and teach the word of God, did not allow themselves to be psychologically manipulated to where they stopped thinking, reasoning, and searching the Scriptures daily, for themselves, to see if what Paul taught was from the word of God, or just his own man made ideas.

It is the responsibility of each individual to prove all things and to hold fast to that which is good, as the apostle Paul taught should be done by each person for themselves (1 Thes. 5:21).

Jesus went on to tell His followers once more who they should really fear. Not men who cannot kill you forever, but Him who can destroy you forever in the fires of the second death. He told them again that they were dearly beloved of the Father. And that everyone who would stand tall and strong in not denying Him before men, would

not be denied by Him. He told them once more about the unpardonable sin, a refusal to repent when the Holy Spirit was leading you to acknowledge sin and to turn from it. And finished this discourse with not worrying about what words to speak if brought before the courts of men because of your religious faith in Him and the Father. He promised that the Holy Spirit would, at that time, inspire you to speak what you would need to say.



## CHAPTER 2

### MORE IMPORTANT TEACHINGS FROM THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

#### The Foolish Rich Man

One from the multitude of people around Jesus one day asked, "Teacher, I would like you to tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

"I have come to teach and preach the Kingdom of God, not to be a lawyer or judge of such matter between you and your brother," replied Jesus.

He could see there was more behind this question than what most standing there could perceive. Jesus could see the man's heart and intent of wanting more physical wealth and goods. So He went on to say:

"You need to take heed and beware of COVETOUSNESS; for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of how many possessions he has. Let me tell you about a rich man who brought forth plentiful in his daily work and business transaction. He thought within himself, 'What am I going to do, for I have no more space to store all my crops and physical goods? Ah, I know what I'll do, I will pull down my old barns and build larger ones, and in them I will store all my grains and goods. And I will further say to my soul, life, you have ample goods laid up is storage for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry, have a blast.' But God said to him, 'Foolish man! This night your life is required, you will die, and all the things you have set your mind upon and coveted in your heart, to lay up for yourself, now who will they belong to?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is NOT RICH TOWARDS God" (Luke 12:13-21).



**Beware of covetousness**

We have seen, and the word of God teaches with many examples, such as Abraham, Solomon, King David, and Job, among others, that it is not wrong to have physical wealth. It is wrong when your mind and the way you live is all wrapped up in your material possessions and the money you have in the bank, to the point where you have no time for God, and giving to others. With physical wealth comes great responsibility. If you are blessed with such wealth you need to use it to do God's service, to do His work, which yes, includes spreading the Gospel so others can be saved into God's family, but it also includes helping those in need, giving to charities, helping the genuinely poor and needy.

I may have mentioned the man in Vancouver, B.C. who some years ago sold his land and found himself with 20 million dollars. He was elderly, had done well in business, and he and his wife and children (all now grown and doing well physically

for themselves) were living comfortably. He said he did not need 95% of the 20 million dollars, and so was having a ball, getting high we might say, in giving it all away to needy individuals and charities.

This is what Jesus was getting at, not setting your heart on more and more physical goods and possessions and money, but if having it all in abundance, to use it to do good for God's work and to help the poor and those good organizations we today call "charities."

We shall come later to where Jesus clearly shows us His concern for the legitimate "poor" and needy of the land, in what he tells a young rich man to do with his great wealth, because it was a stumbling block to him in being in the Kingdom of God.

### **Trust In God And The Little Flock**

This was the time and opportunity to once more reiterate what He had said in his Sermon on the Mount. People needed to NOT be anxious and overly worried, and all consumed with the material things of life. They needed to seek God's Kingdom first and then know with confidence that God would provide all the necessities of this life. They needed to have FAITH!

He did add one important thing this time, concerning the SIZE of His church, the number of members that would be His flock. He said, "Fear not LITTLE flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

The Greek for "little flock" is a DOUBLE diminutive, and in English we would say something like, "Fear not VERY LITTLE flock" or "Fear not LITTLE LITTLE flock." The true church of Christ, the church of God, would never be the large in number "Christian" church among those who use the name "Christian." It would always be relatively very small, just the very little flock.

Then to them, the little flock, Jesus finished this teaching of His, by saying, "So sell your possessions, and give away much of what you have, if you have great material goods; provide for yourselves purses that do not grow old, with treasures in heaven that do not fail you, where no thief can break in and steal from you, and moths cannot eat and destroy. For where your treasure is, there will your HEART be also" (Luke 12:22-34).

Jesus was saying that we need to have the right priorities. If you have an abundance of physical wealth make sure you use it in a godly way.

### **Parable Of The Watchful Servant**

Jesus knew something that they then did not know, and we today still do not know. They and us do not know when exactly the Lord will return from heaven to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. They then, and us today, do not know when it is our last day in this physical life. We hear and see the news each day of people who went to do their daily work one day, as the day before (think of those who were in the two trade buildings in New York on September the 11th 2001), and did not know it was going to be their last day to live for them in this lifetime. This parable is very important for everyone in all ages. Jesus said:

"Let your clothes be on and your lamps be burning, and be like people who are waiting for their master to come home from the marriage feast, so they may open the door for him when he comes and knocks. Blessed indeed are those servants who are awake and alert when their master comes. Truly, he will be so pleased that he will put on the servants uniform and have them sit at the table and he will serve them the meal. If he comes in the second watch or in the third [anywhere from 9 pm to 3 am], and finds them so watching for him, they are blessed indeed.

Now this, that if the house-owner had known the hour that the thief was coming, he would have been awake and ready, so his house would not have been broken into. You also must be READY; for I tell you, the Son of man is coming again at an hour and time you least expect Him to come."

"Lord," said Peter, "are you telling this parable to just us or to all people?"

"Jesus answered, "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master will set over his household goods, to give his family their portion of food at the correct time? Blessed is that servant who is doing their work when their master comes. Truly I tell you, he will give even more responsibilities to that servant in handling his possessions. But, if that servant says within his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the men servants and maid servants under him, and to eat and drink and get drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he least expects him to come, and in an hour that he is not looking for him to come, and will punish him and put him with the unfaithful.

"And that servant who KNEW his master's will, but did not make himself ready nor did according to his will, shall receive a SEVERE punishment. But he who did NOT know, and did what deserved a punishment, shall receive a lighter punishment.

"Every one to whom MUCH is given, of him will much be required; and to the person to whom people give more responsibilities they will demand more in fulfilling those responsibilities" (Luke 12:35-48).

If God has given us knowledge of Himself, His plan of salvation, the understanding of His basic truths, then we are to use them wisely and carefully. We are to appreciate them, to keep them, to do His will in our lives all the time. We are not to slack off, get complacent, or fall into wrong ideas of theology, such as thinking we or others, know the year (or even the day as some have proclaimed in just about every age over the last 2,000 years) of Christ's return. We are not to give up because we think Jesus is delaying His coming again, and so delude ourselves into thinking we can, eat, drink, be merry, or as the saying goes, have our, "wine, women, and song." We are to always be vigilant, watchful, careful, doing our Master's will, and be ready for His coming, for His coming is as soon as our last day of life on this earth, and most of us never know when exactly that day may come.

### **Interpreting The Signs Of The Times**

Jesus again talked about the fact that He had not come this time to bring peace on earth, but that people in household families would be divided over Him, and some would despise others who followed Him. He talked again about being able to interpret the signs of the sky, when it was going to rain etc. but that they could not discern the present time which proved the Messiah was among them. He talked about how they should judge what was correct and if they were in the wrong they

better settle out of court with their adversary, or they would find themselves in much deeper trouble with the courts (Luke 12:49-59).

### **Repentance Is A Key To Salvation**

There were some present who asked Him about the individuals that Pilate had killed while they were sacrificing and mingled their blood with that of the blood of the sacrifices.

It might be interesting to know a few things about Pilate. He was not a Roman by nationality, but by citizenship. He was born a Spaniard and educated in Spain as far as the schools of that country could take him. Then he went to Britain to study in the universities of that country under the administration of the Druids. It was Pilate's ambition to become a Roman lawyer and the future governor of Palestine. He studied long enough in Britain to achieve not only his ambition but to absorb the Druidic philosophy rather than the Greek and Roman. Pilate's question to our Lord as they were walking out the Praetorium, "What is Truth?" This was the question which the Druids were ever accustomed to debate.

The people were wanting to know if those Pilate killed were "great" sinners because this happened to them. The Roman Government usually left the Jews alone to worship in freedom. We are not told why Pilate in this case had them killed.

Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered so? I tell you, NO; but unless you REPENT you will all likewise PERISH. Or, those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse offenders and sinners than all others who dwelt in Jerusalem and/or worked on constructing buildings? I tell you, NO; but unless you REPENT you will likewise PERISH!"

And He told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came one day seeking fruit on it and found none. So he said to his gardener, 'I have come these last three years seeking fruit from this fig tree, and I have found none. I want you to cut it down; why should it use up good valuable ground?' And he answered him, 'I think you should leave it stand, sir, till I dig around it and put on manure. And if it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, then I shall cut it down' " (Luke 13:1-9).

Jesus was, in all this explanation, talking about having life eternal, or being cut down, destroyed, perishing, and never gaining eternal life. There are few things to note. One, is that God is willing to be patient with people to a point. He will work with them, trying to nurture them and bring them along to what is required for His grace and love, but there comes a day when if no fruit is produced by the individual, He will have no choice but to let them perish.

We also note, that REPENTANCE is an absolute requirement if you are going to live forever and not perish. And we also note, that just because some people die in terrible natural calamities and even by the hands of other human beings, does not mean they are sinners above other people, and that God is handing out severe punishment upon them.

The MAIN point Jesus was wanting to get across was for people to think about sin in relation to salvation, not so much about trying to tie horrible events in an individual's

physical life to sin. As the subject was to do with "sin" He was pointing out that people have to REPENT or they will one day perish fully and forever, never to live again.

### **Healing On The Sabbath Meets With Criticism**

It was a Sabbath day and Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and there was present a woman who had an infirmity for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten herself. When Jesus saw her He called her to come to Him and said to her, "Lady, you are freed from your infirmity." He laid hands on her and she was immediately healed and stood up straight. With joyous and uplifted voice she praised God.

But the ruler of the synagogue (they were usually Pharisees) became very indignant because Jesus had done this healing on the Sabbath day. He turned and said to the people assembled there, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; be healed on those days, but not on the Sabbath day."

The Lord Jesus answered him, "You HYPOCRITES! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his horse from the manger, and lead it away to water it? So should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?"

When Jesus put it to them this way, all His adversaries got red in the face and were put to shame. The general people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by Him (Luke 13:10-17).



**Jesus heals the crippled woman who was bent over**

### **Are Only Few Saved?**

Jesus and His disciples still had not yet arrived in Jerusalem. They were passing through many towns and villages. An individual came to him and asked, "Lord, will those who are saved be few in number?"

And He said, "You must strive to enter by the NARROW door, for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the householder had risen up and closed the door, you will begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us.' He will answer you, 'I do not know where you come from.' Then they will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.' But he will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you come from, you are strangers to me, depart from me, all you workers of lawlessness!' I tell you, you will weep and gnash your teeth, when you see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God and you yourselves cast out. And men will come from the east and west, and from the north and south, and sit in fellowship together

in the Kingdom of God. And behold, some are last who will be first, and some first who will be last" (Luke 13:22-30).

Some of the words of Jesus are VERY SOBERING! Some of His words are pretty PLAIN also. When Jesus comes again in glory, when the resurrection takes place, when Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, are raised to life in that resurrection, when the prophets are raised, and many others from the four quarters of the earth, there will be many who thought they were "Christians" - who thought they knew Jesus, thought they ate and drank with Him, were "church" going people, and took it for granted they would be with Jesus in His Kingdom. But they will not be in that first resurrection at His coming again. And the reason as to the WHY, Jesus gives....they were workers of lawlessness! Lawlessness is the breaking of God's holy and righteous commandments, the Ten commandments being the basic foundation.

Many people will not be in that first resurrection who thought they would be. They will have to wait for the general white throne judgment resurrection, at the end of the 1,000 year reign of Christ on earth, that we have talked about in past chapters of this Gospel story.

Some near the end of this age, shortly before Jesus comes, will be converted, will acknowledge sin, will repent, will turn from lawlessness to walk in righteousness, and be in the first resurrection, be in the Kingdom of God. They will be some of the very last ones to find true repentance and conversion since the time of Adam and Eve. So, it will be as Jesus said, the first (long time ago could have found the true way of God and followed it) will be some of the very last to enter the Kingdom, while some of the last of this age will find true repentance and enter the Kingdom first (Rev. 7), at the time of Christ's coming again.

Then again, some of those first to have salvation offered to them, who even thought they had it in their pocket so to speak, but who would not turn fully from lawlessness (think about the 4th commandment, and how many Christians really observe and obey it), will not even be in the Kingdom period! They will be weeping and gnashing their teeth. There will be many "Christians" when Jesus returns who will be standing in their flesh, thinking they should be changed from mortal to immortal (1 Cor. 15), thinking they should rise to meet the Lord in the clouds and be with Him (1 Thes. 4) and THEY WILL NOT! They will be outside looking in. There will indeed be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

We need to be sure we are not among that crowd. We need to be DOING the law, and not be lawless.

### **Jesus' Answer To Herod And His Weeping Over Jerusalem**

At that moment when Jesus was just finishing answering the question about many or few being saved, some friendlier Pharisees came running up to Him saying, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you."

The word Herod was actually the surname of a family, from the great and famous "Herod the Great" (37 B.C. to 4 B.C.) There were a number of male descendants from this "great Herod." This one here that the Pharisees were talking about was Herod Antipas (A.D. 6 to A.D. 39). He ended up (because his father determined it be so) only being governor over the region of Galilee and Perea, which embraced one



fourth of the original territory he would have liked to have had kingship rule over. It was this Herod that John the Baptist denounced for marrying his brother Philip's wife. His rule over the territory he did govern was marked with cunning and crime. He was, history tells us, intensely selfish and utterly destitute of principles.

This Herod Antipas wanted to see Jesus dead, but Jesus told the Pharisees to "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course. Nevertheless I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the next day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from the city of Jerusalem.' "

Jesus was talking in proverbial language to Herod Antipas. He was in plain language saying, "Look, you fox, you cannot do anything against me today, or tomorrow or any day, until I've done the work God wants me to do. And even then I could not die outside of Jerusalem, for so it is ordained, and there is nothing you can do about it!"

As Jesus was thinking about the city of Jerusalem as the only place where He could be put to death, the city itself came before His mind, and its history of being a city where many of God's prophets were killed. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, guilty of killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How I would have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not let me do it! You refused me! So, behold, your house is forsaken! And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'" (Luke 13:31-35).

It was to be yet a while before Jesus would enter the city of Jerusalem. He was making His way there, but He would not arrive for some time. When He did the people would be greeting Him with "Hosanna to the son of David, blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord." This we shall see when we get to that part of our story.

### **Feast Of Dedication In The Winter**

A few months or more had past and it was the heart of the winter in Palestine. The word used by John in his gospel implies that it was cold and inclement.

Jesus was again in Jerusalem, this time for the feast of "Dedication" or as more literal a translation "feast of renewing" or "feast of renovation." Why it was so called will be seen from the following history of how this feast came into being in the Jewish calendar.

"The feast was instituted by Judaeus Maccabeus, in the year 164 before the birth of Christ. The Temple and city were taken over by Antiochus Epiphanies in the year 167 B.C. He slew 40 000 inhabitants, and sold 40 000 more as slaves. In addition to this, he sacrificed a sow on the altar of bunt-offerings, and a broth being made of this he sprinkled it all over the Temple. The city and Temple were brought back into Jewish hands and domain three years later by Judaeus Maccabeus, and the Temple was purified with great pomp and solemnity. The ceremony of purification continued through 8 days, during which Judaeus presented animal sacrifices, and celebrated the praise of God with hymns and psalms (Josephus, Antiquities, book 12, c.11).

"They decked also the forefront of the Temple with crowns of gold, and with shields, and the gates and the chambers they RENEWED, and hanged doors upon them," 1 Mac. 4:52-59. On this account it was called the feast of RENOVATION or Dedication. Then it is

also known as the "feast of lights." Josephus the Jewish Pharisee historian of the first century A.D. calls it such and says the city of Jerusalem was illuminated, as expressive of joy. The feast began on the 15th day of Chisleu, answering to about the 15th day of December. The festival continued for 8 days with festive joy" (see Barnes' Notes on the NT, page 316, One volume edition).

This Jewish feast then can be known as "dedication" because the Temple was re-dedicated to God in 164 B.C. It can be known as the feast of "renovation" or "renewal" because much repair was done to the Temple. And it can be known as the "feast of lights" because Jerusalem was ablaze with many lights and great joy when the rededicating of the Temple took place after Judaeus Maccabeus and his men defeated the pagan armies in 164 B.C. and retook the Temple and Jerusalem for Jewish domain once more. The feast is also commonly known as Hanukkah.

Jesus was walking through the porch of Solomon when the Jews gathered around Him and asked, "Just how long are you going to keep us in suspense by the way you talk? If you are the Christ to come, then just tell us plainly." Jesus replied, "Look, I've already told you with some plain words, but you will not believe them. The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness as to who I am, but you do not believe because you are not a part of my sheep. My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me; and I give to them eternal life, and they will never perish forever, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, He is greater than everyone, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. And what is more, I and my Father are ONE."

Once more the Jews knew exactly what He was meaning by saying that He and the Father were one. They knew He was meaning that He was God. They picked up stones again, ready to throw at Him. Jesus then said, "I have shown you many good works from the Father: for which of these good works do you stone me?"

"Oh, it's not for any works that you have done, that we are ready to stone you to death, but because you are just a man, yet you make yourself to be God," the Jews answered.

"Well, look at your own law! Is it not written in the law of Moses, 'I said, you are gods'? (Psalm 82:6). So, if He called them 'gods' unto whom the word of God was given, unto the people in general (and the Scripture cannot be broken, it is ever true), why do you say to Him that the Father has sent into this world, that I blaspheme because I have said 'I am the Son of God'?"

When Jesus was saying that He was God, He was not telling them that He was the God being who was still in heaven at the time, the one He referred to as the Father. He was not saying that He was the supreme God being, but that being a Son of God, He carried the same name, and attributes - He was Jesus God, we might say, and the one in heaven was the Father God. Jesus showed that their Old Testament Scriptures clearly taught that those human beings who had received the word of God - the Israelites, could be literal sons and daughters of God Almighty, and hence they also could carry the name of God.

Jesus was answering them from the very word of God itself and what the Lord had said, that He Himself called those who had been given His word - gods. It was part of the plan of God to create more offspring from Himself, people who belonged to God, so were God's children, and so would also carry God's name.

Jesus continued, "If I do not the works of my Father, then you have a right not to believe me. But, on the other hand, if I do God's works, then although you don't believe the words that I speak about the matter, believe the works: that you might know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in Him."

All this made the Jews more angry, and were more determined to stone Him, but it was not time for Jesus to be killed, not yet, so He escaped out of their hands. He went for a while beyond Jordan into the place where John the Baptist first baptized, and He abode there for a while. Many people came to Him there because they said, "John did not perform one single miracle; but all that he ever spoke about this man has been the truth." It was while in this area that many more believed on Jesus (John 10:22-42).

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **HUMILITY AND MORE PARABLES**

#### **Man With Dropsy Healed**

It was another weekly Sabbath, and Jesus was dining at a house of a ruler who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees. And the members of that sect were once more watching Him. There was present a man who had "dropsy." This does not mean he kept dropping things. The word "dropsy" is an old English word, it is not used today for the disease that this man had. The man had arms and legs that were swollen all the time. Jesus said to the Pharisees and the experts of religious law, "So, is it permitted in the law to heal people on the Sabbath day, or not?"

They refused to answer Him. Jesus seeing that they refused to say a word in response to His question, touched the sick man and healed him, then turning to the people said, "Which of you does not work on the Sabbath? If your donkey or cow falls into a pit, don't you proceed at once to get it out?" (Luke 14:1-6). Again no one answered Him.

#### **Being Humble**

When Jesus noticed that all who had been invited to the dinner were trying to sit near the head of the table, He gave this advice:

"If you are invited to a wedding feast, don't always head for the best seat. What if someone more respected and well-known than you has been invited? The host will say, 'Let this person sit here instead.' Then you will be embarrassed and will have to take whatever seat is left at the foot of the table! Do this instead - sit at the foot of the table. Then when your host sees you he will come and say, 'Friend, we have a better place for you!' Then you will be honored in front of all the other guests. For the proud will be humbled and the humble will be honored."

Turning now to the host of this dinner, Jesus said, "When you put on a luncheon or a dinner, don't just invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. For they will repay you by inviting you to their dinners. Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. Then at the resurrection God will reward you for inviting those who could not repay you" (Luke 14:7-14).

Jesus was telling people that those who are "unknown" and really "no-bodies" in the eyes of the world would be very wise to stay humble in their dealings and practices with certain physical meetings the world may sponsor. They should not try to be as we say "pushy" - trying to put themselves into the lime-light or notice of people attending such functions, because of some vanity and self-important mindset. For it is better to be asked to "step up" than be embarrassed by being publicly "put-down" a step or two.

#### **The Banquet In The Kingdom**

A man spoke up and said, "What a privilege it would be to eat and share a fellowship meal in the Kingdom of God."

A privilege indeed, but one that many in that day who were invited, will miss out on. Jesus gave this parable in response to the man's statement.

"A man prepared a great feast meal and sent out many invitations to people he knew and ones close to him. When all was ready he sent his servants out to notify the guests that they should come. But they all began to make excuses. One said he had just bought a field and wanted to inspect it, so he asked to be excused. Another said he had just bought five pair of oxen and wanted to see how they worked together pulling his plow. Another said he had just married and could not leave his wife.

"The servant returned and told his master what they had said. The master was angry and said, 'Go quickly into the streets and the alleys of the cities and towns and invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind.'

"After the servant had done this, he reported to his master that there was still room for more people to attend the feast. So, his master told him, 'Go then into the country lanes and behind the hedges and urge anyone to come, so that my house will be full. For none of those I invited first will get even the smallest taste of what I had prepared for them" (Luke 14:15-24).

God first gave the invitation to come into His Kingdom to the Israelites, and specifically in the time Jesus was teaching and preaching, to the people of the House of Judah (who consisted of those from the tribes of Judah, Levi, and Benjamin, with a few from some of the other tribes who had escaped the Assyrian captivity and deportation from 745 to 718 B.C. and had fled to the House of Judah in the south).

In the main, those people to whom the invitation was first given, REJECTED the invitation, made excuse after excuse, and just would not listen and turned away from entering the Kingdom of God. Many were invited that were educated and experts in the law of God, they were the ones who should have been the closest to God, knowing His word, but they also rejected the true way into the feast dinner of the Kingdom of God.

So, the invitation to enter was sent out and given to the lowly and often uneducated of the land, to the poor, to the crippled, to the blind. The invitation would also go to those outside the fold of Judah, into the countries of other nations. God will make sure His banquet feast at the coming of His Kingdom, will be full. But those to whom the invitation was first given would be left outside at that time.

We need to be careful NOT to turn down our invitation to be in God's Kingdom when Jesus Christ returns to this earth to establish it as the world ruling government for all nations.

### **Count The Cost Of Being A Disciple Of Christ**

Great crowds were following Him around, looking like they wanted to be His disciples, but they really did not understand what it meant to be a follower of His way, so He turned and said to them, "If you really want to be my follower you must LOVE me MORE than your own father, or mother, wife, children, brothers or sisters - yes, more even than your own life. Otherwise you cannot be my disciples. And you cannot be my disciples if you will not carry your own cross, particular problems, trials, tests, that come in being my disciple.

"But you better not begin until you COUNT THE COST. For who would begin to construct a building without first getting estimates and then checking to see if there is enough money to pay the bills as they would come in? Otherwise you might complete the foundation only, and then find you have not enough money to finish the project. How everyone would then laugh at you. They would say, 'There's the person who started that building and ran out of money before they could finish it!'

"Or, what king would ever dream of going to war without first sitting down with his counselors and military leaders to discuss whether his army of ten thousand is strong enough to defeat the twenty thousand soldiers who are marching to fight against him? If he is not able, then while the enemy is still a long way off, he will send a delegation of people from his government to discuss terms of peace. So no one can become my disciple without giving up everything for me and knowing what it will cost them.

"Salt is good for seasoning. But if it loses its flavor, how do you make it salty again? Flavorless salt is good neither for the soil nor for fertilizer. It is just thrown away. Anyone who is willing to hear, should indeed listen and understand!" (Luke 14:25-35).

Yes, you do not become a follower and disciple of Christ's JUST on an emotional experience.

Some form of emotion should be felt in full REPENTANCE towards being saved and entering the Kingdom through Christ, but it should never stand alone. There should be also a practical no nonsense, serious contemplation, meditation, and mental thought on what it will mean to be a true "Christian."

For wanting to be a real disciple of Jesus means HE comes FIRST. His way of life, and His practices, must be first in your life, above any other person, or any other thing. There is a price tag on having God's grace and salvation, not that you can ever earn it by any of your works, but you must be wanting to have it more than anything else in your entire life.

As Jesus taught us in His Sermon on the Mount, we must first of all seek God's Kingdom and His righteousness, if we want to be in it on the resurrection day, when Jesus returns in glory.

### **Story Of The Lost Sheep**

The hated tax collectors and other notorious sinners from the other side of the tracks, from the parts of towns most people did not enter, often came to listen to Jesus teach. This made the Pharisees and the "experts in religious law" complain that He was associating with the sum of the earth and the lowest of the "despicable people." So Jesus used again an illustration like He had done before:

"If you had 100 sheep, and one of them strayed away, and got lost in the wilderness, would you not leave the 99 others and go searching for the one that was lost? Yes, you would. And when you found it you would carry it home on your shoulders. When you arrived home you would call your friends and your neighbors to come and rejoice with you because the sheep that was lost is now found. In the same way, heaven will be happier over the one sinner that repents and turns to God, than over



99 others who are righteousness and haven't strayed away and got lost!" (Luke 15:1-7).



**The Parable of the Lost Sheep**

### **The Silver Coin Lost**

Jesus also illustrated the same with this story:

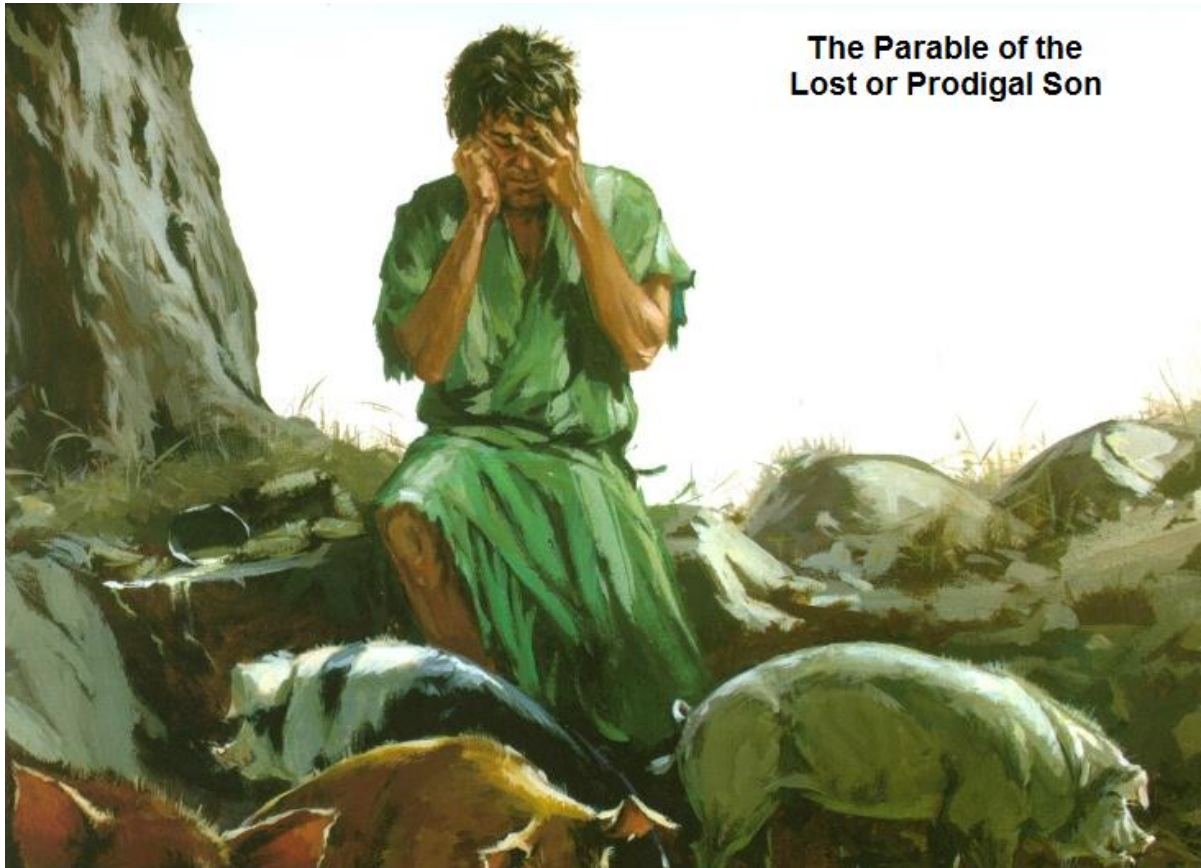
"Or suppose a woman has ten valuable silver coins and loses one. Will she not light a lamp and look in every corner of the house, and sweep every nook and cranny and corner until she finds it? Yes, she will! And when she finds it, she will call in her friends and neighbors to rejoice with her because she has found the coin she lost. In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels over even one sinner that repents" (Luke 15:8-10)

### **Story Of The Lost Son**

And with one more further illustration and story, Jesus brought home the importance of one sinner repenting:

"There was a man who had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father one day, 'Father, give me my share of my inheritance now, not later.' And the father did so, dividing his working profit between the two sons. Not long afterwards the younger son packed his belongings, gathered all he had together, and departed into a faraway country, and there he squandered away his inheritance in loose living. After spending everything he had, there came a great famine in the land he was living in, and he began to be in physical need to keep himself from starving. So he went out and found a citizen who needed someone to feed his pigs. He was so desperate because no one would give him anything, he fed on the pods that he was feeding to the swine.

“He finally thought to himself, 'How many of my father's servants are starving to death, like I am? I will arise and go to my father and say to him, father, I have sinned against heaven and before you also; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me at one of your hired servants.' And so he arose and came to his father. But while still a long way off his father saw him and felt compassion towards him. The father ran and embraced him, and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you, I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'



“But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best set of clothes, and put them on him; and put a ring on his finger, and shoes on his feet; and bring out the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and be joyful; for this my son who was as good as dead, is alive; he was lost, but now is found.' And they all began to have a party of rejoicing.

“Now his elder son was in the field; and as he approached near to the house, he heard music and dancing and merriment. He called one of the servants and asked what was going on and what all this happy noise was all about. 'Oh, your brother has come home,' the servant replied, 'and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has him back safe and sound.' But the elder brother was angry and refused to go into the house. His father came out and tried to entreat him, but he answered his father, 'All these years I have served you, and never did anything against your wishes and desires; yet you never gave me a calf that I might have a party with my friends. But when this son of yours comes back, who has thrown away and foolishly spent your money you gave him, on prostitutes and lavish living, you turn right around and kill the fatted calf and put on a celebration for him. I just do not understand what you are thinking!'

"And the father said, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours all the time. It was fitting to have this celebration party and to rejoice, for this your brother who was as good as dead, is alive; he was lost, but now he is found' (Luke 15:11-32)

Indeed, it is a time to greatly rejoice over even one sinner who truly REPENTS and accepts Jesus as personal Savior and who will love God the Father with all his heart and life and mind. We who have been with the heaven Father for some time, who have His love and all the blessing He gives to us each day, we who know His ways, and have walked in them, and have so been able to receive the blessing from so doing, each and every day, we need to be able to greatly rejoice over even one sinner who has been lost in sin, but who has now found the way to our Father in heaven.

Jesus was trying to get through to certain ones of His time that were so self-righteous in their approach to "religion" that they could not see where it was all at, what the bottom line was that God was doing with mankind on this earth. They could not see that God was wanting sinners to REPENT and to become His literal sons and daughters. They could not see that God and the angels in heaven were greatly rejoicing over just one single sinner that found the way to salvation.

We need to always be of the mindset of our heavenly Father, and our brother Christ Jesus, in that we also rejoice with them over the lost sinner coming to repentance and salvation.

### **The Faithful Steward Being Wise**

Jesus thought it was needed that His disciples be taught that it was fine to be wise in physical ways with the world, which might someday pay off when needing some help, so He said:

"There was a rich man who had a servant, and charges were brought to him that the servant was wasting his goods. And he called him and said to him, 'What is this that I am hearing about you? Turn in the account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be a servant in charge of my goods.' And the servant said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking this stewardship away from me? I am not strong enough to dig ditches and I'm ashamed to beg. Ah, I know what I'll do, so that people may receive me into their favor and houses when I'm put out of my stewardship with this rich man.'

So, summoning his master's debtors to come to him, one by one, he said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' The man replied, 'I owe a hundred jars of oil.' And the servant said, 'Alright, take your account and write down that you owe 50 jars of oil.' Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe my master?' The man answered, 'It owe a hundred sacks of wheat.' The servant said to him, 'Take your bill and write that you owe eighty sacks.'

The master found out what the servant had done, but actually commended the dishonest servant because of his prudence, discerning rational and farsighted thoughts.

The sons of this world are sometimes wiser than the sons of light. So, I tell you, make friends for yourselves in the physical substance of material dealings with people, use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends, so that when

the physical things of money and goods fail you, you will have friends to help you on your way in this life as you move forward to eternal life" (Luke 16:1-9).

Jesus was not endorsing that His disciples be dishonest or cheats. That was not the main point of the parable. The main point was that Jesus said it was wise, to be wise in the use of your material resources, gifts, talents etc. so you could have friends who were not disciples of Jesus. In so doing, there might come a time when those friends would help you in physical ways, if you run into hard times in this life.

Very interesting and revealing indeed, for Jesus was teaching that sometimes friends outside of the Church of God, are fine to have, and that they may be the ones to help you better and faster than your friends in "the church" when hard physical times come your way.

### **Being Faithful With What You Have**

Jesus continued with more instructions of being a wise and faithful steward of what God gives you:

"He who is faithful in very little is also faithful in much; and he who is unfaithful in very little is unfaithful in much. If you have not been faithful with the physical material goods and money you have, who is going to entrust to you greater riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?"

God expects us to be good stewards of all the physical goods we have, to use them wisely and in the service of others. If we do that then He will give us more to use and be faithful in, especially so in the Kingdom. If you are not faithful and wise in using material goods here and now, then people will not entrust you to have more responsibility. We certainly find this in the working sector of society. A boss is not going to entrust you with great responsibilities if you cannot handle wisely the little responsibilities you have now. And often if you have not handled correctly duties and material goods that you do not naturally or shall we say, "fall into sink with" (taking more effort and work on your part) immediately, then even that which does come easy to you, and that you are naturally talented with, will be withheld from you. Life and work is not always doing what comes natural or easy to us, sometimes we must do and be faithful in things that task our body and mind. But we shall be rewarded, often in this lifetime, but certainly in the next one in God's Kingdom.

### **Not Allowing The Physical To Dominate**

Jesus did not want anyone to misunderstand what He was teaching. Some listening would no doubt have thought He was saying that we needed to be consumed, as on a drug, with the material things of this life, making what we do with goods and money and our talents, the number one priority in life, and sad to say, many, from morning to night, are doing just that.

I was talking to a lady who has a daughter, unmarried, but works at two jobs, one an office job, all day, and then goes to work in a casino till 2 a.m. in the morning. She has bought a house but must have two others living there also as roommates. She has to do all this just to make ends meet.

Then of course there are others who do such things as the daughter above simply to get more and more money in the bank. Their "god" is money and material goods.

Jesus was not wanting anyone to think He was teaching that people should be all consumed with the material things in life, so He said, "No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and the physical world."

Jesus wants us to do our faithful part while in this physical world with the material things we have responsibility over, but not to the point it becomes our every breath of life. He wants us to make sure God and His way come first, but not to let slip our physical obligations with what has been given to us either by God or man or both.

The Pharisees, who loved "money" heard all this and just laughed and scoffed at Him. Jesus said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts; for what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:10-15).

The Pharisees, to uphold their life style, their greed for money, their love of being noticed on the street and at banquets, would justify all they did as easy as blinking an eye. They had all kinds of ways to justify, make it sound correct and righteous, how they lived and acted to gain more and more. Jesus told them they were only fooling themselves and maybe some people walking the streets or in the market place, but they were not fooling God, for He knew what was in their hearts. And what was in their hearts was an abomination to God.

### **New Testament Teaching Since John**

Jesus wanted to also make it very clear that the New Testament or New Covenant had arrived and was being taught FROM the days of John the Baptist. He said, "The law and the prophets were until John; since then the good news of the Kingdom of God is preached, and every one enters it by striving forcefully with great determination. But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one dot of the law to become void" (Luke 16:16-17).

These few verses are very important verses, not understood by many. There is much argument today over the Old and the New Covenants, and exactly WHEN the New one took effect, was it when Jesus died, or when He was resurrected, was it on the day of Pentecost?

The truth of the matter is that the New Covenant took effect at the coming and preaching and ministry of John the Baptist. Then it was no longer JUST the law and the prophets, the Old Testament books, but the "spirit" of the New Covenant that was now in effect. Jesus and John were teaching and preaching the New Covenant, this of course we can see plainly from Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount." And those who wanted into the New Covenant, into the Kingdom of God, had to strive hard, be determined in their mind, to walk the straight and narrow path to eternal life, as Jesus had already before taught and instructed.

Then He was also making it clear that just because the New Covenant and the Kingdom of God had arrived to be preached and entered, did not mean the old books of the Old Testament or Covenant were done away with. On the contrary, He

said, it would be easier for heaven to roll away than for one word of those books to perish.

Jesus was saying once more what He plainly taught in Matthew 4:4, that people are to live by EVERY WORD OF GOD, all that is contained in the Old and the New Testaments, what today we know as the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

### **Marriage Bond Tightened Up**

Jesus was still hammering at the Pharisees, it was they who were laughing at Him for what He was teaching, so they needed to be hit a little more. Jesus knew that the main school of the Pharisees taught that people could get divorced for just about any little reason, sometimes out and out silly and trivial reasons, like divorcing your wife because she didn't iron your clothes with the pleats in just the right place. Jesus here recorded by Luke does not go into details, but the Pharisees would have known exactly what He was aiming at. He said, "Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery."

Later, Jesus gets into this subject once again with the Pharisees and goes into more detail on the matter. We shall see this when we come to chapter 19 of the Gospel of Matthew.



## CHAPTER 4

### LAZARUS AND THE RICH MAN

#### Parable Of Lazarus

Jesus said, looking at the Pharisees, "There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom."

Using the Bible to interpret itself, we know that death is a sleep, that people do not continue to think, talk, walk around, anywhere after they die. This poor man Lazarus was dead, asleep, but one day is taken by the angels into Abraham's bosom, into a loving embrace and close fellowship with Abraham. This happens when Abraham will rise from the dead, when both Lazarus and Abraham will rise in a resurrection, the angels being present (Matthew 24:29-31) and all saints in close bosom fellowship one with the other. So, this part of Jesus' parable brings us to the FIRST resurrection, the resurrection of the saints, at the coming of Christ in glory, to meet the Jesus in the clouds of the air (1 Thes. 4:13-18), and the change from mortal to immortal for the children of God as Paul spoke about in 1 Corinthians 15.

Jesus continued, "The rich man died and was also buried; and in the grave, he lifted up his eyes, and was in torment, seeing Abraham far off and Lazarus in close bosom fellowship. And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger into water and come and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish seeing this flame.' "

First we notice the rich man dies, he is also asleep, until he is resurrected back to life. But this resurrection for him is not until AFTER the first resurrection and AFTER the 1,000 years period spoken about in Revelation 20. Of course in this parable it is clear that Lazarus is a saint or child of God, while the rich man is one of the unrepentant wicked.

This wicked rich man comes up in a resurrection at the end of the 1,000 year period, and what does he see? Well, already in the Kingdom of God there is Abraham and Lazarus, who were resurrected 1,000 years earlier. Then as we are near the very end of all time and ages leading up to the cleansing of the earth (2 Peter 3:8-13 and Malachi 4) and destruction of all the wicked, and the coming of the new heavens and new earth, it is only fitting that the rich man SEES the FIRE!

He is in utter anguish! The Greek here for this word "anguish" mainly means "anguish of the mind and emotions." It does not mean he is feeling physical pain from being in some kind of never ending burning hell-fire, where he was thrown when he died.

Notice he asks for Abraham to send Lazarus, to do what? Does he ask him to get a fire engine and hose pipe and shoot torrents of water over him and the area to put out the fire that some say he is living in, and has been in for thousands of years? No! he asks that Lazarus come over to put his wet finger in the tip of his tongue. When

you are in such mental anguish your mouth dries up and you become "hot under the collar" as the saying goes.

This man could see the flames that were coming on the earth to fulfill the prophecies we have quoted above. You bet he was in anguish. He realized what fate awaited him.

Jesus said furthermore, "But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between you and us is a great wide chasm, so that those who would like to pass from your side to this side, cannot do so.'"



**The Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man**

Jesus was hitting the Pharisees right between the eyes with a two by four. He was telling them that such people as they, had had their physical comfort and luxury during their lifetime, while not caring for the poor and needy, while not even giving them some crumbs from their table. He was telling them that people like Lazarus, who had none of the material goods they had, in their physical life, but were true children of God (while they only pretended to be religious), would have their comfort and reward. They would be inside the Kingdom looking out at such fellows who would be in anguish at not being in the Kingdom and who would be waiting their fate in the fires at the end of time.

The great gulf or chasm that could not be crossed was the chasm of "immortality." The chasm of eternal life as opposed to mortal life. Lazarus now had eternal life, the rich man was raised to mortal life. The rich man was representing those who had refused to repent and enter God's Kingdom. It was now too late for the rich man, his day of salvation had already come and gone. He had thrown it away, he had refused to listen to God's calling and God's WORD!

Listening to the word of God, living by every word of God, is vital, as we have seen Jesus already expounding to us in earlier parts of His ministry. This is again brought to the forefront by Jesus' last words in this parable, "The rich man said, 'Then I beg you, father Abraham, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of anguish.' But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear what they have to say.' And he said, 'Oh no, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' Abraham replied to him, 'Ah, if they will not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they hear and be convinced and repent if someone should rise from the dead' " (Luke 16:19-31).

True repentance to salvation has little if anything to do with "miracles." Physical miracles, seeing them, is not the way to find repentance into the Kingdom of God. Satan with his powers can work miracles. Paul tells us that he sometimes comes as if he is an "angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:13-15). True repentance and being a child of

God comes from a personal relationship with Christ and God the Father, and from studying and living by every word of God. When Jesus said you must listen to Moses and the prophets, all in His day knew that meant all of the books from Genesis to Malachi.<sup>1</sup>

Yes, there were to be more books added to God's word, what we today know as the New Testament, but Jesus, as we've seen, said not one "dot" of the Old Testament would fade away. We have seen He said it was easier for heaven to pass away than one small letter to pass from the law and the prophets - the Old Testament.

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**<sup>1</sup> EDITOR'S NOTE:** I don't believe the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man was intended to teach exact doctrinal truth about the resurrections. Protestants could rightly argue that the parable says that Lazarus' brothers were still alive at the time he asked for someone from the dead to be sent to them as the reply from Abraham was that they can currently read the books of Moses and a person from the dead won't make a difference. Abraham didn't say they were already over here or on the same side of the chasm as Lazarus was about to be destroyed also.

Jesus was not trying to teach doctrinal truth about the resurrections but, via a story, was using a widely accepted (but faulty) Jewish understanding of the afterlife to drive home the moral point Keith points out above that miracles are no guarantee that people will repent. It comes down to their choice to submit to and obey God and if they don't, regardless of how rich or powerful they are in this life, they won't receive eternal life.

I'd like to quote from the Wikipedia article on the "Bosom of Abraham" which explains this faulty but widely accepted Jewish belief that Christ drew upon in this parable:

"During the Second Temple period the concept of a Bosom of Abraham first occurs in Jewish papyri that refer to the 'Bosom of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob'. This reflects the belief of Jewish martyrs who died expecting that: 'after our death in this fashion Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will receive us and all our forefathers will praise us' (4 Maccabees 13:17).

"Other early Jewish works adapt the Greek mythical picture of Hades to identify the righteous dead as being separated from unrighteous in the fires by a river or chasm. In the pseudepigraphical Apocalypse of Zephaniah the river has a ferryman equivalent to Charon in Greek myth [Chris De Burgh sung about this in his song 'Don't Pay the Ferryman'], but replaced by an angel...

"In Christ's account, the righteous occupied an abode of their own, which was distinctly separated by a chasm from the abode to which the wicked were consigned. The chasm is equivalent to the river in the Jewish version, but in Christ's version there is no angelic ferryman, and it is impossible to pass from one side to the other."

It was still true then, and it is still true today, that to be a Lazarus, to be in the Kingdom of God, one would have to hear and live by ALL the Bible. That way is the only way to repentance and salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

When using the Bible to interpret itself, this somewhat famous parable, is not even close to proving that people have an immortal soul that either goes to heaven at death if you are "good" or to an ever burning hell-fire if you are "bad."

The parable clearly teaches the truth about RESURRECTIONS, a resurrection to eternal glory if you are a true repentant child of God, and a resurrection to be burnt up in the fires that will engulf the earth to destroy all unrepentant sinners, and then will come the new heavens and the new earth where in only dwells righteousness. So it is written in the last three chapters of the book of Revelation.

### **Increasing Faith**

Jesus went on to talk again to His disciples about the fact that people will cause others to sin and be offended to the point where they will seriously think about giving up on God. He told them once more that people who do such offenses it would have been better for them to have had a stone around their neck and have been cast into the sea. He said that to cause a little one coming to Him to be offended and give up was a very serious matter indeed.

And as He was talking about sin and repentance He said, "Take note of this and of yourself; if your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him; and if he sins against you seven times in a day, and turns to you and says, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."

We understand this as meaning true repentance, not a deliberate play act, just to lead you on and take advantage of your mercy. Jesus knew there were play actors in religion, He called the Pharisees and Sadducees and those skilled in "religious law" hypocrites and play actors, most of them were, and certainly Jesus was not meaning your kindness and mercy should be taken for a ride by the likes of those (Luke 17:1-4).

The apostles then asked Jesus to increase their faith. We would think they may have been thinking He would wave His hand, utter a prayer and "presto" a greater supply of the Spirit would have tingled up and down their spine. But what He said was the way to increase ones faith:

"If you have faith even as small as a grain of mustard seed you could say to this sycamine tree, 'Be rooted up, and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you, it would come to pass as you desired. Then again, will any one of you who has a servant plowing your field or watching over your sheep, say to him when he comes in from outside, 'Please, sit down at once at the table?' Will he not rather say, 'I want you to prepare supper for me, and when I've eaten then you can eat commandments?' Does he thank that servant for doing the things that he is commanded to do? So you also, when you have done those things which are commanded of you, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have done only that which was our duty to do' " (Luke 17:5-10).

Do you remember when the disciples could not cast out a demon from a father's son? Jesus did the casting out, and was disappointed with the disciples. They asked

Him why they could not cast out the demon. Do you remember what Jesus said in reply to them? He said such a miracle could only be done through much prayer and fasting!

We draw close to God through prayer and fasting. We gain more faith to do greater works for God. Jesus here was saying that even with a little faith, a small part of faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could do great things, but if you wanted still yet more faith, you had to go above and beyond just obeying the written commandments of the Lord. Doing those commandments was part of your duty as a servant and child of God. Increased faith would come about by going beyond the call of duty.

It reminds me of what John said in 1 John 3:22. There are things that are pleasing to God that we should be doing also. They may not be written down as laws and commandments per se, but there are things that God is pleased with even if He has not spelled them out to us in His written word.

Doing all of this, the written commandments and the unwritten will of the Lord, draw us closer and closer to Him, and in so living this way, we can add to our faith, or increase our faith. It was probably not the answer that the disciples were looking for or expecting, but Jesus gave it as the sure way to increase a person's faith.

There is also a very sobering connection here with Jesus saying that after we have done all that is commanded of us that we are to say we are "unprofitable servants." For, if we now take those words and put them with Matthew 25:14-30....well, very revealing it is. How the Bible can interpret itself, brings us to stark reality sometimes.

The parable of the unprofitable servant in Matthew 25 can also be applied to our daily everyday lives. God gives us gifts, talents, abilities; He often gives us the opportunity to learn things in ways of skill, such as music, or art, and a host of other skills or abilities. We should with whatever talents we have, use them for the betterment of others around us. Just stop and think for a moment of all the people you know, all the other children in your school or particular club you may belong to, and all the different abilities and skills that they have. God gives all these talents, some natural, just born with, others may be learnt, whichever it may be, the point is that if all are using them to serve and help and give to others, think what a pleasant and nice world it would be, at least in your corner of the world. We often hear of doctors especially skilled in certain surgical work going to serve people in faraway countries, very poor counties, serving them for free because those people have not the means nor the money for such skilled work as they or their children may need.

Our Father in heaven wants us be profitable servants, to use, and to increase what we have been given, even in the physical things that we have. Jesus said elsewhere that He came to SERVE not to be served, so we also should then use all that we have to serve others, and if we are so doing, we will increase and will not be unprofitable servants.

### **Ten Lepers Healed**

Jesus was still headed for Jerusalem. He was now passing along between Galilee and Samaria. He entered a village and was met by ten lepers. The disease of leprosy is very contagious so people in those days with the disease were isolated from everyone else. And they themselves stood back from others so not to pass on their leprosy. The disease is a whitish swollen bumpy formation in the skin, very

contagious as I've just said, and so you really did become an "outcast" from the rest of society.

Well, ten people with leprosy stood far back from Jesus but shouted out to Him, "Jesus, Master, have mercy upon us." Hearing them He said, "You all go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they left they were all healed.

It was the law of Moses that when you were healed from leprosy you were required to show your proof of healing to the priests.

It was one leper who seeing that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice of praise to God, fell at the feet of Jesus, also giving Him thanks. This man was a Samaritan, one from the hated sect that the Jews of Judea despised. "Was there not ten of you cleansed," said Jesus, "where are the other nine? Was no one but this Samaritan found who returned and praised God?"

The other nine we suppose were from Judea, being Jews who thought they knew who the true God was, after all they had the true Temple of God in Jerusalem, and had preserved all the books of the Old Testament inspired Scripture, but they did not return to thank God. Only this man, a Samaritan, that most Jews in Palestine loathed and thought was the scum of the lake, only he returned to praise God and thank Jesus. Jesus told him to stand up and go his way, for his faith had made him well and healthy.

### **The Kingdom Within And When It Also Comes**

One day the Pharisees asked Jesus, "When will the Kingdom of God come?" And Jesus, knowing that they could not see the signs of the present time, and that He was the promised Messiah, knowing they could not see the prophecies, or simply chose to ignore them, about His first coming, knowing that all they cared about was the prophecies of the Messiah coming in power and glory to establish the Kingdom of God on earth (even then they had a distorted idea about how all that would play out, they thought Judah would become some kind of power over all the other nations of the earth, with the Messiah being their leader to defeat their enemies and establish a Jewish super world ruling government).

Jesus knew the Pharisees were only interested in the prophecies regarding the Messiah's coming in glory and power, so He deliberately did not answer their specific question about those prophecies or the time setting as to when those prophecies would come to pass. Jesus went straight to the Kingdom of God as it was for the THEN present, as it was for each individual to find and have for the NOW, for themselves personally, which the Pharisees were far from finding.

Jesus answered them, "The Kingdom of God isn't only ushered in with visible signs. You will not be able to say, 'Oh, look over in this place, for there it is,' or 'It's over there, over in that nation.' For the Kingdom of God is WITHIN you" (Luke 17:20-21).

The Greek word for "within" means just that, within. Some have objected that the Kingdom of God cannot be inside you, but Paul clearly uses it in that sense in Colossians 1:14, where he says that Christians have been "translated" or "moved over" into the Kingdom of the Son of the Father. Christ's Kingdom is the Father's Kingdom, which after He has ruled with that Kingdom on this earth for a thousand years (Revelation 19, 20), He will hand over to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24-26 with Rev.

20, 21). Yet, NOW, at this present time, there is a reality to the Kingdom of God. Christians are moved over into it when they repent, accept Jesus as Savior, are baptized, and receive the Holy Spirit. This for them, is a moving from the kingdom of Satan, sin, and the unconverted world, into the Kingdom of God, here and now, in this physical lifetime. You are already IN the Kingdom of God when you become His literal Spirit led child.

Some object to this explanation, saying that Jesus could not possibly be meaning the Kingdom of God was "within" those Pharisees, to whom He was addressing His answer. But, they fail to take into account the MANY "figures of speech" that is often used in the Bible, by many people, just as we today in our conversation often use figures of speech.

It is true that Jesus certainly did not mean those hypocritical Pharisees had the Kingdom of God within themselves. But using a figure of speech "the Kingdom of God is within you" Jesus was saying and telling them that as far as they should be concerned with, they needed to get the reality of the Kingdom of God as it pertains to the present, as it pertains to having the Kingdom within themselves, being a part of it NOW in the spiritual sense, and not just looking to when it would come in the literal sense, as ruling over the world. And in that first sense, the Kingdom of God could not be physically located as in some specific area of the planet we call earth.

As I've stated, Jesus did not answer their specific question, concerning the literal coming aspect of the Kingdom of God. He chose to go rather to the more important state of things for those Pharisees; being concerned with having in their lives now, within themselves, the Kingdom of God.

Then, turning to His disciples He does tell them about the last days, or more specifically THE very day upon which He would return and establish the literal aspect of the Kingdom of God on the earth. Keeping the CONTEXT in view at all times is the key. We shall then clearly see Jesus was talking about THE LITERAL day when He would come again in glory and power, and the basic state of the world at large.

Jesus said: "The days are coming when you will very much desire to see ONE of the days of the Son of man, and YOU will not see it. Many will come along and say, 'Look here!' or 'Look, there it is!' or 'Behold He comes on this or that year and date.' Do NOT believe them, do not get on their band wagon. For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, SO will be the Son of man in His day. But first He must be rejected and suffer many things by the hands of this generation."

As Jesus taught elsewhere, He was going on a long journey back to heaven for a long time, before He would return in glory to establish the Kingdom. The disciples of His day would later LONG to see that one day of His return, so would many others down through the centuries, but they would not. They would rest in the sleep of death, waiting the resurrection at Christ's coming.

I grew up as a child and teenager in England. I can remember many a day when out on the field playing soccer with the school class, that it just stormed on us like it is hard to imagine. Big black clouds, rolling thunder, raining like there would be no tomorrow, and LIGHTNING that would make a fourth of July fireworks display look tame. It would lightning flash and the sky would literally light up from one side to the other, then go black again from one side to the other, until the next lightning flash.

Quite spectacular it was. And all of this, sky turning black, thunder, rain, and lightning, would all come upon us quite suddenly, within a few minutes.

Jesus continued:

"As it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of man. They ate, they drank, they married, they were engaged to be married, they worked, and they played, until THE DAY when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was in the days of Lot - they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built houses, but on THE DAY when Lot went out from Sodom fire and brimstone rained from heaven and destroyed them all - SO will it be on THE DAY when the Son of man is revealed."

Noah entered the ark on ONE SPECIFIC 24 hour day, it did not take him a month to walk into the ark. The waters of the flood came on ONE specific day (of course the waters continued for a while as is recorded in Genesis), and on THAT DAY Noah entered the ark. The others were as good as dead men on that day, though some did not die on that day that Noah entered the ark. But Jesus is not concerned so much about that fact, as the fact that Noah ENTERED the ark on ONE specific day of the year.

Lot departed out of Sodom on ONE specific day of the year. It did not take him a month or a week to walk out of that city. It took him just ONE day to leave Sodom, and on that day destruction came upon those left in the city.

Jesus is clearly talking about the LITERAL 24 HOUR DAY in the year (whatever year that may be) when He will RETURN to earth with glory and POWER to save/and resurrect the saints, who will join Him in the air, in the clouds (1 Thes. 4:13-18), to be with Him forever more, as they descend to the Mount of Olives at Jerusalem (see Zechariah 14). He is talking about THE day when He comes back again to earth to establish the Kingdom of God on earth to rule all nations, and at that same time and for a while afterwards He will punish and destroy many people who will rebel against Him and will even try to fight Him (see Revelation 17:12-14; 19; and 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10).

We now have THE day that Jesus has focused on, it is one particular literal 24 hour day, when He literally and bodily comes again to earth from heaven. Speaking of that same day Jesus continued with:

"On THAT day, let him who is on the housetop, with his goods and money in the house, NOT come down to take them away; and likewise let him who is in the field NOT turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it. I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. There will be two women grinding together at the mill; one will be taken while the other is left behind."

Oh, the many books that have been written on these last few verses. Many have mistakenly thought Jesus was talking about a coming great tribulation time, near the very end of this age, when the saints would be "raptured" away to heaven - taken suddenly, while driving their car, flying an airplane, driving a school bus, to heaven. They think people will look around in astonishment and ask "Where did....(name)....go to, what happened to them, they were here a second ago and now they are not." Of course the ramifications for such a belief are mind-bending. If you



are driving a school bus full of children down a steep hill on a mountain-side and....you suddenly disappear, the conclusion could be deadly tragic.

Jesus was NOT talking about such a time nor about such a "secret" event of suddenly having the saints disappear while they were doing their daily chores or daily work, and possibly leaving others to face death. Think about the death toll and crippled bodies there would be from all of a sudden thousands of motor vehicle drivers NOT driving, but sudden, in a split second....gone....gone to heaven in a secret rapture!

Jesus WAS talking about THE day in the year upon which He will return to earth. It will be a surprise to most, even the saints will not know which day it will be (as we shall see Jesus telling us later that fact), and people will still be living on earth, doing their daily work and pleasures. Yes, the saints will be on this earth during the last years of the Great Tribulation period. Yes, some of the saints will be in captivity in their enemies lands (the book of Revelation makes that clear), while some saints will be in the wilderness (as it was in the dark and so-called middle ages, to escape religious persecution and death from organizations and governments of nations who wanted to see them dead). Some people will be converted during those last few years before Jesus returns. They will be converted to true Christianity while living where they are living and doing their daily work.

Life at that time will still be going on, in many ways just as it is for us today in our lives. When Jesus returns on a specific day of the year, it will be dark and bedtime for half the world. Hence Jesus saying two would be in one bed. For the other half of the world, they will be awake and working at whatever they do during their waking hours. Jesus will come, not in secret! He will come SUDDENLY yes, but not without great spectacular signs. So mighty will be the signs it will be like one of those famous sudden English thunder and lightning storms I was telling you about. The book of Revelation tells us that every eye shall see Him when He comes. The round earth will continue to roll and make its 24 hour turn. All will finally see the mighty Jesus coming with great heavenly signs. People will stop doing what they are doing. They will stop driving, stop flying airplanes. Stop their school bus. If working in a factory or grinding at the mill outside, they will stop and look up. If still asleep....well the one who is a true Christian will be.....gone indeed, gone in a RESURRECTION call of the blast of the last trumpet (see 1 Cor. 15 and Rev. 11:15-19).

There will be no needless death of persons, or children, or babies, as others around them suddenly disappear to be caught up and led by the angels to meet Jesus in the clouds (Matt. 24:29-31 with 1 Thes. 4:13-18), as they are part of the first resurrection (1 Cor.15).

After all this that Jesus told His disciples they asked him, "Where, Lord, where will we be taken to?"

Jesus replied, "Where the body is, there the eagles will also be gathered together" (Luke 17:22-37).

How this saying of Jesus has also been misunderstood and misapplied, all because of not keeping it within the CONTEXT of the words before it. Jesus has been talking about THE day of His coming back to earth to establish the Kingdom of God. The disciples were understanding that on THAT day they would be in safety, like Noah and Lot had been at their times of earth shattering events. They understood that

they, the saints of God, would be taken....but they could just not finish putting it all together, they were left a little bewildered. What would happen when they were taken, where would they be taken to, hence their question, "Where Lord, where will we be taken to?"

Jesus was telling them about the RESURRECTION, which they would be a part of, at His coming again, at the end of the age, when He would return in glory and with spectacular signs. He was "the body" that would attract the "gathering of the eagles" - as the body is ONE and the eagles are MANY, so it is, that Jesus is ONE and the saints are MANY. And where the body happens to be there the eagles do come to it.

We can see the whole picture from Matthew 24:29-31 and from 1 Thes. 4:13-18 and from Zechariah 14. Jesus, as the "body" in this analogy He uses, comes to just above the clouds of this earth, and at that same time when the 7th trumpet is blown, the saints who are dead rise in a resurrection, while the saints living (sleeping in a bed or grinding at the mill) will be instantly changed from mortal to immortal (1 Cor. 15), and then with the help of the angels (Matt. 24:29-31) they will be taken WHERE Jesus is, to be gathered together with Him in the clouds, and so ever be with Him for ever more, as He descends to the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14) in that very SAME day.

We must also remember that "analogies" are not always to be taken to their ultimate literal sense. Because a "body" is a dead rotting body in this analogy of Jesus' to which the eagles gather to feed themselves on, Jesus was not saying that He would be dead and saints coming to eat Him. That was not the point of the analogy. The main point and only point of it was to teach His disciples that the place where they would be, when in safety on the day of His return, would be the place where He Himself would be. To be WITH HIM on that day was ultimate safety.

We shall be with Him in the clouds (1 Thes. 4:13-18), and so be with Him for all eternity, as part of the very literal born sons and daughters of the Father in heaven. What a wonderful and breath-taking thought all of that is.

### **Stick To It Prayer And A Humble Mind**

Jesus told them a parable, to the effect that they should always keep on praying and not lose heart. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor regarded man; and there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Vindicate and revenge me against my adversary.' For a while he refused; but afterwards he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor regard the position of any man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will vindicate her, or she will wear me out by her continual coming.' "

The Jesus gave the meaning, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God vindicate and avenge His elect that cry to Him day and night? Will He keep delaying for a long time over them? I tell you He will give them justice and avenge for them. He will do it speedily."

Here in this analogy the "judge" is obvious God the Father, but the Father is not someone who does not fear Himself or disregard men. This proves that analogies break down in parts and not everything in the analogy is meant to be taken to prove something. The main point of the analogy is the main point for us to comprehend, not the used details.

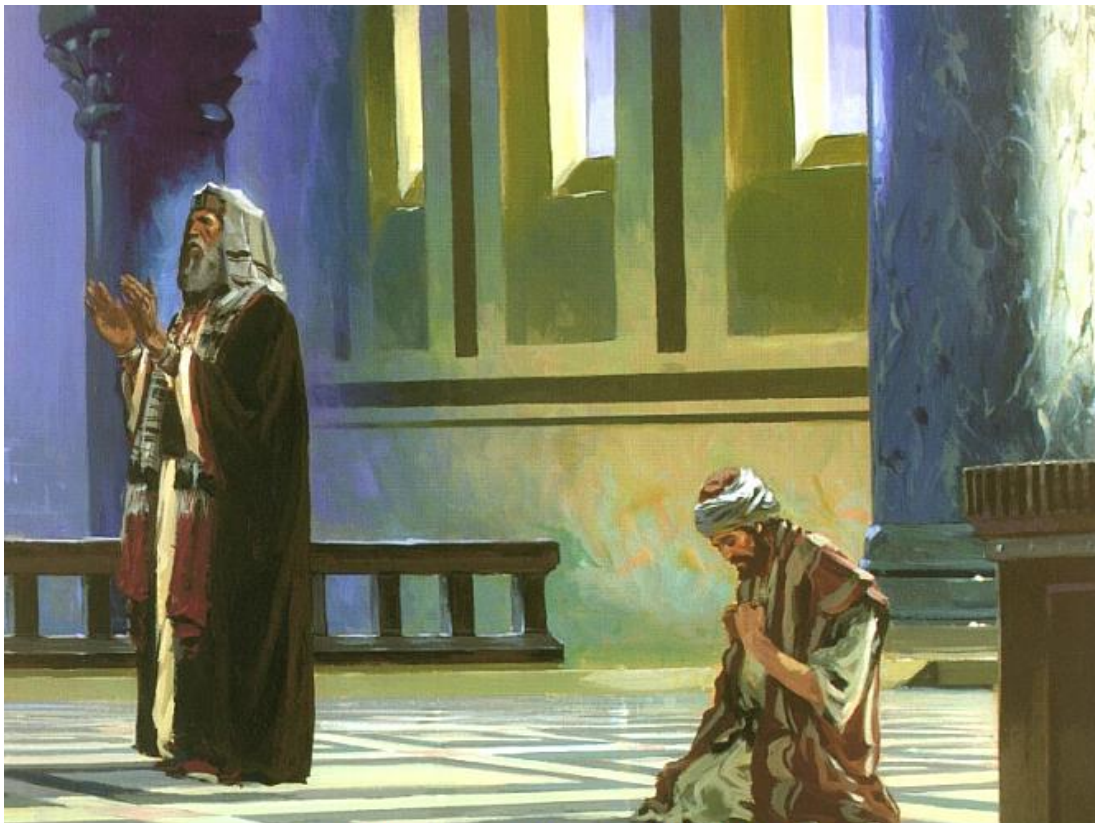
Many evils have come upon God's elect down through the centuries, from those who determined to be their enemies for one reason or another. The people of God have cried out to Him for justice and vengeance to be poured out on their evil enemies. They have been crying out for a long time now. There is nothing wrong with this importuning of God's people to see their enemies brought to trial so to speak and handed their just reward of punishment because of the evil the world and certain groups and certain individuals have done against them. We see in symbolic form the lives of many saints who have been killed for their faith by evil persons, crying out to God in heaven, to be avenged (Revelation 6:9,10).

God's people are not to give up on this request. It is right and proper justice that those who have done evil against peaceful Christian saints, who wanted to do no more than just live their faith, have their enemies pay for their evil. God has written in His word that all shall be rewarded according to their works (see Romans 2:6-11).

Jesus went on: "Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, will he find THE faith on earth?"

In the Greek New Testament the definite article "the" is there. So Jesus was asking the question as to whether THE faith would be found on the earth when He came again. The answer from the prophecies of the book of Revelation, is a YES, but it would still be only a relatively small group who will hold THE faith, the true beliefs and practices of God, when Jesus comes to earth again.

Jesus spent a lot of time trying to get the sect of the Pharisees to align themselves with the true spirit of godliness, as opposed to their false religious attitude. He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others.



**The Pharisee and the Tax Collector**

"Two men went up into the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed like this to himself, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner.' I tell you, this man went to his home justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 18:1-14).

When we fully realize and admit to ourselves that despite all the good things we may well do in this life, we have many sins we also commit in mind, thoughts, words, and actions, as we go about our lives, then we will at times not lift our eyes to heaven, but admit to God we are a sinner.

We shall then always be in a state of mind that we ask for the mercy of God, knowing that we need it, and knowing as the apostle Paul said in Ephesians 2:8 that we are saved by grace and not by any of our "good" works. For, as it is written, when compared to the holy perfectness of our heavenly Father, all our own works of righteousness are but filthy rags before Him.

Being humble, and admitting we are a sinner, is a must in order for us to be justified and to inherit eternal life (1 John 1 through 2:2).

## CHAPTER 5

### DIVORCE AND RE-MARRIAGE AND HOW TO INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE

#### Pharisees Ask About Divorce

Jesus and His disciples were getting closer to Jerusalem. One day as they were on their travels, the Pharisees wanting once more to test Him, came asking this question, "It is lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"

We have seen in the past chapters that there were two schools among the sect of the Pharisees, and the main school of thought and popularity among the Pharisee leaders was the school that taught that the laws of Moses allowed for divorce for just about any reason, large or very small. The Pharisees wanted to see if Jesus agreed with the most popular of their theology schools. And of course Jesus knew all this was what was going on in their minds. He did not beat around the bush with them but went on to state what would be the New Covenant teaching on this matter.

"Have you not read that He who made them from the beginning, made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one'? So they are no longer two but one. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder."

Jesus was telling them that the days of allowing divorce and remarriage for just any silly little reason was over. Under the New Covenant such conduct and allowances were now not to be permitted. He was not agreeing with their most popular school of theology, not for the New Testament age anyway.

They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" They were referring to Deuteronomy 24:1-2. And in their understanding of those verses people in Israel were allowed to divorce for all kinds of reasons, even trivial ones. Jesus did not argue with that interpretation and practice. He just stated what God's original intention for marriage was and that the days were over in allowing divorce for any and every reason.

Jesus answered their question about Moses this way, "For the **HARDNESS** of heart Moses **ALLOWED** you to divorce your wives, but from the **BEGINNING** it was not so."

It was because the heart of the Israelite people was mainly hardened and unconverted, not subject to the ways and laws of the Lord, certainly not to the spiritual intent of the law. And when it came to certain physical things like marriage, even having more than one wife (which is called polygamy), they were far from being in tune and in line with God's original intention for marriage, when He first made man and woman. For how God looked upon the heart of the Israelites see Deut. 5:29; and 29:4.

God **ALLOWED** MANY things under the Old Covenant that was not ideal or as He would have wanted. Slavery was allowed, but that did not mean God approved of it or sanctioned it. He **DID NOT**, but because they were a carnal hard-hearted people, who would have practiced it, He allowed it, but in allowing it He gave strict humane and compassionate laws to regulate it, as we see written in the laws of Moses.

From the BEGINNING of the creation of the world and man and woman upon it, God's intention for many things to do with human relations was far from what nations came to practice, far from what the heart of the Israelites was set upon to also practice, so He allowed things under the Old Testament, but many of those allowances were not going to be allowed under the New Testament.

Jesus went on to say, "And I say unto you; whoever divorces his wife, EXCEPT for unchastity (unfaithfulness, sexual misconduct), and marries another, commits adultery."

Jesus was tightening up the marriage bond between couples. No longer would it be permitted in God's eyes, to divorce and remarry for many of the little reasons it was allowed under the Old Covenant. Jesus DID ALLOW for one category of marriage misconduct, He allowed divorce for UNCHASTITY.....for any sexual sin one partner may commit against the other, such as adultery or any homosexual or lesbian sex act. The Greek word here used by Jesus, when we look how it is used throughout the New Testament, in many different passages, shows clearly that the word covers ALL improper acts of sex that God does not allow under His laws for sexual relations, which then include adultery and homosexuality and/or lesbianism (as well of course as "bestiality" or sex with an animal).

If one partner in a marriage union did commit such unlawful sex acts then Jesus and God, did allow for divorce and remarriage, if the offended party wants to take such action. The offended party could of course show mercy and forgiveness if the offending partner repented and turned away from their sexual sin. God did not say there HAD to be a divorce, only there could be grounds for divorce under that situation.

The disciples of Jesus you must remember were brought up in a society where the main Pharisee school of religion was practiced. They were accustomed to having divorce and remarriage on a very loose scale. On hearing these words from Jesus they could not believe it could be possible to live under a much tighter marriage bond, definitely not as tight as their Master was now proclaiming it would be, so as to be within the New Covenant laws of God. So they responded to the Lord this way: "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is not expedient to marry!"

But He said to them, "Not all men can receive this precept you state, but only those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs made by men, and there are eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it " (Matt. 19:3-12).

First of all, Jesus did not answer or debate with them over the matter of divorce and remarriage, you will notice. He had said what He had said, and it was to be that way under the New Covenant age, divorce for any silly reason was no longer allowed by God. Jesus aimed right in on the disciples saying that it might be better to NOT marry at all. He took the opportunity to talk about people not marrying. Despite the tightening up of the marriage bond for the New Testament age, most would still want to marry, and only the relatively few could accept the disciples thought about NOT marrying. It was only the few, to whom it was given not to marry that would be able to live and never marry, or remain un-married if they lost a mate.

We need to understand what a "eunuch" is. A eunuch is someone (usually a man, or the word was commonly used for men) who has no sex drive, and no desire to have



a marriage with a woman, because they have no desire for sex or to reproduce. Some people, because of things that go wrong from conception, never enter the life stage of sexuality, they never get any sex drive as we say, which usually starts around the age of 10-13 for the male. Then some men back in Jesus day, had their testicles removed by other men, usually men in government power positions or kings. This made them lose any sexual drive, they had no interest in women for sexual relations.

Often kings put such man made eunuchs in charge of their large concord of female dancers and sexy women (rulers and kings of carnal nations had many women just for sexual purposes only), because such men were not affected by the beauty and sexuality of women, hence had no desire to have sexual relations with them. Such eunuchs of men could have normal conversations with women, could rule and manage them, but had no desire to be sexual towards them.

Some persons (probably the apostle Paul was one of them, for he indicates in his writings that he was not married when doing the work of the Lord) have made themselves a eunuch, so to speak, for the work of the Kingdom of God. They have the power and self-control to not be desirous for a sexual relationship with a woman in marriage.

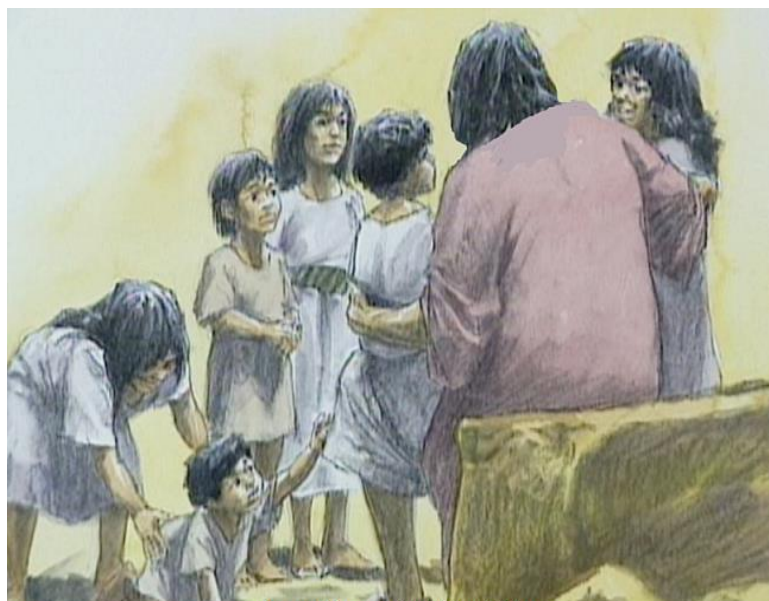
Jesus makes it plain that this voluntary "no marriage" - "no sexual relationship" is not for the majority, but is only for the few, who have the power to refrain from sex and marriage, in order to put their whole life and energy into doing the work of the Kingdom of God.

An example would be that of John the Baptist. He remained un-married and a decided "eunuch" - no sexual relations with any woman, all his life, for the sake of the Kingdom of God, and the work he had been called to do. And of course the Lord Jesus was also a eunuch for the Kingdom of God's sake. Only a few men can so be, only a few are able to receive this, and Jesus said, let him who can receive it, receive it.

### **Jesus Blesses Little Children**

And it was that they were bringing children to Him that He might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them.

But when Jesus saw it He was indignant, and said to them, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such ones belongs the Kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And He took them in His arms and blessed them, laying His hands upon them.



Jesus blesses the little children

What a great example we see here, and we will notice that children were not afraid to come to Jesus. He had a meek and mild manner with them. We might say He had a soft and tender spot for children that made such young ones feel quite at ease in His presence and even in His arms (Mark 10:13-16).

### **The Way To Inherit The Kingdom**

As Jesus was once more setting out on His journey towards Jerusalem, a certain very wealthy young ruler ran up to Jesus and kneeling before Him, asked, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone?" He was obviously wondering if this man knew that He, Jesus, was God in the flesh.

Continuing to answer his question, Jesus said, "You know the commandments, if you would enter or inherit eternal life, keep the commandments, 'Do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not bear false witness, do not steal, honor your father and mother, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.' "

The rich young man said to him, "All these I have done from my youth, what do I still lack in how I should live?" And Jesus looking upon him with love, said to him, "You lack one thing. If you would be perfect, go and sell what you possess and give it all to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and then come and follow me."

When the young rich ruler heard this he went away very sorrowfully because he had great possessions, and was physically very wealthy.

Jesus turned and looked at His disciples and said to them, "I tell you the truth, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. And again, I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God."

The disciples were greatly astonished when they heard Him say these things. And they asked Him, "Who then can enter the Kingdom of God and be saved?"

"With men," Jesus replied, "it is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Yes, the natural tendency of the human heart is, if wealthy, to rely and covet, even putting faith in the material money and goods you have, and to not think you need God in your life. Or, as this young rich man found out, making your physical wealth something you cannot give up. Jesus loved this young man for observing the basic letter of the commandments of God from his youth, but He knew there was ONE weakness that he had that would keep him from entering the Kingdom of God. That weakness was that he could not give up his physical wealth, give it to the poor and needy and be a fully dedicated disciple of the Lord. His wealth had become his "god" and he did not realize it until Jesus put him to the test over it.

Sometimes God does put us to the test, not always, but sometimes, especially if we ask Him what we lack in order to inherit eternal life. He may very well tell us in no uncertain terms. Physical wealth is not wrong to have, for many of God's people down through the ages have been blessed with great material riches, such as Job, and Abraham, but their wealth never became their idol or "god" - they would readily have given it all up to be as King David once said, "I'd rather be a door keeper in the house of the Lord than dwell in the tents of rich people."

We need to make sure that we can give up ANYTHING in this physical lifetime, IF God requires us to give it up.

It is very interesting and very instructive that you will notice Jesus did not tell this rich young man to sell all his possessions, give up all his money, and give it to the "church" or in Jesus' day, to the Temple and to the priests. He told him to give it to "the poor." We can also gather from this that Jesus knows and believes that there are "genuine" poor people who need help in a material way. Yes, there are what we term "bums" who are lazy people, who will try to live off their society, as if society owes them a free living. But Jesus and God also know there are people that circumstances of life often deal them the wrong hand, and they are in a poor situation because of it.

Jesus knew there were genuinely poor people that were worthy of a helping hand. He gave this young rich man the wonderful opportunity to serve and help such people, and then also be one of His chosen disciples.

Peter, hearing what Jesus had told the young ruler, and knowing he and the others had given up much to be a disciple, said to Jesus, "Master, we have left EVERYTHING to follow you. What then shall we receive in the Kingdom?"

Jesus answered, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the Gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and fathers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life. As for you twelve in particular, in the new age, when the Son of man shall sit on His glorious throne, you shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Many that are first will be last, and the last shall be first" (Matt. 19:16-30; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 18:18-30).

When we become a disciple of the Lord Jesus, we may have to give up many friends and relatives who do not understand why we have become a Christian, they do not like that we have become a Christian, they may want nothing to do with us any more, especially when we really serve the Lord in all aspect of our lives. But we immediately become a member of the body of Christ and we are part of a large and loving family, with spiritual brothers and sisters and mothers and fathers all over the world. We have in this lifetime, great blessings from being a part of God's family. And in the world to come, we shall inherit eternal life in the glorious immortal Kingdom of God.

Many who have put themselves first in this lifetime, putting wealth, ambition, fame, family, jobs, etc. shall be last to have their minds opened and to receive a chance to have their names written into the book of life. Many of those first will have to wait until the white throne judgment day resurrection, at the end of the commonly called "millennium" (Rev. 20) or 1,000 year reign of Christ on earth, before they can receive and have the book of life opened to them.

Those who have put themselves last, been willing to give up anything and everything, in order to be part of God's family here and now, shall receive and be the first to gain and inherit eternal life, when Jesus returns to reign on earth and to establish the Kingdom of God over all nations.

Looking beyond the present, into what can be, by being in the first resurrection, the glory and splendor and rewards for that age to come and for ever more, makes giving up whatever we have to give up in this lifetime, well worth the sacrifice.

### **Understand Your Calling And Payment**

Jesus taught them saying, "For the Kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. after agreeing with the laborers for \$100 a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place; and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard also, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And then about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing; and he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into my vineyard too.' And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.' And when those who were hired about the eleventh hour came they received \$100.

"Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received \$100. And on receiving it they grumbled and complained at the householder, saying, 'These last worked only one hour and you have paid them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' But he replied to them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for \$100. Take what belongs to you, and go your way; I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?' So the last will be first, and the first last" (Matt. 20:1-16).

And the first thing we need to note is the overall general meaning of this parable. God will call people to work for His Kingdom as and when He wants to. And no matter how long or short you work till the end of the day for you comes, all will get ONE thing in common. It is not the reward for our works that the New Testament talks about elsewhere, such as the twelve apostles each ruling over one tribe of Israel, as Jesus promised them, but the one thing each laborer for the Kingdom will receive that will be equal and common to all, is ETERNAL LIFE.

You may have been called to the Kingdom when young, say a teenager, and labored in it for decades, if you live a long life. On the other hand maybe God did not call you to labor in the Kingdom until you were elderly, in your sixties or seventies, or older, and so you labored not that long before you died. Whether you labor for a long or short time in this life for the Kingdom of God, all will receive eternal life. Such laboring and living for the Kingdom is God's choosing, it is all in His hands, to do with what is His to do with.

The book of Revelation in chapter 7 (just as the great day of God's wrath is to come upon this world, at the end of this age) shows that many will be called and converted very near the time of the coming of Christ in glory. They will be in the Kingdom with eternal life, though they may have only labored for a relatively short time (compared to others) for the Kingdom.

I will here talk a little about being CALLED and being CHOSEN. Jesus elsewhere did say that MANY are CALLED but FEW are CHOSEN.

There is obviously a DIFFERENCE. A calling from God is when you are given knowledge of certain truths, be it directly from God as you read His word, or by other people who are part of your life. It could be relatives, friends, your parents and so forth, so present to you certain truths of God's word or way of life. God has then allowed you to have a calling...BUT, a small word, with BIG meaning, it is still UP TO YOU to then take those truths in the calling you have been given and LIVE them, "run with them" we might say. You have YOUR part to do, that calling to knowledge of truths, you must make a choice to WANT to FOLLOW and have Jesus as your PERSONAL Savior, and desire to love God with all your heart, mind, and life. Then if you DO THAT you can become a part of God's CHOSEN ones, who desire to attain eternal life.

Many people HEAR the word of God, preached or spoken, in various ways in their life. Many people DO NOT come close to hearing the Bible, or the basic truths of God's word being taught and expounded. The latter people never even have a CALLING to read or hear the word of the Lord. Many of those that DO hear God's word, do not WANT or DESIRE to do anything with it - they have a calling to hear truth and see truth lived by others, but they go no further with it. Such have not become part of the CHOSEN.

Going ON from "calling to hear God's word" becomes the key issue. Just hearing it does not make you a child of God, or someone filled with His Spirit. You must GO ON forward from "a calling" to being a CHOSEN one, and that step YOU have a large part in, for you are a free moral agent. God does not FORCE anyone to go on to being a chosen member of His family. You personally must make the choice to serve Him.

Many children of parents are only in a "calling" situation. Those children or teens may not have taken Jesus as personal savior or taken any of their parents "faith" in any serious way for themselves. It does NOT mean those young people are automatically lost or heading for eternal death. I say this because MANY Jews had a knowledge of God, had His word in their lives in one form or another, but the apostle Paul makes it very clear that MOST of Israel, though "hearing" God's word, were still BLINDED (see Romans 10:17 to end of chapter 11). Most in Israel had a "calling" but were not part of the "chosen" and were not automatically LOST!

God has a great plan He is working out and spiritual blindness is not automatically removed just because you have a calling. That truth is made very clear by Paul in Romans 11.

Calling in this context is NOT the same as "chosen" for as Jesus said, many are called but few are CHOSEN.

I also want you to note another important teaching, that will be important to understand and remember when we come to the events of the day upon which Christ died. Jesus talked about certain hours of the day. The third hour was about our 9 a.m. the sixth hour about noon and the eleventh hour was about the hour we call 5 p.m. There were twelve hours in the day time part of the day and twelve hours in the night portion as the Jews split up the 24 hour day. The vineyard owner called his steward WHEN EVENING came.

Evening did not come until the twelfth hour was finished, which would then correspond to our 6 p.m. At 6 p.m. and not before, it was evening time. Then indeed

the long heat of the day was over with. But, the main thing to remember, and a study in the word "evening" as used and as defined and interpreted by the New Testament itself, is that evening is not before 6 p.m. Any time AFTER 6 p.m. it could be called evening, but evening did not come until the twelve hours of the day had been completed.

### **Jesus Foretells His Death The Third Time**

And they were walking on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; and they were somewhat amazed at His lonely solitude among them, even to the point of being afraid, but not really knowing why. And He took the twelve to one side and began to tell them for the third time what would happen to Him, saying, "Behold, we are on the way up to Jerusalem; and when we get there, the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Roman gentiles; and they will mock Him, and spit upon Him, and scourge Him, and then kill Him; and after three days He will rise from the dead and live again" (Mark 10:32-34).

Luke in his gospel account adds that the twelve still did not understand all this that Jesus said to them. It was not yet revealed to them by the Holy Spirit. They could not imagine that such things could happen to the very Son of God. And they, like many of that day, did not understand all the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the first coming of the Messiah to the earth and all that was written would need to be fulfilled.

The journey to Jerusalem was near completed, and we are close to the last few weeks in the physical life of Jesus.



## CHAPTER 6

### THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

#### **Sitting On Jesus' Right And Left Hand in the Kingdom of God?**

As they went on their way towards Jerusalem, the mother of the sons of Zebedee (James and John) came before Jesus and kneeling asked Him for something. "What do you want?" Jesus responded to her, and she said, "Teacher, we want you to do whatsoever we ask of you."

"Well, then what is it that you want me to do?" Jesus again replied.

The mother of James and John then finally came out with what she and her sons wanted, "Grant Lord that these two sons of mine may sit, one on your right hand, and one on your left hand, in the Kingdom."

"Oh, you do not know what you are asking for," answered Jesus. "Can you drink of the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

And they said to Him, "Yes Lord, we are able!"

Jesus then responded with, "Indeed, you will drink of the cup that I drink from, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit, one at my right hand, and one at my left hand, is not mine to grant; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared for by my Father."

The disciples would indeed partake of the life of Jesus, they would drink what He was living. Drink and eat the physical life as a servant of God. And they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit (as we'll see when we come to the first chapters of the book of Acts) as Christ was and do many of the same works that He did through the power of the Holy Spirit. They would partake of Christ in a very real and personal way, including martyrdom according to first century historical records, but what these two disciples wanted (and their mother also) was not Jesus' to grant.

And when the ten other disciples heard all this they were very indignant towards James and John.

And Jesus called them all to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over the people, and their leaders and kings and great men, exercise dictatorial authority over them. But it shall NOT be so among you! Whoever would be great among you must be your servant. And whoever would be first among you must be slave to all. For the Son of man came and set you the example. He came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45).

Here we see that there will be "positions" in the Kingdom when Jesus returns to establish it upon the earth. We also see that the Father in heaven has reserved for Himself certain positions of authority that only He will decide who will receive them. We know from other Scriptures of the Old Testament that king David of ancient Israel will rise in the resurrection and be king over the restored 12 tribes of Israel. We have seen that Jesus did have authority to promise to the twelve disciples that they would

each rule over a tribe of Israel. But, who is going to sit at Jesus' right hand and left hand, was not for Jesus to say or to give away those positions. Only the Father would determine who would be given those seats of authority in the Kingdom.

When we think of all the great people of God down through the millenniums of time, is it any wonder then that only the Father could determine who shall receive those two positions of sitting on the right and left hand of Jesus in the Kingdom on earth.

We also note here a VERY IMPORTANT teaching of Christ. Whoever was, or whoever desired to be, the greatest among God's people at any particular time in history, had to become, MUST become, the servant of all, the slave to all the rest of the people of God. They had to become like Christ Himself, who came not to be vain and pompous and mentally and emotionally smug over all people, but came to give Himself in service and loving sacrifice to all people. Just think how many hours Jesus spent in a week and in His entire ministry in giving and to serving others. Think about the love and compassion He gave out towards others. Think about all the time He spent in teaching others and His disciples, to know the truths of God, and to understand the mysteries of the Kingdom of God.

So it must be, so must those who would be "great" among the people of God do as Jesus did.....serve and sacrifice for and towards God's people. That is the mark of greatness according to Christ. Greatness is NOT exercising dictatorial authority over people, bossing them around, and telling them what to do and when to do it.

Greatness is being kind, patient, loving, helping, serving, and teaching God's word with all of those attributes, as a person moves among the children of God.

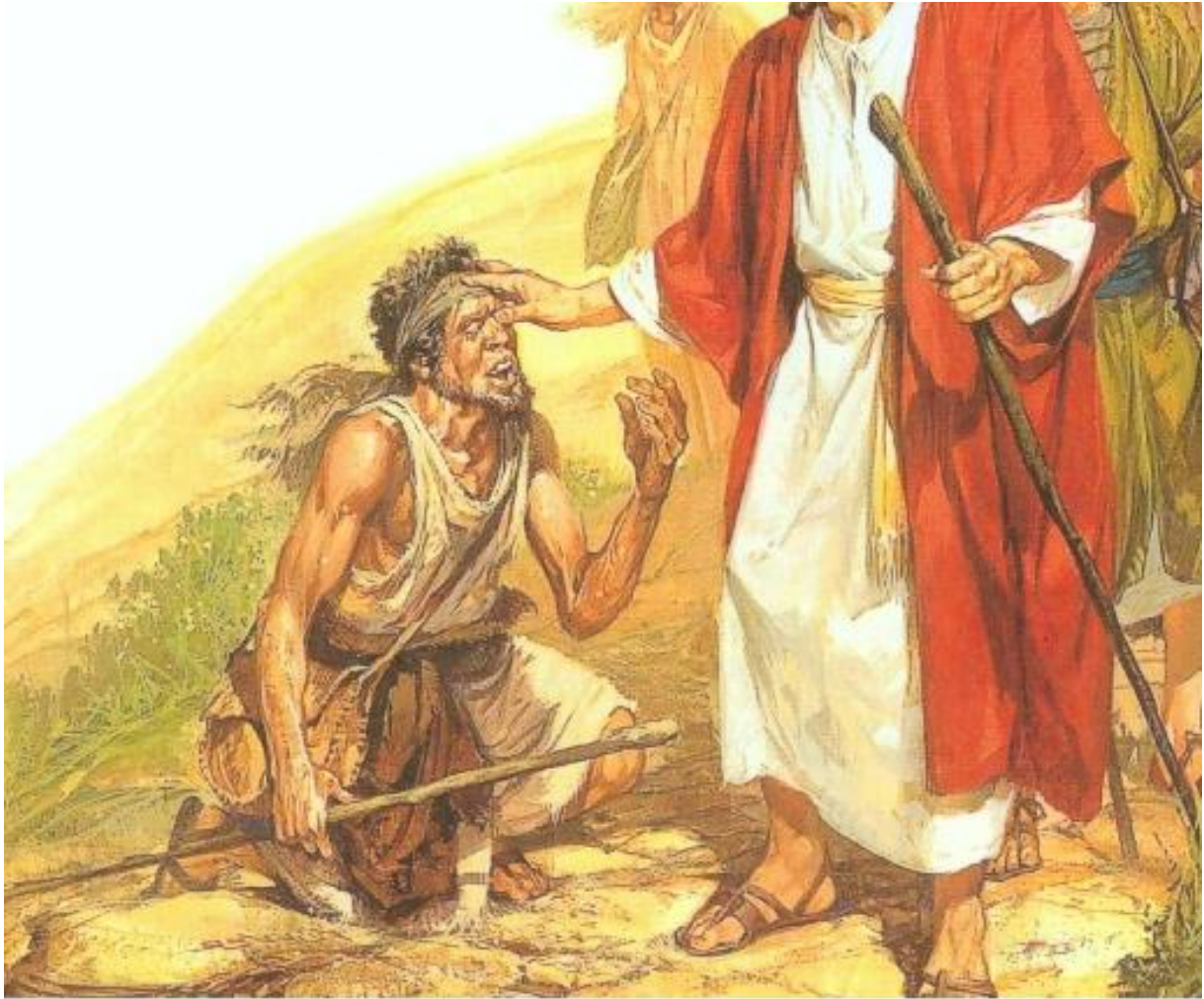
### **Blind Bartimaeus Is Healed**

Jesus and the disciples had arrived at Jericho. As they were leaving a great crowd was following them as usual. On the roadside they came across two blind men, sitting and begging. Now, Matthew's account says there were two blind men. The accounts of Mark and Luke only mention one man, someone who it seems was well known for whatever reasons, as his name is given as Bartimaeus - "blind Bartimaeus" in the popular speech of the day.

Possibly Mark and Luke only record this healing as if one man was involved, because Bartimaeus was the spokesman for the two men, and because he was the most famous of the two.

Bartimaeus was known as the son of Timaeus, who then was probably a man very well known in the community. When Jesus came close Bartimaeus called out, "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me and on us." Many started to rebuke him and told him to be silent. But he cried out even the more, "Son of David, Lord have mercy on us."

Jesus stopped walking, stood and said, "Call the blind man over to me." And they did call him over saying, "Take heart blind man, He is calling for you to come to Him." Throwing off his coat Bartimaeus sprang to his feet like someone being chased by a lion, and came to Jesus. And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do?"



### **Blind Bartimaeus is Healed**

"Oh, Master, let our eyes be opened so we can have sight." And Jesus, looking with kind compassion at him, touched their eyes and said, "Go your way; your faith has made you well."

Their sight was restored immediately, but they did not run off to their separate homes, they instead followed Jesus, glorifying God. And when all the people saw what had happened they also praised and gave glory to God. (Matt. 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43).

### **Zacchaeus A Tax Collector Is Converted**

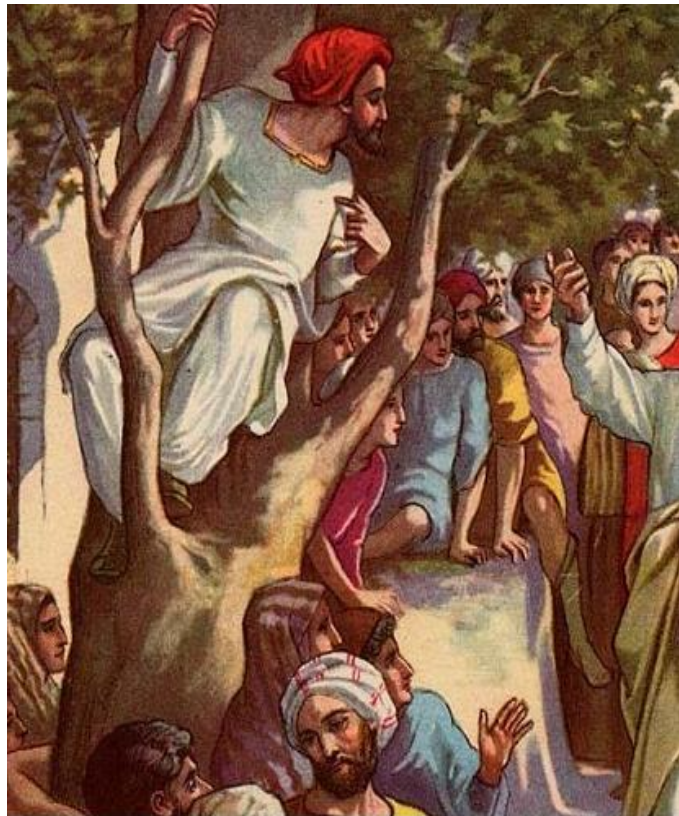
Jesus was still not far out of Jericho, just on the edge of the town limits. And there was a man named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector, and through craftiness he had become very rich.

He wanted to see Jesus but he could not as he was a short man in stature and could not see over the heads and shoulders of the crowd. He was not going to give up that easy though. He decided he would run on ahead and climb up a sycamore tree to see Jesus.

When Jesus arrived at the sycamore tree that Zacchaeus had climbed, He looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, come down quickly; for I must stay at your house today and for the night."

You can imagine how quickly Zacchaeus came down. He was thrilled that Jesus would be staying in his house. He would get to see Him up close for some number of hours. His heart beat like a race horse ready to run a race. He was overjoyed at what Jesus had told him.

But, some in the crowd, who hated people who collected taxes for the Roman Government, murmured with some indignation at what Jesus was going to do. "Why," they said, "he is going to be a guest of a man who is a sinner, this is terrible!"



**Zacchaeus the tax collector is called down from the sycamore tree by Jesus who wishes to dine with him.**

When they all arrived at the house of Zacchaeus, he said to Jesus, "Behold Lord, the half of my goods I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I will restore it to them even four times as much."

Jesus smiled with a happy heart and said, "Today salvation indeed has come to this house, since this man is also a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:1-10).

Yes, what often seems hopeless to mankind, is what God can turn around and makes salvation from. Zacchaeus thought he would only see Jesus from up a tree and nothing else would happen. Many within the crowd thought Jesus was doing wrong by befriending a despised tax collector. Everyone was wrong. God the Father and Jesus His Son were about to convert and bring a man to salvation. Nothing is impossible with God.

Some times in being converted, it is right and proper to make restitution to some people we may have wronged, if it is within our power to do so. We must realize that it is not always within our power to restore, for some people may have moved away and we have no possible means whereby we can locate them. God does not expect that we can right every wrong we may have done to people over our lifetime, but in some situations it may be possible, and if so, then we should make an effort to give restitution. And the example here given for us, which Jesus did not disagree with, was that, restitution would be far above the amount fraudulently taken. The example here also is that if you are very rich, you will, when converted to follow Christ Jesus, give a great part of your wealth to the poor. We will note "poor" is a high priority. Indeed there are many "poor" within the community of the church, who would be grateful for a helping hand.

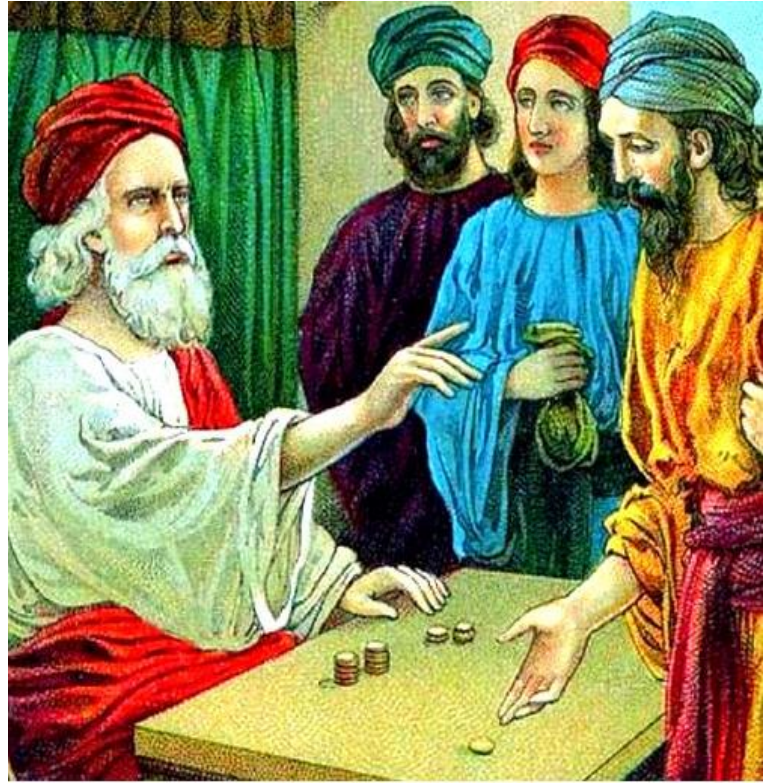


## Parable Of The Pounds

As they heard these things He proceeded to tell a parable, because He was getting near to Jerusalem, and they supposed that the Kingdom of God was to appear immediately. So He taught them saying, "A nobleman went into a far country to receive kingly power and then to return. Calling ten of his servants, he gave them 50 dollars, and said to them, 'Trade with this money till I come again.' But his own citizens hated him and sent an embassy of men after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.'

"When he returned, having received kingly power and authority, he commanded the servants to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by trading.

"And the first came to him and said, 'Lord, your 50 dollars has gain 50 dollars more.' And he said, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. Because you have been faithful in very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.' And the second came, saying, 'Lord, your 50 dollars has gained 25 more dollars.' And the king said to him, 'You shall have authority over 5 cities.'



The Parable of the Pounds

"Then another came and said, 'Lord, here is your 50 dollars, which I looked after and kept safe in a steel box at home. For I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man; you take up what you did not lay down, and reap what you did not sow.' The king replied to him, 'I will condemn you out of your own mouth you wicked servant! You knew I was a severe man, taking up what I did not lay down, and reaping where I did not sow. Why then did you not put my money into the bank at least, and at my coming, I should have collected it with some interest?'

"And he said to those who stood nearby watching and hearing all this, 'Take the 50 dollars from him, and give it to him who gained the 50 dollars more.' And they said to him, 'Lord, he already gained 50 dollars!' The king answered, 'I tell you, that everyone who has will be given more; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And as for those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them before me.'

"And when Jesus had said all this, He went on His way, heading for the city of Jerusalem" (Luke 19:11-28).

This parable teaches us a number of things. It was a parable Jesus gave to tell His disciples that the Kingdom of God was not going to appear as soon as they perhaps thought. They looked for it to come while Jesus was still on earth, and to come in the very near future of their lifetime. Jesus was here dispelling such an idea, yet still not giving any specifics as to when in time, the Kingdom would come. Hence of course many disciples would still have thought, even after Jesus had ascended back to heaven, that the Kingdom would come in the lifetime of many of the first century disciples.

This is also a parable that shows all disciples get the same gift to work with. The only gift that is equal among disciples of Jesus is the gift of the Holy Spirit through which God will give us ETERNAL LIFE! Upon repentance and conversion everyone is given this same equal gift. But from then on God expects us to use it, to go on from there with that gift and work in different ways with it, to increase yourself spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and also to use whatever else God has given us in ways of physical gifts and talents, to increase what He had first given us. If we do increase, we shall be rewarded with positions of authority in the Kingdom of God. How much we increase will determine how much authority we are given in the Kingdom.

But, if we think we can stand still, only keep what is first given to us at conversion, if we think we do not have to move at least a little more forward in spiritual growth, we are one day going to have a rude awakening. If we think we can wrap up God's gift of eternal life in a little box and simply keep it safe and not use it after we are given it, then even that which we think we have safely preserved, will be taken away from us. We shall be on the outside looking in as they say. We shall find ourselves as one of those who in earlier parables that Jesus gave, are crying and gnashing their teeth, saying, "Lord, did we not worship you, did we not go to church, did we not have you in our home, and sitting at our table at meal times?" And Jesus will say, "Depart from me, for I never knew you...."

Yes, as I've said before, some of the teachings of Jesus, cut right to the bone, and they are often not what most teachers of Christian theology want to tell you. They are often the parts of the Gospels that are neglected and/or completely ignored by far too many who claim to be reading the Bible. We need to be willing to read the Bible from cover to cover, and let it teach and correct us, inspire and admonish us, encourage and lift us up, but also let it warn us.

And speaking of warning, there is in this parable also a clear warning signal Jesus was wanting to get across. Those who will not let Jesus "reign" over them, rule them, tell them how to live, allow Him to direct their lives in the godly way they should go, shall be one day slain before His presence. This ultimate slaying of the unruly wicked will come just before the arrival of the new heavens and new earth (see the last verses of Revelation 20), when all the wicked will die in the lake of fire, which the New Testament calls "the second death."

We must not only accept Jesus as our personal SAVIOR, but also as our LORD and MASTER. We must let Him reign and rule in our lives, letting Him and His word guide, teach, and lead us into the way of thinking, speaking, and doing, that which is pleasing to Him and to the Father in heaven.



## **Lazarus Is Raised From The Dead And Death Is Sleep**

This next section of Scripture is very important in two respects. It teaches the "resurrection from the dead" and it teaches "death is a sleep."

It came to pass as Jesus and His disciples were going on their journey up to Jerusalem, that a certain man named Lazarus became ill. He was the brother to two sisters named Mary and Martha. Now, it is John in his Gospel account, that tells us that this Mary was none other than the woman who anointed Jesus feet with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair. We read all about that situation in an earlier chapter.

The two sisters sent to Jesus a message saying, "Lord, he whom you love is very ill." They expected Jesus to immediately come and heal their brother.

Jesus on hearing this news said, "This illness is not unto death; it is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be praised and glorified by means of it." Jesus of course knew what was going to happen and what significance it would portend for all who would witness the event and the outcome.

Jesus, did love all three of those people, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. He heard the news about the illness of Lazarus, but did not immediately start off to go to heal him. Probably to the bewilderment of His disciples He stayed two days longer where they were at, after hearing the news concerning Lazarus. Then perhaps they were not surprised He did not go immediately to Lazarus, for they knew He was in danger if He stepped into Judea, as Lazarus lived in Bethany which was inside the area known as Judea. We gather this from some of the words they said which we shall come to shortly. Yet, as they knew Jesus was heading for Jerusalem in Judea anyway, it seems they were somewhat very confused about the whole situation of Jesus wanting to go up to Jerusalem. You must remember that even when Jesus told them about His being handed over to the religious authorities and finally being put to death, but rising from the dead, at Jerusalem, they did not understand it at all. So indeed they were probably very confused about everything that was going on in Jesus' life at that present time.

Well, two days after getting the news about Lazarus, He said to His disciples, "Let us go into Judea again."

"Why, Master, the Jews there were recently seeking to stone you, and are you really wanting to go there again?" said His disciples.

"Are there not twelve hours in a day?" replied Jesus, "If any man walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if any person walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

Jesus was telling them that while He was still alive and walking, there was work for Him to do, so others could come to see the light of God's truth and salvation. It was also a mild rebuke that they could not yet see the light of day, they were still in the blindness of the night.

Then He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has FALLEN ASLEEP. But I go to awake him out of sleep."

"Well Lord, " the disciples replied, "if he has fallen asleep, he will rest and recover."

The truth is Jesus was speaking about his death, but they thought He was meaning Lazarus had taken a rest in sleep, as we do at night time, or at other times when we are tired and sometimes taking a "cat nap."

Then Jesus said plainly to them, "What I am saying to you is that Lazarus is DEAD! And for your sakes I'm glad I was not there, so that you may believe even the more. Let us go to him."

At least Thomas, called the Twin, was beginning to see what it was all going to end with, it was beginning to sink into the mind of Thomas at least, that Jesus would now probably die in some fashion in Judea. He said to the other disciples, "Come on then, let us go also into Judea with Him, and let us die there with Him also."

Jesus arrived at Bethany to find that Lazarus had been dead in the tomb or grave for FOUR DAYS. Bethany was near Jerusalem, only about two miles away. Many Jews from Jerusalem and the area had come to console Mary and Martha concerning the death of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming she ran to meet Him, while Mary sat in their house.

On meeting Jesus Martha said to Him, "Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died. Yet, even now I know that whatsoever you ask from the Father, God will give it to you."

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again!"

"Oh, yes Lord," replied Martha, "I know my brother will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

"You know, do you not Martha," answered Jesus, "that I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and he who believes and lives in me, shall not die forever. Do you believe this?" She said to Him, "Yes Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one promised to come into the world."

After this conversation Martha went quietly to her sister Mary, telling her that Jesus was asking to see her. And when Mary heard this she rose up quickly and went to Him. The Jews in the house followed Mary thinking she was going to weep some more at Lazarus' grave site.

Mary came to where Jesus was and fell at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died."

Jesus saw Mary and the Jews with her weeping in great anguish, and He was deeply moved in spirit, and said to them, "Where have you laid him?" And they answered, "Lord, come with us and see."

As Jesus was going with them to the grave where Lazarus was laid to rest, we have the shortest verse in the Bible, but one that shows us that there are times when it is right and proper for MEN as well as women to literally cry, for John records for us these words, "Jesus WEPT."

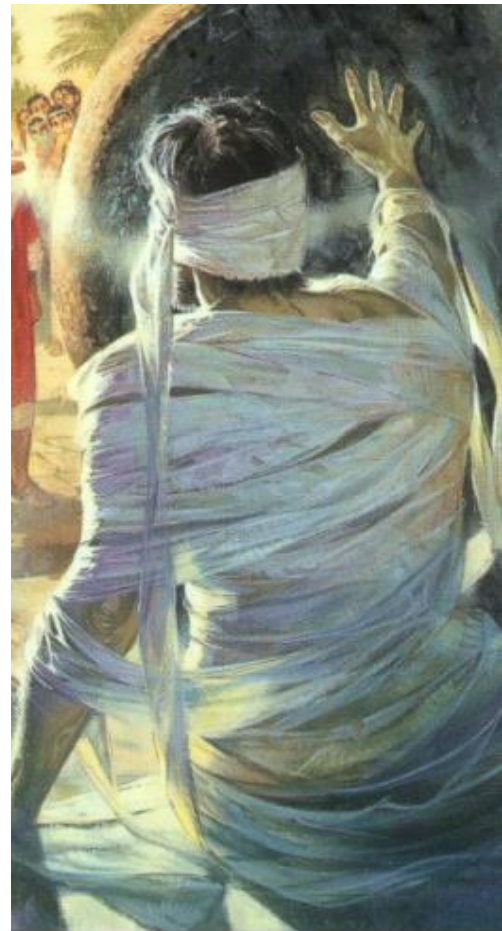
And some the Jews there said among themselves, "Ah, do you see how he loved this man."

But others said, "Why, if he loved him so, this man who could open the eyes of the blind, surely could he not have stopped Lazarus from dying?"

Then Jesus was deeply moved once more on hearing all this talk among the people. He came to the tomb; it was a cave, and a great huge stone lay upon it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, being surprised at what Jesus was now telling them to do, said, "Lord, there will be a terrible smell, for Lazarus has been dead four days now."

Jesus responded with, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up His eyes towards heaven and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I know that you hear me always, but I have said this on account of the people standing by, that they may believe that you did indeed send me." And after saying this, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, COME ON OUT!"

There was a shock that went through the minds of all standing there, they froze in their stand, many mouths dropped open, eyes were glued on the entrance to the cave. Could this man really raise someone from the dead after they had been dead four days, was the question that was now on everyone's mind.



**Lazarus is raised  
from the dead**

There was hushed silence as all were steadfastly looking to see if Lazarus would walk out of the cave....more seconds went by....THEN, to the amazement of every person there, Lazarus CAME OUT! He was once more alive. People were again frozen in their minds and speech for a few seconds at what they were seeing, then gasps of surprise filled the air, some fell to the ground on their knees, praising God, others looked at one another in astonishment, as they realized the power this man called Jesus had, even power over death.

Lazarus was bound with bandages over the hands and feet, in the manner that the Jews buried their dead. It was not at all like a large piece of cloth put over a body, but wound around bandages that were used over parts of the body like the hands and the legs and feet, even the face and head. Lazarus could not unwrap himself, so Jesus told them to unwrap the bandages and let him go free.

What joy and praising God there was that day, when Jesus raised Lazarus from the grave after his body had started to decompose after being dead four days.

Here, as I've said, is one of the great Bible passages, that tells us plainly that death is a SLEEP. We do NOT continue to live after death in some heaven, hell, or

purgatory, with an immortal soul we are born with. Death is a sleep, from which the dead are waiting until the resurrection day, to be raised back to life once again. Lazarus was raised back to life as a physical person, to live and eat and breathe again, as he did before. Lazarus later died once more, as we all do eventually, and is again sleeping till the resurrection day. The resurrection that Martha knew about, and told Jesus she knew her brother would rise in a resurrection at the last day, is what the Bible calls the "first resurrection" (Rev. 20), and this is the resurrection that all saints and children of God will rise up in. It is the resurrection day, at the coming of Christ in glory, as I've mentioned and given Scriptures for, in previous chapters of this New Testament Bible Story.

### **Jesus Is Condemned By The Jewish Council**

Many Jews had come from various parts of the region to Mary and Martha's home and had witnessed this great miracle Jesus had done in resurrecting Lazarus from the dead after four days of laying in the tomb. And many of those Jews believed in Jesus as the Messiah to come, that was foretold in the pages of the Old Testament prophets. But other Jews still not ready to accept Jesus, went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together the council or Sanhedrin (the body of men who ruled on certain aspects of the Jewish religious life), and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him continue doing this, soon everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation."

They thought that if the people all believed in Jesus, they would want Him to be their king and leader in a revolution against the Roman yoke of servitude, and so bring onto the Jewish nation the full armies of Rome, in a battle that could only mean utter destruction for the Jews. This was of course wrong thinking, as Jesus would never have been a part of such a revolution and would never have allowed the Jews to try to use Him in such a revolution against Rome.

Then a man named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You speak about things you know nothing at all about. You do not understand that it is often best and expedient that ONE MAN should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish." Now, he did not say this of his own mind, but being high priest that year he actually was prophesying that Jesus should die for the nation, and not only for the nation, but to gather into one family the children of God who are scattered abroad in all nations.

So from that day forward they took counsel and sat around figuring out how to put Jesus to death.

Jesus knowing and hearing what the Jewish Sanhedrin was trying to plan, no longer went about among the people in an open manner, but went from there to the country near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim; and there He stayed with His disciples.

Now the Passover of the Jews, the feast that God gave to the people of Israel under Moses, was soon to be observed, and many went up from the country-side to Jerusalem before the Passover began in that city, to work through the purification rites, and so ceremonially purify themselves as directed under the laws of Moses.

They were looking for Jesus as they stood around in the Temple courtyards, knowing it was Jesus' custom to attend the Passover in the city of Jerusalem. Many were saying among themselves, "Well, what do you think? Will he or will he not come this year to the feast?"

The chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where He was, he should let them know, so they might arrest Him" (John 11:45-57).

The air was tense with excitement and various emotions, in anticipation that Jesus would come to observe the Passover in Jerusalem as usual. Most at this time were for Him, that is they were on His side, as we say. They knew He was a mighty miracle worker, more and more were believing He was the promised Messiah. Yet, they did not understand why He had come to earth this first time. They did not understand the prophecies in the Old Testament concerning His first appearing on earth, even Jesus' disciples did not understand them, and most thought that being the Messiah He would deliver them from the Roman Empire, make the Jewish nation great and mighty, and so eventually the leading nation on the earth.

The people were hoping that this is what Jesus would now begin to do....lead the Jewish nation out from under the Roman yoke, and give them world dominance. The people were ready for such a leader, to lead and deliver them from their enemies. The emotional excitement in their hearts and minds was so high and so thick for everyone to see, that as we say, you could "cut the air" with a knife, and hand portions of excitement around to all entering the Temple and even setting foot into the city of Jerusalem.

Would Jesus come was the big question on all minds. If He would they would surely be ready to greet Him in a mighty and glorious way. They would not have long to wait for their answer to their question.

## CHAPTER 7

### JESUS' TRIUMPHANT ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

Reading the accounts in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, we can come to a complete understanding of the events which transpired as Jesus came near unto Jerusalem.

Arriving at the mount called Olivet (where the great event of Christ's glorious coming is to take place that is recorded in the 14th chapter of Zechariah), which is near Bethphage and Bethany, He sent two of His disciples to a village close by, saying to them, "Go into the village, and immediately as you enter it you will find an ass tied up, with a colt with her, on which no man has ever sat; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say to them, 'The Lord has need of them, and will send them back immediately when their work is done.' And they will let them go with you."

An "ass" is from the horse family, often what we call a donkey. A "colt" is a young male offspring of the horse family, in this instance, a young male from the female donkey. The young colt was still with its mother, hence Matthew records the ass was "with her" and she was tied up, the colt was "with her" and did not need to be tied as the young colt would not leave its mother's side. Such it is in nature with a mother and her young ones. The colt was not as they say in the horse world, "broken" - no man had ever sat upon it, yet it would have been old enough to withstand the weight of the average size Jewish man.

Jesus would perform a small miracle here. He was going to sit upon a young donkey that had never before had any training with men, to carry a person with calm and quietness. It is often missed (because only Matthew records it) by artists depicting this scene, that there was two donkeys.....the young one Jesus sat upon, but the mother was alongside her colt, in order to bring no distress upon the colt, as would have been the case if its mother was not there.

Now, some would argue that Jesus could have performed two miracles, the second being "no distress" for the colt if it had been taken away from its mother. That may be true, but it is not a case of what Jesus could have done, it is a case of what Jesus **CHOSE** to do. He chose to show everyone His compassion for BOTH the mother donkey and for her young offspring. He would not divide them up and perform a special miracle of "peace" for both of them when divided up, but would simply take both of them, keep them together, and perform a small miracle on the colt, giving it complete composure of mind and body, as Jesus sat upon it and as He would make His way into the city of Jerusalem.

As a young man I worked for a while breaking and training horses. Young colts or fillies (female offspring) of horses that are used for saddle riding (horse trails etc.), will grow up around humans, and will of course have no fear of them, and if handled with kindness become like dogs in nature towards humans. But yet the day comes when they have to be "broken" to the saddle and for humans to ride.

Now, in my experience, such friendly colts and fillies, hardly ever "bucked" or went wild (as did horses we were breaking that had never been around humans before - they would be scared crazy and often buck like the bulls you see being ridden in the Rodeo). They just most often stood there and acted plain "dumb" - not knowing of

course what to do, where to go, and not knowing how to react to commands you gave it, either by the voice or by the heels of your boots or by any tug on the bit. Naturally, all this stuff that the human was now doing was very new. They were not frightened of the human but just did not know what this human now wanted it to do.

So to help train the young colt or filly, we would have its mother right alongside, and it would follow her just fine. After a while the colt or filly would get to know what "stop" or "go" (with a little heel kick) meant, and its training would progress from there. It would take some time before its training would be finished and complete, so to make a good saddle horse for any person to ride on trail rides, by itself or with other horses other than next to its mother.

Jesus, chose to keep the colt with its mother, but performed a miracle of sorts by having the colt know exactly what was expected of it. I'm sure many people knew the situation of the mother and her colt (that no man had ever sat on the colt) and knew Jesus was doing something with both of them (especially the colt) that was quite different than the normal expectation of an untrained young donkey.

Sure enough when the two disciples got to where the colt and its mother were and started to untie the mother, some people seeing what they were doing and knowing they were not the owners of the animals, asked them why they were taking them. They responded with the words Jesus had told them to say, and the people said no more and let them go away with the two donkeys. Those persons concerned by what they saw the two disciples doing must have known who the "Lord" was, when told that "The Lord has need of them." Jesus was indeed "Lord" to many by this time.

Jesus coming into Jerusalem on a colt was to fulfill the prophecy in the Old Testament prophets of Isaiah 62:11 and Zechariah 9:9. The Gospel of Luke quotes it this way: "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold thy king is coming, sitting upon an ass's colt!"

The disciples did not understand all this at first, but later, after Jesus had been glorified, then they remembered what had been written and why Jesus had sat upon a colt to enter Jerusalem.

There was by this time a massive crowd of people gathered around Jesus, behind Him, and in front of Him. More and more were hearing that Jesus was making His way to Jerusalem, and so were gathering along the roadway. Many threw their coats on the roadway to make the footing softer for the colt. Many took leafy branches which they had cut from the fields and trees and placed them on the road that the colt, with Jesus on its back, was travelling.

All the people were worked up into great excitement. This was the day most of them had been waiting for, surely Jesus was about to deliver them from the yoke of the Roman government. This is what most of them were thinking and quite sure in their hearts that it would be so - Jesus, the Christ, the Messiah, God's chosen one, God's promised one, the mighty MIRACLE worker, the one who could raise people from the dead, would now lead them to victory over their enemies, and bring in the glorious Kingdom, where the Jewish people, and all the tribes of Israel, would be the MASTERS of the world. Many had gathered because they had heard about the mighty miracle Jesus had done in raising Lazarus from the dead.

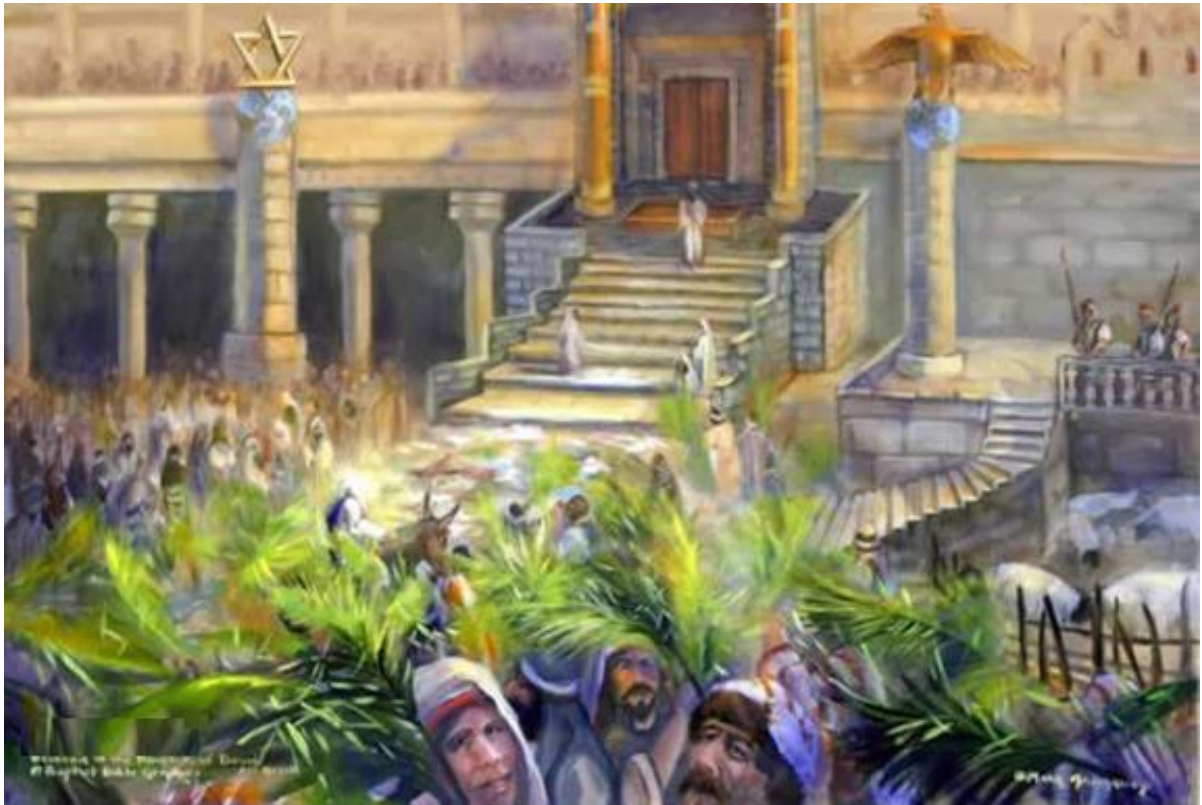


The people were so sure that Jesus was about to lead them to victory over their enemies they all began to shout with uplifted voices, "HOSANNA! HOSANNA! Blessed be HE who comes in the name of the LORD! Blessed be the KINGDOM of our father David that is coming. HOSANNA to the Highest!"

The Hebrew word "Hosanna" when broken down into its meaning is very revealing, and gives the true understanding of what the people were shouting loud and long. "Hosan" means "save, help" and "na" means "please." The people were crying out, "PLEASE SAVE AND HELP US!"

Putting it in our English words, the multitude was saying, "He who is coming in the name of the Lord, Please help and SAVE us. Please save us from the Romans, deliver us, set up the Kingdom of David. Save us in the presence, in the sight of (the Greek "en" translated "in" can mean "before, in presence, in sight") the Highest.

The people wanted, now expected, that Jesus would save and deliver them from the Roman yoke, and set up the glorious Kingdom of God, a kingdom they thought would be like that kingdom in the days of their ancient great king David.



**The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem**

How they wanted to be delivered, set free from under the heavy yoke of what they considered a great evil. They could understand, they could see what the prophets had written, that the Messiah would come and deliver Israel from the yoke of its enemies, when the Messiah would come with the power of the Most High, to rule the world, and make Israel a prosperous and fruitful nation, that all other nations would look up to, and want to be like. But they were reading the Old Testament with one eye shut. They could not see that first of all the Messiah would come to save people, and that included people from within Israel, from their sins, from Satan, from themselves, and give salvation to the world.

They were going to be soon very disappointed with Jesus, and deflated in their expectations of what He was going to do for them. So disappointed they would be, that few would have ever expected at that time, that the coming events would have them turn their back on Jesus in a most drastic way....the most drastic way possible to turn your back on someone you once praised and glorified.

Then among all this praise for Jesus there were the ever present Pharisees, who once more wanted to throw buckets of water on the excited fire of enthusiasm being shown to this man riding on the back of a humble colt.

"Teacher, rebuke your disciples for making all this fuss over you," shouted some Pharisees.

"I tell you," replied Jesus, "if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."

He drew near unto the city of Jerusalem, and when it all came into His view, Luke in his Gospel account records that "He wept over it." Once more we see the down to earth emotional side of Jesus. He knew what trouble and pain and devastation the people of that city were in for, if they did not all fully repent, and turn to their God in humble service. Jesus said, "I would that you knew what were the things that would make for peace in your lives! But, they are hid from your eyes, you refuse to see. The days shall come upon you when your enemies will cast a wall of armies around you, and hem you in on all sides. Then they shall dash you to the ground, you and your children within you. They shall not leave one stone upon another, utter destruction shall come upon you; because you did not know nor want to understand your time of visitation and punishment" (Matt. 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19, 29-44).

Jesus knew the vast majority in that city of Jerusalem would never come to true repentance. Though many in the days ahead would come to accept Him as Savior, acknowledge their sins, and find the true way to salvation (all of that after His resurrection and ascension back to heaven, as we shall see in the book of Acts), for the most part the majority of people and religious leaders would reject Jesus, and would not abandon their false ways of living, and their wrong thoughts towards the Roman powers. Hence in 70 A.D. the city of Jerusalem would be brought to the ground by the Roman armies, and its inhabitants (including children) slain by the sword.

Jesus foreknew this would all happen, and so with deep emotion, He cried tears of sorrow, as the city of Jerusalem came into His view. He knew He must die there, but He also knew the punishment to come upon that city, because its people would not turn from their sins, and look to seek the way of peace for themselves individually, as well as for their city as a whole.

### **Unfruitful Fig Tree Is Cursed, And Dies**

On the following day, returning from Bethany, where Jesus and the twelve had spent the night, they were coming back to Jerusalem again, and Jesus was hungry. He saw a fig tree by the wayside in the distance, and walking up to it He discovered it had only leaves on its branches and no figs. "May no fruit ever come from you again," Jesus said to the tree. And the disciples heard what He said.

The next morning as they passed along the same way, they saw the fig tree was all withered away right down to its very roots.

And Peter remembered, said to Jesus, "Master, look! The fig tree which you cursed has withered away."

"Have faith in God," Jesus answered, and went on to say, "Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he has said will come to pass, it will indeed be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believing that you will receive it, you will receive. And when you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against any one; so that your Father also who is in heaven, may forgive you your trespass" (Mark 11:12-14, 20-25).



**The cursed fig tree**

We need to understand that Jesus did not go around cursing this or that thing at random, or just to over use, or abuse, the power that He had. He did not take the mighty power from the Holy Spirit given Him, and use it like a play toy. He did not go about cursing things just for the fun of it.

A fig tree is one of the fruit trees that is very different from most fruit trees. The actual fruit, the fig, comes on the branches BEFORE the leaves come. So, when seeing a fig tree from a distance, and noting it has leaves on its branches, you would automatically gather it also had fruit on its branches. This is what Jesus expected when He finally got up close to the tree, but as we have seen, there was no fruit, or figs, on the tree at all. It was really a useless, unproductive, fruit tree that was not doing what it was designed to do. It was taking up space and nourishment from the soil, and giving nothing back, certainly not giving back what it should have been giving back.

We must take this as a lesson to learn from. God does not want people, all of which have some gifts, talents, and abilities, to just take up space so to speak, drink in and use up what they can from society and from others, and never give back to others, something that can enrich and help others in some manner. Everyone has something they can contribute to someone else, be it a smile, a word of encouragement, some form of a helping hand (i.e. opening the door for someone who has their hands full of parcels, or helping an old lady cross a busy street), giving of your time, energy, talents, to a charitable cause etc.

If we do not produce something that gives back to others, then we are fit for nothing, fit only to lose everything. And that is exactly what will happen to us, if we do not repent of living a useless, non-productive, non-giving life....we shall be rooted up, plucked up by the roots, we shall wither away and simply be no more. God cannot use in His family someone who is none productive for what they were created to be



and to do in service for humanity. A Christian's life, the life of a child of God the Father, is to produce and serve, to give back to others, what God has given to you, and God does give something to every person so each can give something back to society and to others.

This is also a lesson in "faith." Again, we do not, and Jesus did not, go about demonstrating "faith" just for the sake of demonstrating faith, and casting this or that mountain or hill into the sea. But under the correct situation, where faith is needed, for a good and correct purpose (and it was a good purpose that this fig tree should be withered up, for it was taking up good space and soil, for no good purpose, the soil could be used to plant a productive tree), then having "faith" you could do miracles, and things that most would never expect could be done. Many a person down through history have performed things (or had things done for them) that most would have thought was quite impossible. They had faith in God that what they wanted and needed (asking according to His will, not asking amiss, James 4:3; with 1 John 3:22) for that situation, would be granted them. And with faith, mountains could be removed into the sea, if that was what was needed to be done for that particular circumstance.

Jesus also took the opportunity while speaking about "prayer" to remind them that an attitude of being able to forgive others, was a basic fundamental attribute of being a child of God, for only by being able to forgive others, would we have our sins forgiven by our heavenly Father.

### **Jesus Cleanses The Temple Once More**

The ways of sin and unrighteousness had crept back into the practices within the Temple walls. Jesus had in the past thrown out the greedy, unscrupulous, merchants who sold things to the people who came to sacrifice in the temple. They had robbed the people, taken advantage of them, sold in such a way that was only to make as much profit as possible for themselves.



**Jesus drives out the money changers from the Temple with a whip of cords**

Once more such merchant robbers were back in the Temple, doing their selling to the people as before. How soon the heart of man can forget the correcting of the Lord, and return to its former evil habits.

Jesus entered the Temple in Jerusalem, and saw again that the merchants had reverted back to their old sinful ways and practices.

Once more with righteous indignation He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons and cried out, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer'; but you make it a den of robbers."

Jesus would not allow anyone to carry on their selling, bringing in and taking out their merchandise through the Temple.

The sellers by now knew the mighty power He possessed, and they were not about to test Him with it. All stood in fearful awe of Him.

The blind and the lame came to Him in the Temple, and He healed them as before. Children were even crying out with loud voices, "Hosanna, please save us, Son of David." And when the scribes and the chief priests heard what the children were saying, they said to Jesus with jealousy and frustration, "Do you not hear what these are saying." They wanted Jesus to tell them to stop, but Jesus looked at them and said, "Yes, I hear what they are saying. Have you never read where it is written, 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings you have brought perfect praise'?"

And they could say nothing or do nothing to Him in response. They feared Him, not only because of His great power in performing miracles and healings, but also because the multitudes of people were astonished at His teaching, hanging on every word He spoke, and were at this point fully behind and backing Him up all the way.

Leaving them, Jesus went out of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem, and went again to Bethany and lodged there for a short while (Matt. 21:12-17; Mark 11:15-19; Luke 19:45-48).

### **Chief Priests Question Jesus' Authority**

It was not long before Jesus was back in the Temple preaching and teaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God. The religious leaders of the people were by now getting as uptight and as jumpy as a cat on a hot tin roof. The chief priests, and the scribes, with the elders (a good portion of the Jewish Sanhedrin, or court of religious matters) of the people, came to Jesus and demanded to know, "By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you the authority to do them?"

Jesus answered them with a question, "I also will ask you a question; and if you will tell me the answer, then I will tell you by what authority I do these things. My question is this: 'The baptism of John, where did it come from? Was it from the authority of heaven or from the authority of men?' "

Now those leaders were in quite the pickle as we say. They quickly reasoned among themselves that if they said John's authority came from heaven, then Jesus would ask them why they did not believe him. But if they said John's authority came from men, they knew the crowds of people would be against them, and might even do physical violence to them, for they knew the people held John as a prophet from

God. So with a sheepish voice they answered Jesus, "Well....we really do not know where John's authority came from."

Jesus stared at them, paused for a moment....then with half a smile on His face, said to them, "Well....neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things" (Matt. 21:23-27; Mark 11:27-33; Luke 20:1-8).

Those leaders of the people had been caught in their own trap. They went away seething with anger inside, and determined even the more to destroy this man called Jesus.

## CHAPTER 8

### MORE PARABLES AND THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

#### Parables Of The Vineyard

It was another day or two later, and Jesus was back teaching in the Temple once more. And as usual the Pharisees were not too far away. Knowing their deceitful hearts, He said to them, "What do you think about this? A man had two sons, and he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in my vineyard today.' And the son answered, 'No, I will not!' But a little while later he repented and went to work in the vineyard. The man went to his second son and said the same thing, and that son answered, 'Yes, sir, I will go,' but he did not. Now, which of the two did the will of his father?"

The Pharisees were quick to answer. They said, "Why the first son of course." Jesus then said to them, "It is true what I say unto you, the tax collectors and the harlots (prostitutes) go into the Kingdom of God BEFORE you. For John came to you in the pathway of righteousness, and you did NOT believe him, but the tax collectors and the harlots DID believe him; and even when you saw what was happening, you still did not afterwards repent and believe him" (Matt. 21:28-32).

Many of those Pharisees were not blinded, and they will miss out on being in the Kingdom of God, for they were not willing to repent of their wrong attitudes, thoughts, and practices. Some of those Pharisees were blinded to the truth at that time, some later, as we shall see in the book of Acts, did repent and accept Christ as the Messiah and the Savior. They shall be in the first resurrection, at Christ's glorious coming, along with many of the tax collectors and harlots of Jesus' day, who also repented of their sins, and walked in the way of righteousness.

But Jesus was here giving a strong message to those Pharisees, scribes, and Sadducees, who gave lip service to God, but whose hearts were far from humble repentance, who were far from walking in the light of God's straight and narrow pathway. He was telling those who were not blinded to the truths of God that He was teaching and preaching (and John the Baptist who did likewise), that they would be outside of the Kingdom, looking in. They would be among those that He mentioned earlier in His teachings, that would be crying and gnashing their teeth, and saying, "Lord, did we not speak in your name, did we not do miracles in your name, did we not regularly attend church services in your name?" And Jesus will say to them, "I never knew you, go away from me, you who work lawlessness."

Jesus went on to say to them, and to all that stood around Him:

"Hear another parable. There was a householder who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge around it, and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower. He rented it out for others to work and produce from, while he went into a far country for a long stay. Time went by and he sent a servant to the tenants, that they should give to him some fruit from his vineyard. But the tenants beat the servant and sent him away with nothing. And he sent another servant, but the tenants beat him up, wounding him in the head and treating him shamefully. He sent another servant, and that one they killed. So it was with many others that he sent, some they beat and some they even killed. The owner of the vineyard said within himself, 'What shall I do?' He had



a precious son, and he said to himself, 'I will send him to them, surely they will honor and respect him!' But when the tenants saw the son they said among each other, 'This is the very heir that he has sent to us. Let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.' And they cast him out of the vineyard and did indeed kill him. What then do you think the owner of the vineyard will do to them? Yes, you know very well what he will do. He will come and destroy those tenants, and give the vineyard to others who will give him the fruit he deserves in its season."

When those standing by heard this they knew what He was getting at and what He was saying to them. They said, "God forbid!"

Jesus looking at them even more intensely said, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner; this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in your eyes'? Everyone who shall fall on that stone will be broken to pieces; when that stone fall on any one it will crush him to powder. Therefore I tell you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing the fruits of it."

The chief priest and the scribes and the Pharisees in the crowd hearing all this perceived correctly that the man called Jesus was speaking about them first, and the nation of Judah as a whole, secondly.



Jesus is the Chief Cornerstone  
whom the builders have rejected

It was they who He was saying were the evil tenants beating and killing servants that God was sending, and that God would destroy them, and give His work that was entrusted to them, to other people who would bring forth the fruits that God wanted to receive.

Once more, instead of repenting, because they knew the very truth that Jesus was telling them, they just hardened their hearts even more. They tried within that hour to figure a way to lay hands on Jesus to arrest Him for speaking those words, but they feared the multitude of people that were all around, for the people estimated in their minds that Jesus was a prophet from God (Matt. 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19).

### **Invited Guests To A Marriage Feast**

And again Jesus spoke to them in a parable, saying: "The Kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who had been invited to the marriage; but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, look, I have made all things ready for my dinner, oxen and fat calves have been killed, and everything is ready; so come to the marriage feast.' But they made light of it and laughed and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest took hold of his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his

servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were first invited are not worthy. Go to the highways and roads and lanes, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you can find. ' And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they could find, both bad and good; so the wedding hall was filled with guests."

Jesus was here plainly telling them that the Jewish nation, and especially its religious leaders, who should have been able to recognize God's truth, were the first ones to be invited to the Kingdom of God, through the preaching and teaching of John the Baptist and now Jesus Himself. They not only refused the invitation, but did shame and even killed some of the servants of God sent to them over the centuries.

Jesus was telling them in pretty plain words that God, as the king of the parable, would send an army that would come against Judah and its religious leaders, to destroy them and burn the city. This did take place in 70 A.D. when the Roman general Titus came with his army against Judah and Jerusalem.

The parable did not end there. Jesus went on to say, "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who did not have on a wedding garment; and so he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And the man was speechless, he had no answer to the question. Then the king said to the attendants, his servants, 'Bind this man hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.' So I say to you, many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. 22:1-14).



**The Parable of the Marriage Feast**

Here Jesus is telling people that although many will be called to the Kingdom of God, after Judah and its people had been given first chance to enter, though many from other nations would be called (and we must remember that none can come to God unless God first calls them by His Spirit - John 6:44, 45, 63, 65) to enter the Kingdom, there are conditions to meet in order to inherit that Kingdom. One is repentance (Luke 13:1-3) and the other is to put on the righteousness of God as a garment (Rev.19:7-8 with Ps. 119:171 with Matt. 19:17). Keeping the commandments and works of God does not earn you salvation, for you are saved by God's grace (Eph. 2:8), but doing the works of God is expected of you (Eph. 2:10).

You are to have an attitude of mind that is the garment of the wedding feast, in order to be at the wedding feast and not be cast out. Those who do not have the condition

of the mind-set of a repentant and obeying attitude, who are willing to say with Christ, "Not my will be done, but your will be done Father," just will not enter the marriage supper of the Lamb that is pictured in the book of Revelation chapter 19. They will be, as we have seen many times already in the words of Christ's ministry, in earlier chapters, "on the outside looking in" to use a figure of speech.

Many may be called to walk in the way that leads to the wedding feast of the Kingdom, but you have to be among the "chosen" in order to enter and live for all eternity in the Kingdom. God does the calling, but you personally have to choose to come under the conditions to be in, and remain in, the wedding feast. Many may be called, but only the chosen inherit the feast of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus said elsewhere that "many are called but few are chosen" - so there can be a difference when used in a certain context. The chosen ones are those who have heard the word of God, have access to reading it, and who have committed themselves to not only accept Jesus as their personal Savior, but they have also committed themselves to do as Jesus taught, which in a nut shell is what He said in Matthew 4:4, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

Many are called to "hear" God's word, but not to understand it, as they are not given the removal of spiritual blindness from their minds. This type of "calling" is as we find the apostle Paul talking about it in Romans 10:17 through to the end of chapter eleven. Such persons are not in a spiritually "lost" state for God has not given them the mind to comprehend His word and truths.

Then there are those who HAVE been "called" to not only hear the word but to understand it, and God IS wanting them to come to repentance and salvation through Jesus Christ His Son. But THEY must make that decision to accept God's invitation to be His very sons and daughters, and be in the first resurrection at the return of Jesus in glory to this earth. If they move on to come under the grace of God and receive His Holy Spirit, they then become part of the "chosen" ones. And if they "endure to the end" as Jesus said (Matt. 24:13), if they make their calling and election SURE (see 2 Peter 1:3-11), then they shall enter the Kingdom of God.

### **Concerning Paying Taxes**

The Pharisees were ever wanting to trap Jesus in His words of response to their questions. This time they thought they had the very question that would finally trip Him up and get Him in hot water with all the people of Judah. This time they had the help of the Herodians who also came with some of the disciples of the Pharisees to question Him. Now, the Herodians were a party among the Jews, formed probably under Herod the Great, and basically held that it was right to pay homage to a sovereign who might be able to bring the friendship of Rome and other advantages. They had no title to reign in any way over the Jews either by law or by religion. They differed from the Pharisees on the answer to the question both parties would now put to Jesus, but here they joined forces with them in disguised but open opposition to Jesus. They also saw Jesus as an enemy. The Herodians then were something more than a political party and something less than a religious sect.

Both groups came to Jesus speaking in a way that would have melted butter, they said, "Oh teacher, we know that you are true, and care for no man; for you do not regard the position of men, but truly teach the way of God."



What a bunch of lies were now pouring out of those people who represented the sect of the Pharisees and the band of Herodians. They did not believe one word of what they had just said to Jesus.

They continued with the question that they were sure would be the final death blow to Jesus' popularity with the people, "Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?" Most in Judaea did not like being under the Roman power. If Jesus said yes, give taxes to Rome, the Pharisees thought He would then be on the "outer" with the people, and if He said no, do not give taxes to Rome, then the Pharisees could report Him to the Roman authorities, as someone trying to turn the people against Rome. Either way they thought they had Him this time.

They could not fool Jesus for one second. He knew exactly what was going on and why they had come to Him with this question. He knew they were a group filled with hypocrisy, on both sides. He said to them, "Why do you try to put me to the test? Bring me a coin, and let me look at it." And so they did, they brought Him a coin, and that was their second mistake, the first being the very question they asked Him. "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" Jesus asked them. "Well....well...." they began to answer with some hesitation, "it is the likeness of Caesar." They sensed by now that they, not Jesus, were in for the public embarrassment.

"Very well then," Jesus began to reply, "you should render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and you should render to God the things that are God's."

The faces of those who asked Him the question first went as white as snow, then as red as a beetroot in embarrassment. They were stunned and every one of them was speechless, they could not utter one word. They were both amazed at His reply, and also angry at Him for once more turning the tables upon them, and making them look silly and ridiculous among all the people standing by. With not one single word, they turned away from Him and departed (Matt. 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17; Luke 20:20-26).



**Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's  
and what is God's unto God.**

Jesus taught that we are to have a certain amount of respect for secular governments. Some governments of men, we as Christians, living in some parts of the world, need to move away from, escape out of the land of that government, for they are very evil towards Christians. Recently we had a large black family come to the city I live in, and the church I attend. They came to Canada to escape the harmful evil Government of the Middle Eastern nation they were from, because they were under possible physical violence from that government because they were Christians.

This situation above did not exist in Judea during the time of Christ. The Roman government allowed the Jews to have all freedom to teach and practice their religion.

There was no fear of physical violence from the Roman Government if the Jews lived in a peaceful way within the Roman Empire. Hence, under such a living situation Jesus taught people should pay taxes to the secular government, and be thankful that they did not have to flee for their lives as they taught and practiced the word and truths of God.

### **A Question Of Marriage In The Resurrection**

On the same day the Sadducees came to Jesus with a question they thought was going to have Him treading on His shoe laces and falling flat on His face (of course I use a metaphor as they wore sandals not shoes with laces in those days). They were going to show the Herodians and the Pharisees "how to do it." The Sadducees did not believe in "the resurrection" of the dead to eternal life. This was their question: "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife but no children from her, the man must take the wife and raise up children for his brother."

This was a law in the books of Moses, but here they only state the basic law, it was not written in stone, that the living brother HAD to do this, in other words there was a clause in the law that could be used so the brother did not have to take his dead brother's wife in marriage (see Deut. 25:5-10).

The question they had for Jesus was based on the basic principle of this law of Moses. They continued, "Now there were seven brothers; the first took a wife and died without having children from her; and the second, and the third took her, likewise all seven had her as wife and left no children, and they all died. Afterwards the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection, whose wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife."

You could see all these Sadducees with a large grin on their faces, oh how they thought they had won the day, finally they were thinking, we the great priests of the Temple, have backed this Jesus fellow into a corner and He is finally defeated in His theology. Oh how they were thinking that they the Sadducees were the victors over this man that many believed was the Messiah. This question they thought would be proof that this Jesus was NOT the promised Messiah, and the Son of God as He was claiming.

And Jesus said to them, "How wrong you are, for you know not what the Scriptures teach nor the power of God."

The Scriptures that the Sadducees could read clearly stated there would be a resurrection (see Daniel 12:2; Ezekiel 37; Isaiah 26:19), and the "power of God" that Jesus was talking about, is not only the literal power that God has, but it is also knowing the "spirit" and essence of what the Scriptures of God taught on that subject. With those two things in hand, Jesus was able to continue to say, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage; but those who are accounted worthy to attain to the age to come and to the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to the angels and are the very sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. And as for the dead being raised, have you not read what is written in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, and how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? Now He is not the God of

the dead, but of the living, for all shall live in Him. You are very wrong in your theology on this matter."

And when the crowd heard all this, they were astonished at His teaching, and the Sadducees found they had tripped over their own shoe laces, and it was they who had their faces in the dust of the ground (Matt. 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-38).

Yes the Bible teaches very clearly there will be a resurrection, in fact as we have seen, Jesus taught (John chapter 5) that ALL who had ever died would be resurrected. What Jesus teaches here is that those who will be in the resurrection to be very sons of God, will be like the angels in that they will neither marry nor will they be given in marriage. There will be no husband and wife marriages as we in this physical life know them. There will be no sexual relations for those in the resurrection to eternal life, no sexual relations as we know and practice it in our physical marriages.

This explanation of Jesus' also tells us that angels do not marry, neither do they have, nor can they have, sexual relations among themselves or among and within human beings. Some teach that in Genesis chapter six, angels, be it "fallen ones," came to earth and married and had sexual relations with physical women, and that union produced great giants. What Jesus said here in the Gospels goes against such an idea that some hold concerning Genesis chapter six. The Pharisees actually taught that idea about angels marrying physical women, and we know that Jesus had already warned His disciples about the "leaven" of the doctrines of the Pharisees and the Sadducees (Matt. 16:6-12). Much of what they taught was error and false.

We shall know each other when in the resurrection, be able to do things together, even eat meals together, have all the inter-actions with each other that we enjoy today in the flesh, just as Jesus could with His disciples AFTER He was raised from the dead. But in this passage we have the clear teaching from Jesus that those in the resurrection to life in the Kingdom of God, will not marry, nor have sexual relations as we do today when we in this age, marry each other.

### **The Great Commandment**

It was not long before the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees. They came together again in a little huddle to determine what their next question would be for Jesus to try and answer, with the view that He would not be able to answer or give an answer that would disgrace or make Him look inept before all the people.

Looking from above, with a bird's eye view, down on the Temple, all of this would have seemed quite funny, if it was not all so serious. You had the chief priests, scribes and elders of the people, in the first huddle to plan their attack on Jesus with a trick question, and Jesus scoring a touchdown against them. Then the Herodians and Pharisees huddled down to plan their attack question on Him, and again He scores a touchdown against them. After that the Sadducees call time out and huddle down to come up with a question He could not answer, and Jesus scores a touchdown with the ball they kick at Him. Now, the Pharisees regroup, they call for another time out, and huddle down again to plan their attack against Jesus.

All really quite funny, looking from above on all these little "sect huddles" going on in the Temple grounds, if as I've said, it was not so serious a matter. This was not a game these sects were playing, they were dead earnest about trying to nail Jesus' hide against the wall. This time one of the Pharisees who was also one of the scribe lawyers, asked Him this question, "Teacher, which commandment is the first, the greatest commandment in the law?"

Without any hesitation Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your life, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandments greater than these."

And the lawyer scribe said to Him, "You are right teacher; you have truly said that He is one, and there is no other but He; and to love Him with all your heart, and with all your understanding, and with all your strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

And when Jesus saw that the man answered wisely, He said to him, "You are not far from the Kingdom of God."

After all this questioning from the different sects, and all of Jesus' correct and wonderful answers to them, there was not one person who dared to ask Him any other question (Mark 12:28-34).

### **About The Messiah's Ancestry**

No one was brave enough to ask Jesus any more questions after all this, but Jesus thought it was now His turn to ask the Pharisees a question. While they were still as one group before Him, He asked them, "Tell me, what do you think of the Christ? Whose son is he?" The lawyer scribes were quick to answer, "Why, the Christ is the son of David."

"Well then," replied Jesus, "if that is so, how is it that David, inspired by the Spirit, calls Him LORD, saying, 'The LORD said to my LORD, sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet'? (Ps. 110:1). If David then calls Him LORD, how is HE his son?"

And no one was able to answer Him a word, they had no answer for the question Jesus now asked them. And from that time forward not a single person asked Him any more questions (Matt. 22:41-46).

Jesus was showing them that THE MESSIAH was not just from the line of their great king David, but that the Messiah was David's LORD, the Lord that David worshipped. The Messiah was DIVINE God, as well as coming in the physical form to earth via the blood line of David. This we saw way back in the very first few chapters of this New Testament Bible Story. Mary, who was to bear God's Son, was from the physical line or ancestry of Israel's ancient king David.

The Messiah, Jesus was pointing out to them, was to be BOTH humanly physical as well as DIVINE LORD or God.



Jesus had put up with a lot from the Pharisees, they had questioned Him time and time again, they had attacked His character, slandered Him, called Him names, even said He did things by the power of the Devil. Times was short now, Jesus knew He would soon be put to death, and the Pharisees would have a large part in bringing that event to fruition. Jesus was going to tell the Pharisees and all people standing around, just where it really was with the Pharisees. He would speak plainly about them and their attitude as never before. His words would, as we say, makes their ears burn.

## CHAPTER 9

### JESUS PLAINLY REBUKES THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES

#### Woes To The Scribes And Pharisees

And Jesus said to the crowd and to His disciples, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; so all therefore that they bid you observe, that is according to the Word of God, and what they have authority over, that observe and do, but do not follow their works for they say, but do not do practice what they preach."

Although the words "according to the Word of God, and what they have authority over" are added by myself, it is clear from all that Jesus has said as recorded in the four Gospels, this is the true meaning of what Jesus was saying to them. We have seen that Jesus said much of the doctrines and teachings of the Pharisees was "leaven" and to beware of their theology. We have seen that Jesus many times did not agree with the ideas and the theology of the scribes and Pharisees, so it is obvious that He was not telling people here to BLINDLY, without question, do and practice everything that came out of the mouth of those two groups of people, the scribes and the Pharisees.

Yet, Jesus did admit that they did have a certain amount of authority from Moses and did have some things correct, so where their authority and teachings were in line with God's word, people were to admit it was correct and so do the truth that they taught. But, He was just as clearly teaching here that people were NOT to follow the life example set by the scribes and Pharisees, for as we have seen Jesus often told them they were hypocrites....they often said what God's word did teach, and wanted people to obey it, but they did not do it themselves. So people were to be aware that their example was often far from what people should follow.

Now Jesus got really to the point, did not hold back, and painted in graphic words the foundational nature of the scribes and Pharisees. He went on to say, "They bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them off with even a finger."

Religious cults are prone to do this sort of thing. They rule their members with all kinds of laws that govern every facet of their lives, from the time they wake up to the time they go to sleep. The scribes and Pharisees were in many ways a religious cult, and how they loved to burden people with hundreds of "do this" and "do not do that" laws of life, that were not the laws of God. The people were under heavy burdens, and the leaders of the two groups Jesus is addressing, were not willing to lift the smallest of these man made regulations, that could, in a figure of speech, be lifted from them with just one finger.

Jesus continued: "They do all their deeds and works to be seen of people; for on their arms they wear extra wide prayer boxes with Scriptures verses inside, and wear extra long tassels on their robes."

In their religion of those days, there was a lot of meaning to such clothing. Remember the Old Covenant of the Old Testament age was in many ways full of physical rites, rituals, sacrifices, Temple worship, and even decorating their homes and clothing with Bible verses was often practices. The scribes and Pharisees went

to the ultimate extreme in decorating themselves with Scripture verses.....but it was, as Jesus said, mainly for outward show, in order to tell others how "religious" and how "godly" they were, but in fact the opposite was the true case.

Continuing with Jesus' words, "And how they love to sit at the head table at banquets and in the most prominent seats in the church! They enjoy the adulation they get from people on the streets, and they revel in being called 'Rabbi' or 'teacher' in a vain religious sense. Do not let anyone call you "Teacher" in this vain pompous religious way, for you only have ONE "teacher" - God in heaven. You my disciples are on the same level as brothers and sisters. Do not address each other with pompous religious titles. And furthermore, do not address anyone here on earth with the religious title of 'Father,' for only God in heaven is your spiritual Father. And do not let anyone call you 'Master' in a spiritual religious way, for you have only one Master - the Christ, myself, the Messiah."

Right away we can think of one large religious body of people who use the word "Father" as a religious title for its church leaders. Jesus here clearly said such a practice was not to be done. It is so true in so many cases, that when Jesus said "do this" people do not, and when Jesus said, "do not do this" people do it. Such is the deception of the human heart.

To further amplify the attitude that Christians must have one towards another, Jesus went on to say: "The one who thinks he is the greatest among you, must be your servant. Those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted. How terrible it will be for you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites you are! For you will not let others enter the Kingdom of God, and you will not go in yourselves. Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites you are, for shamelessly you cheat widows out of their property, and then, to cover up the kind of people you really are, you make long prayers in public. Because of this your punishment will be the greater."

Yes, those leaders of religious law, were very clever at getting money from people, even from the widow, who would often give over whatever property they were left by their husband at death, to "the church" as we say today. And so it still is in our time that many "religious" teachers out there are masterful at getting people to give and send them money. Now and again we see such people and their "religious work" be exposed on TV. Such persons usually have great personal wealth, or their organization does, and they live off the organization with a lifestyle that is up there with the "rich and the famous" in the Hollywood circle of movie stars.

Continuing: "Woe to you religious leaders of the scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! For you travel around the earth, over land and sea to make one convert, and when he is made, you make that person two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves. Woe unto you, you blind guides, which say, 'Whoever swears by the Temple, it is nothing, but whoever swears by the gold on the Temple, is a debtor and is obligated to pay and fulfill what he has sworn to do.' You silly fools and carnally blind: for which is the greater, the gold, or the Temple that sanctifies the gold that is on it? The Temple where God says He would dwell is the greater of course!

"And you also say, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift of sacrifice on the altar, he is a debtor to pay in full what he swore to do.' You fools and you blind: for which is the greater, the gift on the altar or the altar itself that sanctifies the gift? Why the altar is the greatest of course!

"So, whoever swears by the altar, swears by it and everything that may be upon it. And whoever swears by the Temple, swears by it and all things upon its walls, and especially by Him that dwells in it - God.

"And whoever swears by heaven, swears by the very throne of God, and by Him that sits on the throne - God Himself!"

As we can see Jesus did not mince His words towards those religious leaders of the people known as the scribes and the Pharisees. Truly some of the teachings they held were by nature and by common human logic, very silly and foolish, and as Jesus bluntly put it "hypocritical."

Going on with Jesus' scathing rebukes: "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are careful to tithe even on the smallest parts of your income and goods, but then you IGNORE the large important parts of the law - JUSTICE, MERCY, and FAITH. Oh yes, you SHOULD tithe, but you SHOULD NOT leave UNDONE the more IMPORTANT things. Blind guides you are! You strain your water so you will not accidentally swallow at gnat; then you turn around and swallow a camel!

"How terrible it will be for you teachers of religious law and for you Pharisees. You hypocrites! You are so very careful to wash and clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but you forget the inside. You are filthy - full of greed and self-indulgence! You blind Pharisees! You should first wash the inside of the cup, then the outside will get clean also, as you wash the inside.

"Woe, unto you scribes and Pharisees. Hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs - looking beautiful on the outside, but filled on the inside with dead people's bones and all sorts of impurity. You all try to look like upright godly people outwardly, but inside your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness.

"Woe, unto you scribes and Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you build tombs for the prophets your ancestors killed and decorate the graves of the godly people your ancestors destroyed. Then you have the nerve to say, 'We would never have joined them in killing the prophets.' In saying what you say, you are accusing yourself of being the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. Go ahead. Finish what they started! You snakes, you sons of vipers! How will you escape the judgment of hell fire?

"I will send you prophets and wise men and teachers of religious law. You will kill some, and whip others in your churches, chasing them from city to city. As a result of your evil heart you will be guilty of murdering all the godly people from righteous Abel to Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered in the Temple between the altar and the sanctuary. I assure you, all the accumulated judgment of the centuries will break and come upon the heads of this very generation."

Jesus, as you see, did not mince His words at this time. His time had just about come to an end as far as living in the flesh as a human being. He had been very badly treated, shamefully treated, by those religious leaders of the people of Judah. They, of all people, should have known better, they were the ones supposedly reading and understanding all that the word of God in the Old Testament was saying. Many, many passages told of the first coming of the Messiah, and how He would live, and teach, and heal, and proclaim the truths of the Kingdom of God. Those

scribes and Pharisees should have been able to have recognized that Jesus the Christ was indeed the very promised Messiah. The words Jesus used against those two groups of religious leaders were fair and proper words. They deserved every bit of Jesus' condemnation.

Jesus finished this attack on the scribes and Pharisees by thinking of the people in general, and how they had been influenced to deception by those leaders, so much so that in an overall sense, that deception would last for a great time to come.

He said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those whom God sends to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you would not let me do it! Behold therefore, your house is forsaken and will be desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord' " (Matt. 23:1-39).

Jerusalem, the city, and the majority of the Jews to this very day, are still spiritually forsaken, and their house is desolate. They still do not accept Jesus as the Messiah. They have had great troubles for many centuries. They still wait for the Messiah to come. They will indeed not see Jesus, until He comes again in glory. Then as the prophet Zechariah (chapters 12 to 14) shows, they will see that the very Jesus Christ that walked among them centuries earlier, IS the MESSIAH! They shall then praise Him and will indeed say, "Blessed be HE who comes in the name of the Lord."

### **A Widow Gives All**

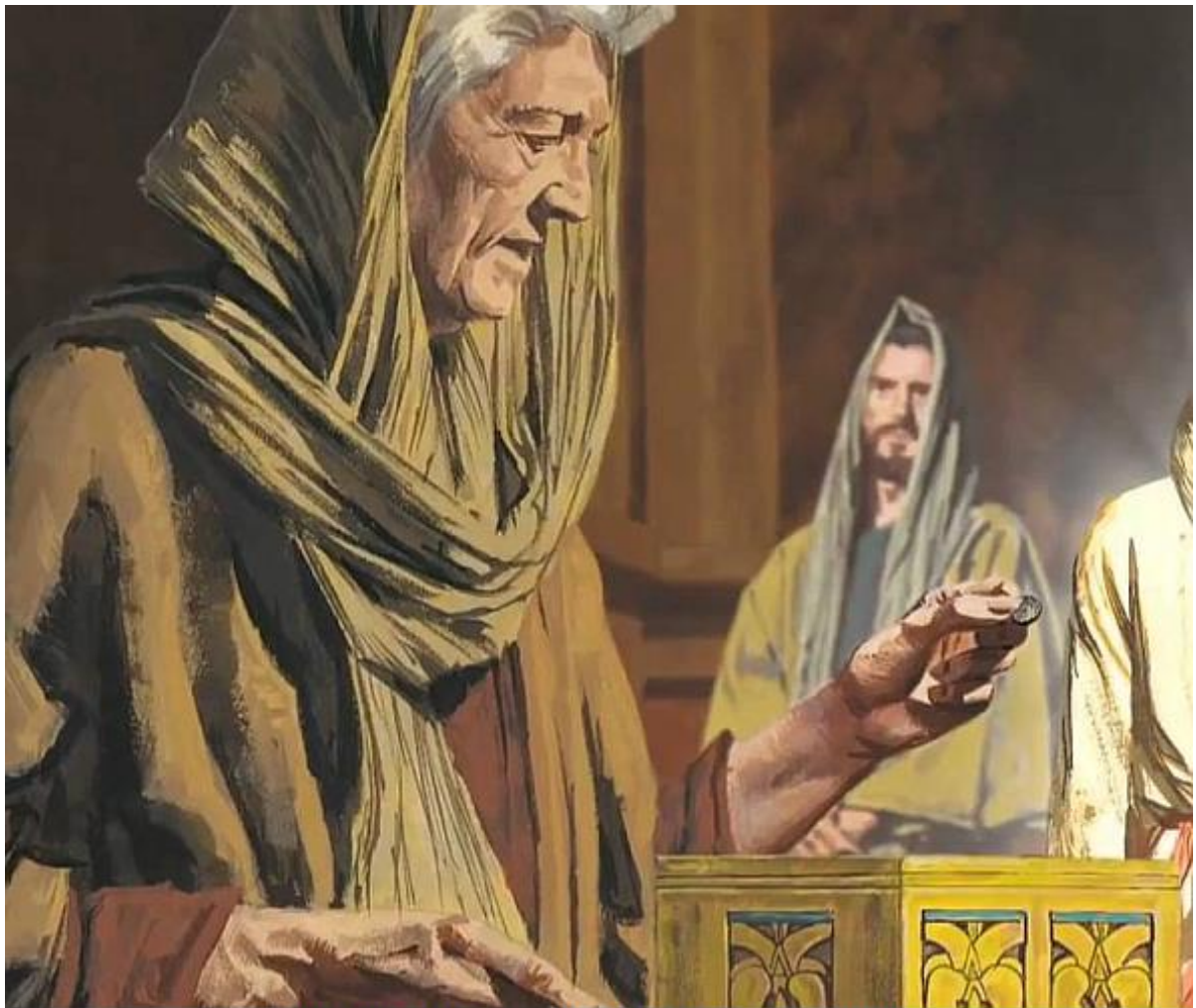
Jesus had been teaching for some hours. He was getting a little tired so He sat down across from the Temple treasury, and watched the multitude putting money into the treasury box. Many very rich people put in large sums of money.

Then came along a poor widow, and put in just two copper coins, which make a penny, a very small amount compared to what others had put in. So small an amount that some would have thought it pretty well amounted to nothing.

Jesus, knowing through His miraculous power of the Spirit, the true situation of what this widow had done, called His disciples to come, and He said to them, "I tell you of a truth, this poor widow has put into the Temple treasury more than all who have contributed. For they all contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in EVERYTHING she had, her whole living" (Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4).

Nothing more is mentioned by the Gospel writers. But we can easily get the message Jesus was giving His disciples. The heart of the woman was much larger in attitude than any of the wealthy who had contributed.

They may have given large amounts of money, but they could have given more really. And you talk about "faith" that was exhibited by this widow, yes, she had great faith that God would provide for her. It does not say in the accounts, then again, it does not need to. Jesus noticed it, and I'm sure this widow was blessed in a physical way somehow, and that God made sure her daily needs were met.



**A widow puts in a mite into the Treasury box.**

### **The Start Of Rejection By The Jews**

The Jews had great expectations of Jesus. They were sure He was going to start to lead them to full freedom from the Roman Empire. They had welcomed Him to Jerusalem with great acclaim and celebration. But all they saw was Him teaching in the Temple. His teaching was fine and even spectacular, and shocking at times, yet they thought, when was He going to break forth into a rallying army type leader who would gather them all together and lead them to victory over the Roman army. He had mighty miracle working power that they thought could surely destroy all the armies that Rome could send upon them. They were beginning to get doubts in this Jesus who called Himself the Messiah, and the Son of God.

Now among those that went up to worship at the feast time of the Passover were some Greeks. These came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

These Greeks had probably heard about Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, and now wanted to learn more about and from this man. We are told that Philip went to Andrew. Philip may have wanted some other person to talk to about the matter, as these Greeks were Gentiles, and Jesus did not normally go out of His way to teach and preach to Gentiles. The Gentiles would have the door to the Kingdom of God fully opened to them after Jesus' resurrection, when God made it known to the Jewish disciples of Christ that salvation was for everyone.....Jew or Gentile.

Both Philip and Andrew went to Jesus to pass on to Him the request from these Greek persons. The narrative, recorded by the apostle John, simply goes into the words of Jesus. We are to assume these are the words given by Jesus to both His disciples, Jews, and to these Gentile Greeks.

And Jesus said, "The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified. Truly, yes true indeed, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone, and fruitless; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life, loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it forever in the eternal life to come. "

Jesus was here speaking of Himself, that would die, but in so doing, much fruit would be brought forth by His death. He is also speaking to His disciples who would want to follow Him. He was once more telling them that they were to have their hearts primarily set upon eternal life in the Kingdom, and not on being wrapped up in the physical things of this life. His disciples must even give up their lives like He was going to give up His life, IF called upon to do so, for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven.

Jesus going on with the last thought I've mentioned, said, "If anyone serves me, he must FOLLOW me; and in so doing, where I shall be there shall my servant be also; if any one serves me, the Father will honor them."

Yes, all who live and die as a follower of Christ, shall one day be with Jesus. There will come a resurrection from death, at the coming of Christ in glory, as we have seen, and the dead in Christ will be raised to immortal life, and those living when He comes shall be changed from flesh and blood to immortal sons and daughters of God (1 Cor. 15; 1 Thes. 4), and meet Jesus in the air, in the clouds, and as the apostle Paul said, so shall they ever be with Christ.

Jesus, now looking at what the near hour of His death would be like, said, "Now is my mind troubled. And what shall I say? Shall I say, 'Father, save me from this hour'? No! For it was for this purpose I have come to this hour just ahead of me. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."

Was this voice, the very personal voice of God the Father? We need to be careful not to jump to that conclusion too fast, for as John records, the crowd hearing that voice, did not automatically believe it was God Himself speaking. As in our governments of this world, a "spokes-person" on behalf of a leader of a nation, can speak in the first person, acting for the President or Prime Minister of the nation. So, it could also be in God's Kingdom. Here is what John recorded as the reaction of the crowd when hearing this voice, "The crowd standing by heard it and said that it thundered. Others said, 'An ANGEL has spoken to him.' "

Whatever, either the voice of an angel or the voice of God, Jesus went on to say, "This voice has come for your sakes, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out; and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself."

As the apostle John recorded, he said this to show what death He would die. Being lifted up, using that figure of speech, was well understood by the Jews and all within the Roman Empire. It signified being crucified on a cross or stake. Crucifixion was a common method used by the Romans to slowly kill someone. In most cases it was a



slow death, over two or three days, but I'll have more to say on that when we get to the actual crucifixion of Jesus.

The ruler of this world to be cast out, that Jesus referred to, was Satan himself. At the death of Christ, the works of Satan were conquered. Sin began with Satan in the distant past. And from the time of Adam and Eve and their sin, ALL people have sinned, and the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23) - eternal death in the lake of fire which is the second death spoken about in Revelation chapter 20. Jesus' death would pay the penalty, He would take our sins upon Himself, so upon our repentance and accepting Him as our personal Savior, we could be freed from Satan's hold and death's hold on us.

At the death of Christ for the sins of the world (John 3:16) Satan would be in essence, cast out from holding the people of the world in his grip. His power over us would be broken through the shed blood of Jesus. He would still be allowed to do his work on earth for another two thousand years or so, before he would finally be chained up for a thousand years, as Revelation 20 tells us. But Jesus dying on the cross would make sure and seal Satan's fate of being cast out....and as God often calls things done that are not yet literally done, but so sure are they that they will be done, God sometimes uses words that speak as if they are now done. This is what Jesus did here, spoke as if Satan would be cast out NOW, at Jesus' death. In one way as I've mentioned Satan would be, but in the literal sense Satan is not put away from the earth until the one thousand year reign of Christ begins, when Jesus comes again in glory to establish the literal Kingdom of God on earth (Rev. 19 and 20).

After Jesus had mentioned that he would be "lifted up" which all present knew He meant that He would die by crucifixion, the crowd said, "We have heard from the law of Moses that the Christ remains FOREVER. How then can you say the Son of man must be lifted up? Who then is THIS Son of man you talk about?"

Jesus replied to them, not in a direct way, He had over the course of His ministry told them plainly WHO the Son of man was. He replied in the way that showed they should have known by now WHO the Son of man was, "The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, lest the darkness overtake you; those who walk in the darkness do not know where they are going. While you have the light, BELIEVE in the light, that you may become the sons and daughters of the light."

Once more Jesus was referring to Himself. He was the light. They needed to BELIEVE in HIM! They needed to walk in the light of truth He was teaching them. He was again telling them they needed to become true sons and daughters of God the Father.

When Jesus had said all this, He departed and kept Himself hidden and out of sight from them. And John tells us that though He had done so many signs and miracles among them, they still did not believe in Him, they did not believe in Him as they should have believed in Him. It was all as the spoken word of the Prophet Isaiah said, "Lord, who had believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" (Isa. 53:1). It was not given for the majority of the people at that time to believe, for Isaiah also said, "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they should see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and turn to me to be healed" (Isa. 6:9, 10).

Yes, Isaiah was inspired of God to say these things because it would not be God's will to take the blindness away from the hearts of the majority of the people during the time of Christ's ministry. Nevertheless God had called a number of the people to believe in Him, even a number of the authorities within the Jewish nation believed in Jesus, but for fear of the sect of the Pharisees, who had a huge amount of pull and sway in a political religious manner, they did not openly confess they believed in Jesus, lest they should be put out of the synagogues. God had called them to believe, but as we have seen, we have our part to play in that calling.

As free moral agents we can decide how we will "run" with the belief God grants us. These people who believed, did not run well with it. As the apostle John states, they loved the praise of men MORE than the praise of God. They made the synagogue or church their "social club" and did not want to be "put out" on account of believing in Jesus. Possibly, after Jesus' death and resurrection, some of them took a firmer stand on their conviction and were not bothered about being put out of the synagogues, but at this juncture in time, they were more afraid of men than God. We need always be more fearful (which is a deep respect and honor) of God than of men.

Jesus was not yet through speaking. He cried out, "He who believes in me, believes not merely in me but in HIM that sent me. And he who sees me sees also HIM that sent me. I have come as LIGHT into the world, that whoever believes in me may not remain in the darkness. If any one hears my teachings and does NOT keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not at this time come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects me and does NOT receive my sayings has a judge; the WORD that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day. For I have not spoken on my OWN authority; the Father who sent me has Himself given me commandment WHAT I should SAY and WHAT to speak. And I surely know that His commandment is ETERNAL LIFE! What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has commissioned me to say" (John 12:20-50).

Jesus' main purpose in coming the first time was to die for the sins of the world, to give people a way out of sin, and a way to eternal life (John 3:16), through His shed blood on the cross. It was not Jesus' time to judge the world, to judge all the people on the earth. That day of judgment was not for that time, it was for a much later time, but people would even then not be judged out of Jesus' own mind per se, but judged by the very word of God, which of course includes all the words and teachings of Jesus that are recorded in the New Testament.

God has revealed His will for us, how we should live, what we should practice, what we should think and say and do. It is all in His word we call the Bible. Christians, the children of God the Father, are to as Jesus said, live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4). All people, one day, shall be judged by that very word. We need to read it, understand it, love it, want to follow it and live by it. If we have that attitude of mind we need not fear our judgment day, for we shall be under the grace of God. We shall be loved by Him, and we shall inherit eternal life.

### **Mary Anoints Jesus' Feet**

The apostle John in his Gospel account relates to us that six days before the Passover, Jesus was in Bethany, the town where Lazarus (the man Jesus raised from the dead) was living. He was at a supper meal. Martha, Mary's sister, was serving, and Lazarus was also present, sitting at the same table with Jesus.



**Mary anoints Jesus' feet**

Mary took a pound of very costly ointment and started to anoint Jesus' head and also His feet, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment. But Judas Iscariot (the one who betrayed Jesus later) said, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred denarii (a large sum of money in our terms today), and given to the poor?"

We may think that Judas was kind hearted, especially towards the poor, but John informs us that he did not say this because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he was also in charge of the money box the disciples had, for their living expenses, he would steal from it at times.

It is good to here realize that Jesus and His disciples had a "bank account" as we might call it today. They were obviously given money from many different people and sources, to help them with physical expenses (such as food) as they travelled up and down Palestine doing the work of God. Perhaps some of the money was from the gifts that were given to Jesus when the Magi visited him as a baby.

Jesus replied to Judas' statement, "Let her alone, do not trouble her. For you will always have the poor with you, and whenever you will you can do good to them; but you will not always have me here. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand, for burying me, preparing me for death. And truly, I say to you, wherever the Gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her." She probably used the rest of the oil later when He would be buried.

When the people heard that Jesus was there in Bethany, they came in large numbers, not only to see Jesus, for some were already questioning and having

second thoughts about Him, because He was not doing what they expected Him to do, gather all the Jewish men together to form an army to fight the Romans.

They came also to see Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Many were through waiting and started to believe in Jesus while the power that the chief priests, scribes and Pharisees had over the people was diminishing. So those groups of men were planning to also put Lazarus to death along with Jesus (Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-11).

## CHAPTER 10

### THE GREAT PROPHECY OF THE END TIMES (PART 1)

#### The Mount of Olives Prophecy

It is now only three days until the Passover and the fateful events of the night and day of the fourteenth of Nisan, the first month in the calendar that the Jews used, corresponding to our March/April (see a good Bible Dictionary under the article "calendar").

Jesus had been on this third day before the Passover, in the Temple, once more teaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God. He was now leaving the Temple, when His disciples, at least one of them, said, "Teacher, look at the wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings are within the Temple structure."

Jesus answered, "You see all these, do you not? Truly I tell you, there will not be left one single stone upon another that shall not be thrown down."

The disciples were astonished once more at His remarks and they pondered and mused among themselves as they walked along, what that remark was really meaning.

Jesus reached the Mount of Olives, and stopped to look at all He could see, as well as have a short rest. It was then that some of the disciples, namely, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked Him privately this question:

"Tell us Lord, when will this be that you spoke about concerning the stones of the Temple, and what will be the sign of your coming and the close of the age?"

We need to notice very clearly, for it is written by Matthew in very plain to understand words. The disciples were asking Jesus to tell them about the signs that would signal His RETURN.....and the END OF THE AGE!

What we are about to read, the words of Jesus, as recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, is MAINLY and for mostly, an END TIME prophecy. It has only a smaller fore-running local event of what happened to the Temple and Jerusalem, in 70 A.D. What happened in 70 A.D. did NOT fulfill this prophecy, for TODAY we still have part of the wall of the Temple in existence in Jerusalem. It is called the "Wailing Wall." Hence in 70 A.D. not EVERY STONE, was "will not be left one stone upon another, that will not be thrown down" as Jesus had said would come to pass, BEFORE His COMING AGAIN and the END of the age!<sup>2</sup>

This prophecy of Jesus' is most certainly for the END TIMES, yet ahead of anyone reading this New Testament Bible Story!

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<sup>2</sup> **EDITOR'S NOTE:** Please see my editorial notes at the end of this chapter for a fuller discussion on the correct location of the Temple in the time of Jesus for which, I believe, there is clear evidence to indicate that it was not located on what is today referred to as the Temple Mount where the Dome of the Rock currently sits.





The disciples from the Mount of Olives look back to Jerusalem as Jesus gives His prophecy about the end times.

Jesus said, "Take heed that no one leads you astray. For MANY will come in my name saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead MANY astray."

At the end times it is the MANY that would come saying that Jesus was the Christ. They would come in His name, claiming they were ministers of Christ. But they would be false ministers, leading MANY, not the few, astray. And so it is today we have dozens and dozens, even hundreds, of "religious" organizations claiming Jesus is the Christ. But Jesus Himself said, the MANY would be false ministries and false preachers, leading the many into a false Christianity.

Jesus continued, "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end of the age is not yet. For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places; all this is but the BEGINNING of sufferings."

We have in the last 100 years seen all this fully come to pass. More earthquakes than ever, more famines than ever, more nations fighting nations than ever in the past. All this Jesus said had to come to pass, but the end of the age was not just yet, more specific things Jesus would now go on to name and foretell, would be the signs of the stones of the Temple in Jerusalem being cast down so not one would be left upon another (the stones of the Wailing Wall still stand, which was once a part of the Temple of Jesus' day), and the coming of Jesus again to earth.

Continuing with Jesus' words, "Then they will deliver you my disciples, up to tribulation, and beat you in the churches, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear testimony before them. Some of you they will put to death. And you will be hated by all nations for my sake. Do not worry beforehand how to answer your accusers; for I will give you the words and wisdom to speak through the power of the Holy Spirit, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. And at that time many will fall away from the truth, and betray one another. You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and kinsmen and

friends. Family members will betray one another even to death. And at this time many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And along with all this, wickedness will be multiplied and the love of most people will wax cold."

This period, when all this will happen, will be the last few years before Jesus returns, as the book of Revelation explains and amplifies.

Jesus went on to say that those who would endure to the end, stick it out, keep the faith, no matter what the cost, would be saved.

And He said that before the end of the age came, the Gospel would be preached throughout the whole world as a witness to all nations. Some of that would be done by the servants of Christ, some of it done by the two great witnesses that the eleventh chapter of the book of Revelation speaks about, who will come to Jerusalem for the last three and one half years or forty-two months, and from there will witness for the truth of God. Then the final world-wide witness will be by an angel that will declare the Gospel to all that dwell upon the earth, to every nation, every kindred, and tongue, and people (Revelation 14:6,7).

Jesus said that after those specific events we just read about, then the end of the age and His return would come. Then the Kingdom of God would be established upon the earth.

Now Jesus, steps back in time somewhat, and talks about a specific event that will lead up to and trigger this last days persecution of God's spiritual children, as well as the physical people of the tribes of Israel.

"When you see," Jesus said, "the abomination that makes desolate, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it should not stand, standing in the holy place...."

We are not to guess what this is that Jesus has reference to. First, the Greek words for "holy place" are NOT unique. The Greek for "holy" is the common word used throughout the New Testament, and means, "consecrated, pure, holy, saint" - it is the Greek "hagios." The word for "place" means just that - "place, spot, location." "Jesus was saying something will make desolate a holy place, a holy location, or holy spot on the earth.

Secondly, we do not have to guess what this is, or come up with many different ideas, theories, interpretations, as many have done in the last 200 years. The Bible "interprets itself." Luke in his Gospel account of what Jesus said here, gives us the meaning. We find it in Luke 21:20, "But when you see JERUSALEM SURROUNDED BY ARMIES, then you will know, its DESOLATION IS AT HAND."

Jesus, was saying that what Daniel had foreseen and what he wrote about for the end times, was the DESOLATION of JERUSALEM! Jerusalem was God's chosen HOLY PLACE. It was and still is the HOLY CITY! It is the city that God has chosen to have His headquarters in under the reign of Jesus Christ during the millennium or one thousand year period of Revelation chapter 20.

An end time power, the "King of the North" as Daniel calls it (the book of Revelation calls it a "Beast" power, with a "beast man" as army leader and "false prophet" as religious leader) will come against the "King of the South" at the end time and will defeat him, and then march on into the "glorious holy mountain" and "set up" or plant



his tabernacle of dwelling "between the seas" (between the Mediterranean sea and the Dead sea) in the very holy place, or holy city of Jerusalem (Daniel 11:40-45).

Jerusalem will be surrounded by the armies of this Beast - King of the North power about three and one half years, or forty two months, or 1260 days, before Jesus returns to earth. This end time power will then march into Jerusalem and destroy most of the city. There will be great desolation of the holy city, and then the final wall (Wailing Wall) of the Temple that stood in Jesus' day, will come crashing down, and the prophecy will be fulfilled where Jesus said that not one stone of the Temple would stand on another stone.

In Daniel 12:11 it says that at that time "the daily sacrifice is taken away". The word sacrifice is in italics in most translations and is not in the original text written by Daniel. This daily that is taken away may well refer to the daily worship that is performed at the Wailing Wall.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> **EDITOR'S NOTE:** In regards to the prophecy of the end time abomination of desolation Keith takes a minimalist approach not seeing any need for either any re-start of daily sacrifices by the Jews nor any need by them to rebuild a physical Temple. This is a minority point of view not shared by most in the Church of God. Most within the Church of God believe that the Jews will re-start daily sacrifices which the Beast power will stop upon conquering Jerusalem. There is a difference of opinion, though, as to whether a physical Temple needs or will be rebuilt by the Jews.

Keith is correct that the word sacrifice is italicised in Daniel 12:11, however I don't support his view that the daily being taken away may represent the daily worship at the Wailing Wall for two reasons. One is that daily means something that is **scheduled** daily. There is no daily worship service at that wall as far as I am aware. The other is that this wall was never a part of the Temple but was a part of the Roman fort Antonia (see my notes at the end of this chapter where I also show the Jews could rebuild a Temple without touching the Dome of the Rock). The daily has to refer to either daily sacrifices or something else.

It is possible to get a fit with the "standing in the holy place" where it shouldn't mean the Roman standing army being in Jerusalem and destroying it but I feel this is a rather strained interpretation. The term "holy place" is never used elsewhere for Jerusalem and is always used for the Temple.

The principle of duality is a major key in understanding prophecy (Isaiah 41:22, 46:9-10). By understanding the early fulfillment we better understand the end time fulfillment. The early fulfillment of the abomination of desolation was not merely an army destroying Jerusalem but a sacrilege by Antiochus Epiphanies in 167 BC in the Temple. He stopped the Jewish sacrifices and erected a statute of Zeus in the Temple and sacrificed a pig to it. God here gives us a model to understand the end time fulfillment. Such a sacrilege of something pagan in a rebuilt Temple is a better duality fit for the term "standing in the holy place". If that occurred then any Jewish sacrifices would have been stopped beforehand.

When that event happens Jesus went on to say, "Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let him who is on the housetop not go down to take things from the house, but flee. Those who are inside the city better flee, and those out in the country-side better not enter the city. Those in the field had better not return to their homes to gather things, but they better flee. For these will be the days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written.

"Alas for those who are pregnant and with child, and for those who are still nursing their child! For great distress shall be upon the earth and wrath upon THIS people in Palestine; they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away as captives into all nations; and this city of Jerusalem shall be trodden down and made desolate by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, until God has allowed the Gentile armies to do their devastation and evil.

"You my disciples need to pray that your fleeing will not be in the winter nor on the Sabbath day. For this will be the time of GREAT TRIBULATION such the like that the world will never have seen, no not from its very beginning, and never will see the like ever again. If those days were not shortened, no HUMAN BEING WOULD BE SAVED ALIVE; but for the sake of the ELECT, those days God will shorten."

There can be no mistaking about the time Jesus is here talking about. It was not the time of 70 A.D. It was not the time of the middle ages, not the time of the first world war, not the time of the second world war. No matter how bad those times were, the time that Jesus is talking about (as we shall see further as we proceed into the context of the next verses and what Jesus said) is still ahead of all who are reading these chapters in this Bible Story.

Jesus is clearly talking about a time just prior to His visible second coming in glory. It will be a time of tribulation and distress and suffering, like the world has never seen since man was created upon it. As Jesus said unless those days would be shortened not one single human being would be left alive on the face of the entire earth. Only in the last 50 years have we had the weapons of mass destruction that could indeed kill every man, woman, and child, from off the planet.

This prophecy of Matthew 24 is, without question, an end time prophecy, for the last three and one half years (the 42 months, the 1260 days, the times and time and half a time, of the book of Revelation).

Jesus further said, "Then, at that time, if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There He is,' do NOT believe it! For false Christs and false prophets will rise up and even show GREAT signs and wonders, so great as to lead many astray, so deceptive they will be that IF it was possible they would deceive even the VERY ELECT! You need to take heed; I have told you and warned you of all these things beforehand.

"So, if they say to you, 'Ah, look, He is in the wilderness,' do not go out to look; if they say, 'Look, He is in this inner room,' do NOT believe them. For when I COME AGAIN, it will be like as LIGHTNING comes from the east and shines as far as to the west. Yes, that is what my coming will be like. The Son of man will come in a cloud with GREAT POWER and GLORY! Now, when these things begin to take place, look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near. Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together."

Once more Jesus has warned His true followers that at this end time, the last three or four years especially, many false prophets and religious teachers would arise. Some will be able to perform great and might miracles.

The false prophet of the book of Revelation will be able to bring fire down from heaven. Many will come at that time claiming Jesus has returned, but Jesus said He will not come in such a secret manner that people have to tell you He had arrived and is over in this wilderness area or in a particular room somewhere.

Jesus said His coming will be like the LIGHTNING comes from the east and flashes to the west. As a young lad growing up in England I witnessed such events. Some of the thunder and lightning storms would come upon us very suddenly. Within minutes the sky would be dark with huge black clouds, then loud thunder would roll across the heaven, THEN SUDDENLY the lightning would flash at on side of the sky and flash across to the other side. It was all very SPECTACULAR and QUICK!



**"For as the lightning comes out of the east and shines even to the west, so also will be the coming of the Son of Man...they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of the heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:27, 30).**

Jesus said as His disciples were watching these last day events unfold, they were to realize their redemption was near. He was referring to their being made immortal in the resurrection at His return. The resurrection spoken about in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15.

Jesus used the analogy of a carcass and the eagles or vultures gathering together around it. We have either seen that in person some time, or seen it in a movie or documentary on eagles and vultures. We are to get from that analogy the main

thought, not the specifics as such. Jesus was not thinking about the carcass being dead, or the meal the vultures would have. The point He was making was the one carcass being there would draw the birds to it.

He had just mentioned the redemption of His followers, and that redemption was the time of HIM (the one person body, or the one carcass of His analogy) coming to earth again, with glory as the glory of lightning, and the resurrection of all the saints taking place, their redemption glory, and they then coming to where He was, just as the vultures come to where the carcass is. Jesus and His followers would COME TOGETHER. We see this perfectly explained by the apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians chapter four.

Jesus will come like the glory of lightning to the clouds, to the air of this earth. It will be a spectacular event, not something secret or un-noticed. And when He comes the RESURRECTION (or changing from flesh and blood to immortal spirit for those saints alive at His coming - 1 Cor. 15) of the saints takes place, their redemption is complete, and they gather together where Christ is in the clouds, and so will be with Him forever more.

The prophecy of Zechariah 14 finishes it all for us. In that very day on which Jesus comes in glory, with the saints (who have been resurrected or changed from human to divine), Jesus and the saints land on earth, at the Mount of Olives, and start to establish the literal Kingdom of God on earth. The reign of Jesus for 1,000 years on earth begins.

Jesus now once more backtracks some in the time period of the last three or so years of this age. Jesus has not yet arrived, His coming like lightning is yet to happen. He wants to here tell His disciples about another spectacular event that will happen, that must happen, an event that they will see in the heavens above, and then know that His coming is very close at hand. Jesus gave definite signs for His servants to watch for during the last years of this age, leading up to His return and their completed redemption in the resurrection.

Jesus said, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the SUN will be DARKENED, and the MOON will not give its light, and the STARS will fall from heaven, and the powers of HEAVEN will be SHAKEN! THEN, after those signs of the heavens, the sign of the SON of man in heaven shall appear, then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will then see the SON of man coming on the CLOUDS of heaven with POWER and great GLORY; and He will send out His angels with a LOUD TRUMPET call, and they will gather together His ELECT from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other end of heaven."

Yes, this is what I just explained above, the time of completed redemption of the saints. The time of the resurrection of the saints to meet Christ in the air, in the clouds. We notice that the angels will have a part in bringing the saints to where Jesus is, gathering them together, like the eagles gather to where the carcass is, so the saints are gathered by the angels to be brought to where Jesus is in the clouds of heaven.

Before this takes place Jesus gave His people the sign of the "heavenly signs" to watch for, so when they saw the sun darkened, and the moon not giving light and the stars falling from heaven, AFTER the great tribulation, after a time of distress such

as never before on earth, then they could know their completed redemption in the resurrection at the coming of Christ in glory, was NEAR at hand.

The sign of the Son of man in heaven that shall appear, maybe the sign that is talked about in Revelation 11:19. The Temple of God in heaven opened and the ark of His testament shown. We notice the context of Rev. 11:19 is the sound of the SEVENTH AND LAST trumpet, the time of the RESURRECTION of the saints, the time for Jesus to COME AGAIN and rule the nations of the earth. All fits together with 1 Cor. 15; 1 Thes. 4; Zech. 14; and Rev. 19 and 20.

Jesus really wanted His people to get the picture, and to get in their mind some very important points within this whole last days scene. He went on to tell us:

"I want you to learn the lesson from the fig tree; as soon as its branches become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So likewise, when you see all these things I've told you about, coming to pass, then know that the end is near, even at the gates. Truly I say to you that this age of mankind will not pass away until all these things come to pass. Heaven and earth will one day pass away, but my words will never pass away, so you can be assured it will all come to pass what I am telling you about.

"You need to take heed to yourself, lest your hearts be weighed down with wickedness and drunkenness and with the cares of this life, and that time come upon you suddenly like a snare; for it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the earth suddenly, they will not be expecting it. But you my disciples, need to pray and watch at all times that you are counted worthy to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of man when He comes.

"Of that specific day and hour when I come again in glory, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son of man, but ONLY my Father.

"I tell you this, as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, right up until the day that Noah went into the Ark, and they did not know until the flood came and swept them away, so will be the coming of the Son of man.

"So take heed, watch and pray, you do not know when that day will come. It is like a man going on a journey, and when he leaves he puts his servants in charge, each with his work to do, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. You need to watch, for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening time, or at midnight, or at the time when the cock crows, or later in the morning. Watch, lest he come suddenly and find you asleep.

"When that day comes for me to return, two men will be in the field, one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, you do not know WHAT DAY your Lord is coming."

This whole context is the VERY DAY, the literal 24 hour day, that Jesus will come again from heaven back to this earth. So when He said one would be taken and the other left, He was not talking about some "secret rapture" - an invisible silent, unseen, coming of His, that some people teach, to snatch away the saints while leaving others behind. All kinds of silly scenarios have been imagined by people who

teach and believe in the so-called "secret rapture" of the saints, to be secretly snatched out of the world and taken to heaven, while the great tribulation falls on all that are left on earth.

Such people teach that people will be driving their car and then, all of a sudden, disappear or they are driving a school bus and they, as a Christian suddenly, disappear as they are caught up to heaven in a secret rapture. You are left to imagine the horror that takes place on the school bus when the driver suddenly vanishes.

Jesus is here in the whole context talking about the VERY DAY of His coming again. And as the book of Revelation clearly shows there will be Christians on the earth at that time. Jesus in this context of this great prophecy also makes it clear that Christians will be on the earth when He returns in glory. Some will be in the wilderness in safety from all the destruction around them. Some will be called and converted only when the tribulation of the last days is under way, and they will be in different nations, doing different things, with many unconverted people around them.

When the day comes for the Father to send Jesus back to earth, as we have seen the RESURRECTION or CHANGE for the living saints, will take place, ON THAT VERY DAY, as Jesus reaches the clouds of heaven above us. The saints will be gathered by the angels, they will be taken from the grave as they are raised to immortal life, and taken from wherever they are on earth, in the field, in the bed, working at the mill, if still alive (but the live Christians will as we have seen, be changed from mortal to immortal - 1 Cor.15), and taken to be with Christ in the clouds.

One taken and one left is to do with the RESURRECTION of the saints on the very day that Jesus returns, the day that the Father sends Him back to earth to establish the Kingdom of God on earth for a thousand years.

And God will make sure that the Christian taken in the resurrection will not be driving a bus, or flying a plane, or any such thing, that would endanger innocent lives when they are suddenly not there.

Jesus gave emphasis to His people to WATCH! He went on to say, as He amplified the point of watching, "Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the householder had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have watched and have not let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready; for the Son of man is going to come at an hour you do not expect.

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant who when his master comes will find so doing his job faithfully. Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions.

"But if that wicked servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and eats and drinks with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come in a day when he does not expect him to come and at an hour he does not know, and will punish him and put him with the hypocrites; there men will weep and gnash their teeth" (Matt. 24:1-51; Mark 13:1-37; Luke 21:5-38).



We see that Jesus was very concerned that His disciples would always be WATCHING! The watching Jesus had in mind was far more than just watching world news and world events, in order to tell whereabouts we are in Bible prophecy. Jesus had in mind that His followers should always be watching their LIVES, their CONDUCT, and watching that they remain faithful to their calling. Then no matter when Jesus comes they will be ready to inherit and to enter the Kingdom of God.

We need to remember that for each one of us personally, the day of Christ's coming is just as close as our death, for the very next thing for us after death is to awake in the resurrection at the coming of Jesus. We will not know the passing of time, we will not know how long we have been asleep in death. And most of us do not know when we shall die. So we need, as servants of God, to always be ready, so we can meet our Lord in the clouds and forever more be with Him.

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### **EDITOR'S NOTES:**

#### **WHERE WAS THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM?**

Jesus prophecies about the destruction of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple brings up the question about where the Temple stood in Jerusalem. Not only did He say one stone would not be left upon one another in the Temple but that the same fate would await the whole city of Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44) "because you did not know the time of your visitation" (Jesus coming as their Messiah).

Some take the view that most of this occurred in 70 AD but won't finally be finished until the end time. This differs from the eyewitness testimony of Eleazar, commander of the Jewish army at Masada who wrote in 73 AD:

Where is this city that was believed to have God himself inhabiting therein? It is now demolished to the very foundations, and has **NOTHING LEFT BUT THAT MONUMENT OF IT PRESERVED, I MEAN THE CAMP OF THOSE [ROMANS] THAT DESTROYED IT, WHICH STILL DWELLS UPON ITS RUINS...**

I cannot but wish that we had all died before we had seen that holy city demolished by the hands of our enemies, or **THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUR HOLY TEMPLE DUG UP**, after so profane a manner (Wars of the Jews VII, ch.8, 7).

If you go to Jerusalem today and look from the Mount of Olives to what is called the Temple Mount where the Dome of the Rock sits today you will see an impressive stone platform. Archaeologists universally agree the lower courses of stone were built by Herod the Great yet somehow we are told to believe that they all survived the Roman destruction in 70 AD.



Eleazar's testimony is completely consistent with the prophecies of Jesus about the destruction of both the Temple and the city of Jerusalem.

Eleazar clearly states that the foundations of the Temple were completely dug up yet the whole so-called "Temple Mount" platform (its foundation) stands today. If the Temple was completely dug up to its foundations then the so-called "Temple Mount" platform **CANNOT** be the location of the Temple is Jesus' day!!!

If we accept Eleazar's testimony then our only conclusion as to why the so-called "Temple Mount" platform survived the Roman destruction was because it was the ROMAN CAMP – Fort Antonia!

Virtually all Bible models of the Temple show Fort Antonia as a rather pokey small building in the north-west corner of the Temple platform. Josephus states that Fort Antonia was built on a great precipice and that it was very large. He writes:

The inward parts had the largeness and form of a palace, it being parted into all kinds of rooms and other conveniences, such as courts, and places for bathing, and broad spaces for camps [military training areas]; insomuch that, by having all conveniences that cities wanted, IT MIGHT SEEM TO BE COMPOSED OF SEVERAL CITIES (Wars of the Jews V, ch.5, 8).

A Roman legion was formed of 5 000 soldiers and there was at least one full legion based in Jerusalem and so the fort was a lot bigger than it is usually depicted as. A typical Roman camp was around 400 x 500 metres, close to the size of this stone platform on which the Dome of the Rock now sits.

So, if this was Fort Antonia you're probably asking by now just where was the Temple? Josephus stated that the Fort was to the north of the Temple so Josephus places the Temple south of the Roman fort. The Roman historian Tacitus gives us another major clue.

The Temple resembled a fortress and had its own walls, which were more laboriously constructed than the others. Even the colonnades with which it was surrounded formed an admirable outer defense. **IT CONTAINED AN INEXHAUSTIBLE SPRING** (Tacitus, History, V, 11-12).

There was a spring that lay underneath the Temple complex. There are two reasons why it was located near a spring 1) Living waters symbolically flow from the throne of God and 2) Water in abundance was needed for the sacrifices.

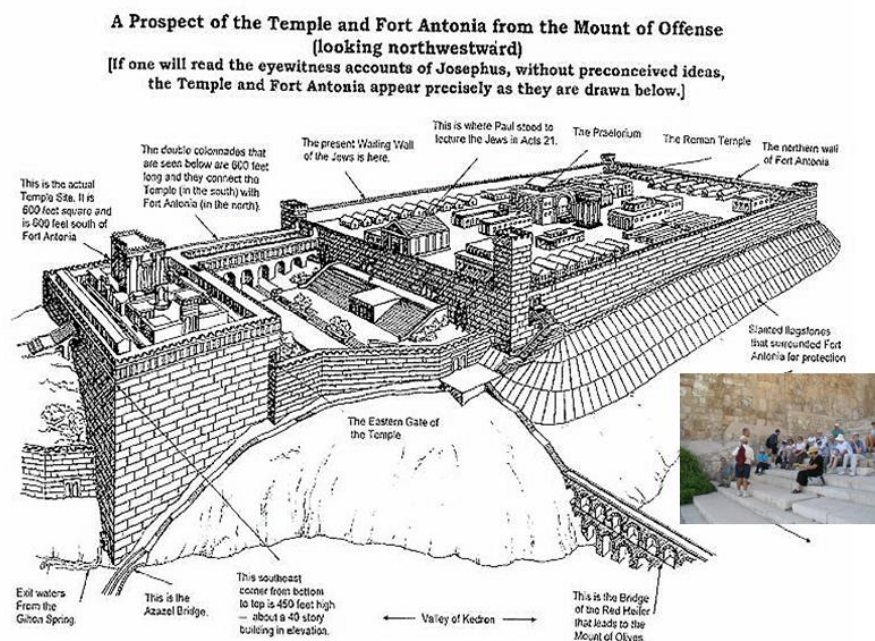
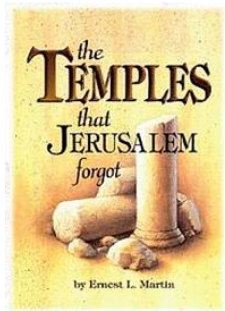
The Gihon spring is the only spring in Jerusalem and is around 250 metres (700 feet) south of where southern wall of the stone platform where the Dome of the Rock is today.

The Gihon Spring was where the tabernacle resided before the Temple was built in Solomon's day. "So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet...had Solomon ride on King David's mule, and took him to Gihon. Then Zadok the priest took a horn of oil from the tabernacle and anointed Solomon. And they blew the horn, and all the people said, 'Long live King Solomon!'" (1 Kings 1:38-39). This moment of Solomon's anointing as king is immortalised in the British royal coronation theme written by Handel called "Zadok the Priest". In describing the Temple during the time of Jesus day Josephus wrote:

This hill [Temple platform] was walled all round, and in compass four stades [a stade was 600 feet], each angle [of the square] containing in length a stade [600 feet on each side]" [Antiquities of the Jews XV.,11,3] ...

The colonnades were thirty cubits broad [45 feet], and the complete circuit of them, embracing [the colonnades to and from] the Tower of Antonia, measured six stades" [Wars of the Jews V.5,2]

Based on the research I have presented here on the Temple from Ernest Martin's book "The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot" here is an artist's illustration of what the Temple really looked like in relation to the true size of Fort Antonia where the Dome of the Rock is today. Each side of the Temple was a little under 200 metres (600 feet).





Notice those stairs up to Fort Antonia on its southern side. That was most likely the site where the crowds gathered when Pilate offered to release either Jesus or Barabbas and later where Paul addressed the Jewish crowd in Acts 22.

Jerome in the late fourth century AD said the Temple area was turned into a dump. Eusebius about the same time as Jerome wrote that the Temple

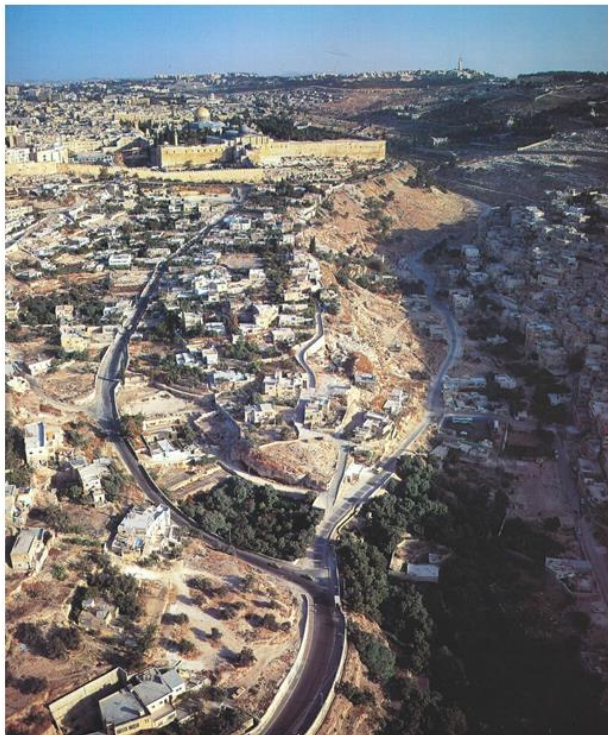
...IS A ROMAN FARM like the rest of the country. YEA, WITH MY OWN EYES I HAVE SEEN THE BULLS PLOWING THERE, AND THE SACRED SITE SOWN WITH SEED (Proof of the Gospel, Book VIII, Ch.3, sect.405-406).

This is a fulfillment of Micah 3:12 which says: "Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed like a field. Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins and the mountain of the temple like the bare hills of the forest."

So what is on this site today? After my first visit to Jerusalem in 1999 the Jews had taken over quite a bit of the northern part of the spur that was the original City of David and developed an archaeological park that is a huge tourist attraction. Its key attraction is Hezekiah's tunnel that goes from the Gihon spring to the southern end of the spur where the Pool of Siloam is.

Arab houses are further south where the Temple site was but the Jews are quite eager to buy them out. The two photos I took on the bottom right on my second trip in 2008 are approximately where the Temple stood.

### **The City of David and True Temple Site Today**



## CHAPTER 11

### THE GREAT PROPHECY OF THE END TIMES (PART 2)

#### Parable of the Ten Maidens and of the Talents

The Gospel of Matthew chapter 25 is a continuation of the great Olivet prophecy. Matthew is the only one to record the second half, or the continuation of this large and somewhat detailed prophecy of Christ's.

Jesus went on to say:

"Then the Kingdom of heaven shall be compared to ten maidens who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and the other five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise maidens took a container of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and went to sleep.



The Parable of the Ten Maidens

But then at midnight there was a loud cry, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all the maidens rose up and quickly trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise maidens replied, 'Perhaps there will not be enough for us and for you; go rather to the dealers and buy more oil for yourselves.' And while they went off to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast; and the door was shut. Afterwards the other maidens came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us.' But he replied, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know who you are.' Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

Many have meditated over what the "oil" could represent. Obviously the bridegroom is Jesus. The wedding feast is the marriage feast at the coming of Christ, when He returns to receive His bride and to enter the feast marriage of the Kingdom of God on earth. This is all depicted in Revelation 19:6-16.

The maidens represent those called to the marriage feast of the Kingdom of God. Though they all went to sleep to some degree, the bridegroom Christ, taking longer than anyone expected to return, the church, half of them did think to make sure they had extra oil in their lamps. The oil could as some have speculated, represent the Holy Spirit, and I think there is some truth to that claim. Whatever the case may be for what the lamps and oil could represent, the main thought that Jesus wants to get across, is what He says at the end of this parable....WATCH, be ready, and He had just before got through talking about watching and being ready. It was all to do with a person's CONDUCT, how they lived. If some of His disciples thought He was delaying His coming, and only wanted to be a Christian and follow Jesus IF they

could live to see His return, but got tired of waiting and living like Christ, and went back into the world, and all the ways of the unconverted world, they may very well miss out on entering the Kingdom, being too late, or just not ready as they should be in order to enter the Kingdom.

Jesus was saying that His disciples, the children of God, must be faithful in their conduct of the life, to the end. If some gave up that life of light, and thought they could get it all back at the last moment, when the shout went out that the bridegroom Christ was coming, then Jesus was warning, they better think again! Some just may leave off making sure they make their calling and election sure (as Peter said we should in 2 Peter 1:3-11), and find it will be too late to do so at the last moment, and Jesus will refuse them entry into the Kingdom when He does come.

Again, some very sobering words from Jesus. They're just not the words most people want to hear, nor the words most are told from their pastors that Jesus said here, and at other times also.

We may also wonder about Jesus saying the maidens were going to meet the bridegroom at night, with lamps, and that he came at midnight. In our modern twenty-first century, western world, we have no such custom, but marriage customs differ in various countries, and they have differed or changed in some countries as the centuries have past.

Going back to the time when Jesus was relating this parable analogy, the general marriage custom in Judea was like this:

....the essence of the ceremony consisted in the removal of the bride from her father's house....After putting on festive dress....the bridegroom set forth from his house, attended by his groomsmen, proceeded by a band of musicians or singers, and accompanied by persons bearing lamps. Having reached the house of the bride, who with her companions anxiously expected his arrival, he conducted the whole party back to his own or his father's house....

On the way back they were joined by a party of young girls (virgins), friends of the bride and bridegroom, who were in waiting to catch the procession as it passed....At the house a feast was prepared, to which all the friends and neighbors were invited, and the festivities were protracted for seven or even fourteen days.... (The New Unger's Bible Dictionary, page 818).

Now it becomes clearer. The bridegroom would go to fetch his bride in the very late afternoon or early evening, hence the taking of lamps, for by the time he and his bride returned to his house it would be dark. As the bridegroom returned with his bride and all in attendance with them, they were met by young girls, maidens, friends of both the bride and bridegroom. These young ladies would also have lamps, as it was now dark. In the parable Jesus says the bridegroom was long in returning, or delayed his coming for some reason not stated and not important, for the purpose of the main point of the parable Jesus wanted to convey.

The bridegroom was so long in returning that the maidens fell asleep. Then at midnight the cry went out that the bridegroom was coming, and the young ladies arose to trim and light their lamps, to meet him and join the wedding party back to his home and so be part of the marriage feast. Some of the maidens were wise enough to realize it might be possible the bridegroom would stay with his bride at her home



for longer than usual, before returning as a group to his home, so they took extra oil for their lamp just in case that should happen. The point being that Jesus wanted to get across was those five wise maidens were prepared for any and all situations, as to how long the bridegroom would be before returning, and their joining the bridegroom to the wedding feast.

Going on with more analogies of the Kingdom of heaven, Jesus continued:

"For it will be as a man going on a journey and calling his servants he entrusted to them his property; to one he gave FIVE talents, to another TWO, and another ONE, to each servant according to his natural ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them; and he made five talents more. So too, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But he who had received the one talent, went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those servants returned and settled the accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came before him, bringing five more talents as well, and saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here they are plus five talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will give you authority over much; enter into the joy of your master.'

"And he also who had the two talents came before him, saying, 'Master, you gave me two talents; here they are besides two more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done you good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will give you authority over a lot; enter into the joy of your master.'

"He that received the one talent also came before this master, and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not plant. I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here it is, you can have back what is yours.' But his master answered him, 'You wicked and lazy servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not planted. Then you ought to have at least invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming back I should have received what was mine with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him that has ten talents.' For I say to you, that to everyone who has, it shall be given; but from him that has not shall be taken away even that which he has. And the unprofitable servant shall be cast out into darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

It was not the first time Jesus used this type of parable. The main point He wants us to get is that, although we may not all be equal in gifts, abilities, money, natural talents, although we may all differ in all these physical things and what was given to us in our genes at conception, in so far as things we can do with our mind, our hands, our feet, and our body (some of us are good at sports, some are not, some are good at music while others are not, some are good at art work while most of us may not be, some can sing like the birds and others are more like a fog-horn, etc.), we can all do something with what we have been given.

We need to find what we have been given and use it, do something with our lives that can make us a profitable servant. We can find what secular job we would be good at, go for it as they say, and be the best we can be at that job. We can look at what natural abilities or talents we have and use them to serve, help, do good to others with those abilities. If we have or come to have large amounts of money, we can use that money to help, to serve, to give to those who are in true need.

Whatever and wherever we are, we can make a difference in this life to someone, somewhere, sometime. And we need to let that sometime, be most of the time. If we do not use what we have been given, God will count us as an unprofitable servant, and the words Jesus said about what happens to the unprofitable servant, speak for themselves.

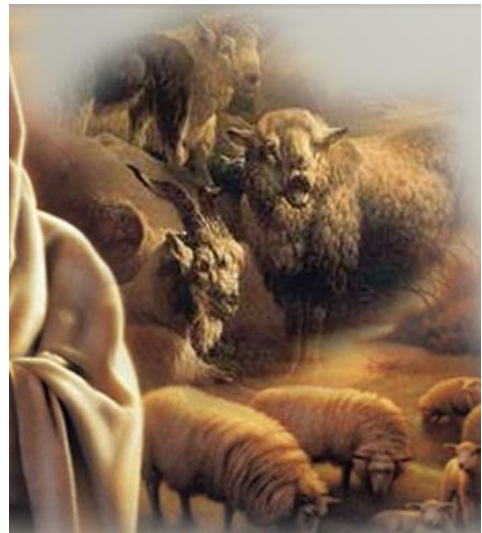
If we sit down and use our mind to think, together with the Spirit of God, going to the Lord to ask Him for guidance, we can come up with something that we can do to be a profitable servant, and so have our Father in heaven say to us one day, "Well done you good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over little, so I will give you authority over much, enter the joy of your master."

### **The Great Separation Of Sheep From Goats**

Being a follower of Christ is accepting Him as personal savior, it is repenting of sin, it is a willing heart to obey God, it is realizing the Lord does have teachings or doctrines, and a way of life that we are to try and live, and living that way of life is VERY IMPORTANT! It is so important that Jesus in Matthew 25 devoted a whole parable to and a somewhat detailed, down to earth, explanation, making it very clear what He expects from His disciples, and from those who claim to be have Christ's name....Christians.

Jesus said:

"When the Son of man comes in His glory, and all the angels are with Him, then He will sit on His throne of glory. Before Him shall be gathered all the nations, and He will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And He will place the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on His left hand. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.'



He shall separate the sheep from the goats.

"Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of these my brethren, you did it to me.'

"Then He will say to those at His left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Those on the left will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not serve and help you?' Then He will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it NOT to one of the least of these

my brethren, you did it not to me.' And they on the left will go away into the punishment that lasts for eternity, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matt. 25:31-46). Pretty clear and simple words coming from Jesus is what we have just read. No University degree is needed to understand the message Jesus was teaching. Christians who want to inherit eternal life in the Kingdom of God, at the resurrection when Jesus comes again to rule all nations of the earth, had better be helping, serving, doing good, to others in this lifetime, in one way or another. Jesus clearly taught that being a true child of the Father and inheriting His Kingdom, meant that your life would have to be one of service to others, in whatever way your abilities, time, talents, physical resources, would allow you to be able to help and serve others.

A Christian is not to shut themselves up, go out by themselves and live the days of their life as a lonely hermit on some island in the sea where no one else lives.

We shall see later where Jesus prayed to the Father that His disciples would NOT be taken out of the world (as a general way of life), but that the Father would keep them from the evil of the world.

Jesus earlier had said that His disciples were to shine as a light in a dark place, to be a city set on a hill, that all could see. He had said their good works were to be manifested to the world, so people could come to glorify God. You do not do all that by being shut off in some secluded place all by yourself.

The Christianity Jesus taught was one of "being out there" as we say, being out there to help and serve others. Jesus taught that His followers were to be in essence "in the public eye," but not with vanity of mind and outward pomp, but with a humble and loving attitude of caring for and helping others, as they could and as their means of helping allowed them.

Those who would be Christians and who wanted to also have eternal life in the Kingdom, but who would not serve and help others, were just simply not going to make the grade. They were not going to be numbered among the righteous. They would be looked upon as goats by Jesus, and they would be on the left side, and those on that side would be cast away into the punishment that would last for all eternity, which is the second death in the lake of fire, as we find in the last verses of Revelation 20.

The righteous sheep, those on Jesus' right hand, those who served their fellow man, are called "the righteous" by Jesus, and they He said will go into eternal life.

I will say it again, we cannot "earn" our salvation by our good works, for we are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8), but God is only going to give His gift of grace or forgiveness of our sins through the blood of Christ, to those who will be willing to have a certain mind-set as to how they will live. And part of that mind-set attitude they must have as God's children, is to serve and help others.

It's not hard, it does not take four years of University book studying and exam writing, to get your degree in "public service" - well not the public service Jesus was here talking about. All you have to do is get up and serve your fellow human being in one way or another. Do that, and as Jesus said to one man who answered correctly about which was the great commandment, "You are not far from the Kingdom of God."

## CHAPTER 12

### JESUS' LAST PASSOVER ON EARTH (PART 1)

#### Judas Iscariot Plans To Betray Jesus

After Jesus had finished His prophecy on the Mount of Olives it was evening time, and He said to His disciples, "You know that in two days it is the Passover, and the Son of man will be delivered up to be crucified."

We know from the last hours of Jesus' physical life on earth, what Jesus said to them (and it was not the first time He had told them He would die in Jerusalem), went right over their heads; once more they just did not get it, did not really believe those words. To them it was just incomprehensible to conceive that their Lord and Master, the one they knew was the Messiah, could be put to death.

The chief priests and the elders of the people were at this time busy gathering together in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, taking counsel with each other, as to how to arrest Jesus in a secret manner and kill him. They first thought they better not try to do this during the Feast of the Passover and days of Unleavened Bread (which was eight days in total, but during Christ's time the whole period was known by the name "Passover").

Then something happened to change their minds about when they would try to arrest and kill Jesus.

The disciples were really not understanding what was all going on at this time in Jesus' ministry. They did not understand the prophecies in the Old Testament about how the Messiah would come and have to die for the sins of the world. They were somewhat familiar with the prophecy of the Messiah coming in power and glory, to reign over the nations and rule the world, but with all that Jesus was saying, and the people getting divided over what they wanted to believe the Messiah should be doing with them, and for them, and against the Romans, there was confusion even in their minds.

Judas Iscariot was as confused as any of them. Surely he was thinking, the Messiah is going to rise up with His mighty power and show these scribes and Pharisees and priests, a thing or two. He was probably thinking Jesus had only used "words" against them so far, but He must be going to use His power and obliterate them, literally. Judas was probably thinking Christ should do that, obliterate those silly hypocritical religious leaders of Judea. And thought no doubt Jesus would then continue using His power to bring the people of Judah together, form an army, fight against the Roman power, destroy them, and set up the Kingdom of God on earth.

How could he, he thought, help get Jesus started on this road of conquest. His mind was not just confused, but anxious, on edge, eagerly desiring to see all this take place. And with his mind in such a state of unrest and looseness, it was all that Satan needed. Luke records for us that it was at this time that Satan entered, literally took over the body and mind of Judas Iscariot.

Judas, now possessed by Satan the Devil, hurried off to the chief priests and elders of the people, to offer his service in how he might betray Jesus and hand Him over to

them. The accounts in the Gospels do not tell us if Judas did this thinking Jesus would then have to use His power and fight and destroy the priests and elders, and then move on to destroy the Roman armies, or if Satan just simple got a hold of his mind, twisted it so much out of normal, that Judas just wanted Jesus in the hands of the priests and elders so they could do with Him whatever they wanted. Whatever the case as to what was going on in the mind of Judas at this time, we are told Satan entered him, and off he went to betray Jesus to the priests and elders of Judea.

The priests and elders of course were delighted that Judas was offering his help so they could arrest Jesus. They had plans to kill Him. Judas may not have known that, probably did not, Satan no doubt kept that from the mind of Judas. Well, the priests and elders were so grateful for Judas' offer that they were ready to offer him money. Judas actually asked them how much they would give him if he delivered Jesus into their hands. They said they would pay him thirty pieces of silver. Thirty pieces of silver was the price for a slave (Exodus 21:32). They regarded Jesus as worth very little. He agreed, and from that moment on Judas looked for a way and an opportunity to betray Jesus into their hands (Matt. 26:1-5, 14-16; Mark 14:1, 2, 10, 11; Luke 22:1-6).

### **Preparing For The Passover**

To understand some of the passages in the Gospels and the events of the last day of the life of Christ on this earth in human form, we need to understand some basics about the Passover, as well as some of the traditions that many of the Jews were doing at the time of Christ, as taught by the scribes and Pharisees.

The original Passover of Exodus 12, was a household Passover, a few families coming together. A priest was not needed, nor a Tabernacle or Temple. The lamb was chosen and was kept UP TO the 14th day of the first month. It was killed at "evening" or "between the two evenings" which was at dusk or sunset, the beginning of the 14th, that portion of time when the sun first goes down behind the horizon and when it became black of night. As the sun set the family or small gathering of two or so families, killed the Passover lamb, and roasted it, which took a number of hours (some say 3 or 4 hours) and then sat down with bitter herbs, unleavened bread, and ate the lamb. It was well into the night when all of this was finally finished, often everyone stayed up all during that night of the 14th.

The Passover day was not a Sabbath day, but at the end of the 14th, the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread began, and that first day of the Unleavened Bread feast, was a Sabbath day. It was God's law that by the time the 15th day arrived, all leaven was to be out of the homes of the Israelites. They had up to and including the 14th day, to remove the leaven and prepare for the feast of Unleavened Bread, which was to be observed for a full 7 days. Now by the time of Christ the scribes and Pharisees had introduced and adopted a number of changes to Exodus 12. They and their followers had gotten into the habit of getting rid of leaven on the 14th day, and so in Jewish terminology, the 14th day was "a day of unleavened bread" because of the tradition taught by the Pharisees of putting out leaven on the 14th, so there was no question of any of it being left in the home when the 15th day arrived.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> **EDITOR'S NOTE:** Please see my comments at the end of this chapter explaining the difference between how the Jews and how Jesus kept the Passover.

The Pharisees had taught the people that the lambs for the Passover were to be slain in the Temple, under the Priests and Levites. And they traditionally started to do this on the 14th day, after the morning sacrifice. Some scholars claim they started at 3 p.m. in the afternoon, but others state it could have been much earlier, as the priests would not have been able to kill enough lambs for the people, between only 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. 6 p.m. was when they would start to roast the lamb, which was the beginning of the 15th day of the first month.

Whatever it may have been, the fact is the Pharisees had taken the Passover meal and carried it over into the night portion of the 15th day, which was the start of the 7 days of the Unleavened Bread feast. They had MIXED the TWO separate feasts of God and put them together as one, or putting it another way, they had brought the Passover meal over into the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread.

With this in mind, we can begin to understand some of the words used in the Gospel accounts of this last day of Jesus' life as a human being.

We read in Mark and Luke that the day of "unleavened bread" when the Passover lambs WERE BEING SLAIN (as the Greek tense is) had just come. This was the "unleavened" day when the Pharisees and their followers were TRADITIONALLY getting leaven out of their homes (some even started to clear leaven out on the 13th day), it was the BEGINNING of the 14th day, which was not a part of the 7 days feast of Unleavened Bread (Exodus 12), but had become traditionally a day of "unleavened" because of what the Pharisees were teaching and had been practicing for a few centuries by this time.

The disciples knew, from being with Jesus for three years or so, that He observed the Passover like many other Jews, at the beginning of the 14th day, the "evening" of the 14th day, as prescribed in the beginning by God in Exodus 12.

The small groups of people in and around Jerusalem, were beginning to gather together, they were already beginning to kill the Passover lambs, at sundown. It was sunset at the beginning of the 14th day of the first month, and Jesus had not said ANYTHING about where they would keep and observe the Passover meal. This was very unusual indeed. The disciples were getting very uptight, very anxious, very bewildered. Everything seemed very confusing to them, Jesus had said things about His death that they just could not believe, and they knew the scribes, Pharisees, and elders of the people were on the war path as we might put it, with Jesus. And now, it was just sunset, the beginning of the 14th, the time when groups of people in their homes were killing the Passover lamb and making reading to observe the Passover meal, and Jesus had said not one word to them about where they as a group would observe the Passover meal.

They were now beside themselves, and had to say something, they could not retain their anxious thoughts any more.

"Master, master, it is late, you've said nothing to us about where we shall observe the Passover. People are already killing the lambs in their groups and places of gathering. Where Lord, will you have us go and prepare for you and us to eat the Passover?"

Jesus chose two of them, Peter and John, and sent them, saying to them, "Go into the city of Jerusalem, and when you enter you will see a man carrying a jar of water,



follow him into the house where he goes, and say to the house owner, 'The Teacher says, my time is at hand, and I will eat the Passover at your house with my disciples.' Ask him to show you the room where we are to hold the Passover meal. He will show you an upper room that is furnished; there make ready for us all."

And the two disciples went and they found it all as Jesus had told them. And they there prepared the Passover meal (Matt. 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-13).

Finding a man in Jerusalem as Jesus had described to them, was not hard, for it was women who usually carried the water pots, seeing a man doing this would have been very noticeable. To kill and roast a lamb for Jesus and the twelve disciples, probably would have taken about 3 to 4 hours. The two disciples were not sent to find the room until sunset, dusk time, of the beginning of the 14th day. By the time they arrived in Jerusalem and found the room and killed and prepared the Passover, for Jesus and the others to sit down and eat, it would have been about 10 p.m. possibly even as late as 11 p.m.

This was fine, for as I've said above, the eating of the Passover and reflections on the whole meaning of it, often went on all through the night, then they would go to their tents in the morning and sleep (Deut. 16:7). Of course in Jesus' day it was not "tents" they went to, but homes or places where they could sleep during the daylight hours of the 14th day. But this Passover night and coming day would be like no other ever before or ever again will be.

The Passover meal was now all prepared. They just had to wait for Jesus to arrive with the other ten disciples.

### **Jesus Eats The Passover Meal With His Disciples**

It was late that Tuesday evening (it was a Tuesday evening when this Passover was observed in the year 30 A.D.) and Jesus arrived at this upper room with the other ten apostles. The hour had arrived and they all sat down. Jesus said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you all before I suffer; for I tell you I shall never eat it again, until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God."

They then started into the ancient and traditional Passover meal of the basic three things that were always a part of that observance, namely, the lamb, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs.

You may want to here re-read the Old Testament Bible Story of Exodus chapter twelve.

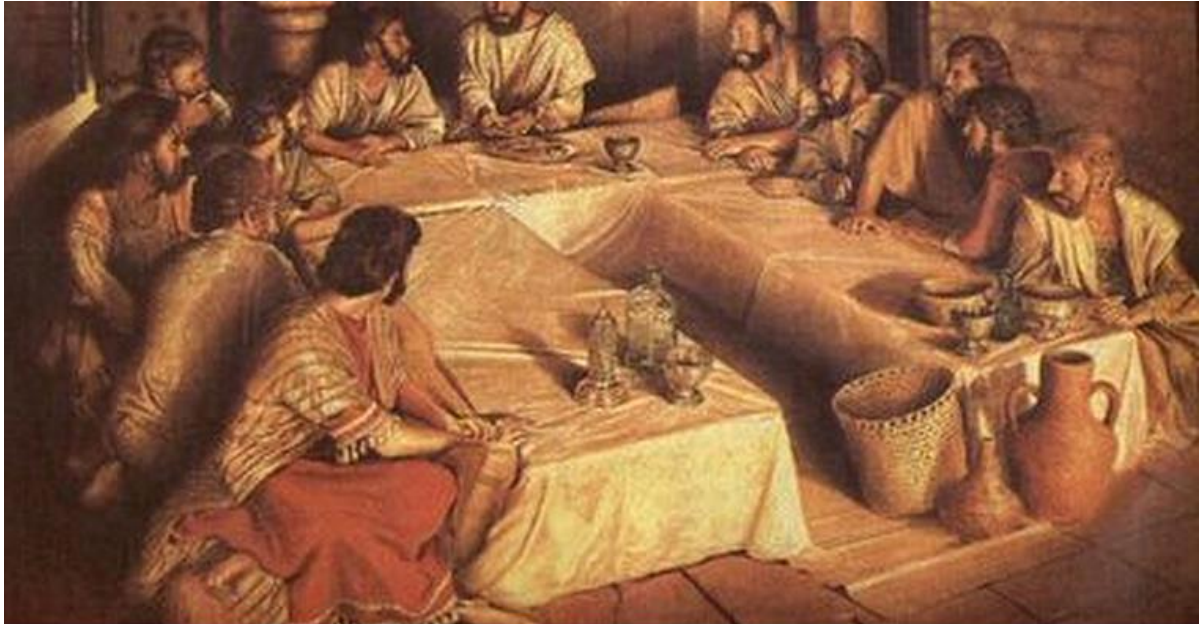
Now at this Passover Jesus introduced the New Testament ordinance of the "bread and fruit of the vine."

Jesus took some of the unleavened bread and broke it into pieces, gave thanks, and said, "Take a piece, this bread represents my body, which is given for you: this do in like manner in the memorial of me."

Jesus then took the cup of the fruit of the vine, and gave thanks. He then said to them, "Each one of you, drink from this cup. The fruit of the vine represents my blood of the New Covenant, which is poured out for you, for the forgiveness of sins. I shall

not drink of the fruit of the vine again, unto the day I drink it new with you when the Kingdom of God comes."

They all did what Jesus requested and each took a piece of unleavened bread, and each drank from the cup of the fruit of the vine.



**The disciples gathered around for Jesus' last Passover meal.**

The apostle Paul also outlines this New Testament ordinance in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. It is THE memorial service, remembering the Lord's death. It was introduced by the Lord Jesus on the evening of the 14th of the first month in the Hebrew or Jewish calendar. It was only observed in the apostolic Church of God, once a year, in the first part of the hours of the 14th, what we call evening time.

After Jesus had introduced and performed this New Testament ordinance, He looked around at all twelve disciples and in a very sombre tone of voice, said, "But behold the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. For the Son of man goes as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!"

Amazement and shock came across the faces of the twelve, on hearing those words. And soon they began to question each other, as to which of them it was going to be that would betray Jesus (Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-23).

The part of that night had come, where it was customary to leave the supper table and recline and lounge around as we say, on various types of seats and cushions. It was the time to relax and ponder and meditate on the Passover and all that it signified in Jewish history. This Passover was way more significant than any of them could have possibly imagined.

### **Jesus' Words Do Not Imbed Too Deeply**

No sooner it seemed had Jesus spoken these words of the disciples having love one towards another, that they were into arguing among themselves as to which one of them was to be regarded as the "greatest."

Jesus had to intervene with words He had told them once before, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. They rule each other with iron dictatorship. But it shall NOT be so with you! Rather, let those who would want to be the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the newest kid on the block. And those who would want to lead as the one who serves. For which is the greatest, the one who sits at the table, or the one who serves? Is it not the one who sits at the table? But I have been among you as one who serves."

The whole life and ministry of Jesus was one of service, one of helping, healing, doing goodness, having mercy, on people and for people. He served in teaching and preaching the wonderful truths of salvation and the Kingdom of God. Jesus had lived and acted as anything but a despot or iron fisted dictator, although He spoke pretty plainly a few times to the religious leaders of the day.

He even had, at this late time in the evening and in His physical life, to correct His disciples on a matter that was important. But He wanted to leave this conversation point in an upbeat, positive manner, so He said, "You are those who have continued with me in my trials; as my Father has appointed a Kingdom for me, so I have appointed that you may eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:24-30).

The Kingdom that Jesus was thinking about, the one that the Father had appointed Him to have, was to be a literal Kingdom on this earth, one that would rule all nations. The Kingdom that the prophets of old had foretold about over and over again in their writings, was the one that they also foretold the Messiah would be king over. Jesus again promised His eleven as it was now, that they would each rule over one of the tribes of Israel when His Kingdom came.

### **Jesus' Washes The Feet Of His 12 Disciples**

John is the only Gospel writer to record the next event at that last Passover Jesus held with His disciples.

The supper Passover meal had ended. The KJV translation is correct when it says, "and supper ended" for the Greek tense here used by John is "aorist" tense, which signifies a completed action in the past, an event already finished in the past.

The Devil had already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going back again to God, rose from the supper table, laid aside His outer garments, and girded Himself with a towel. He then poured water in a bowl, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel He had around Himself.



**Jesus washes Peter's feet.**

He came to Simon Peter; and Peter said to Him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "What I am doing now you do not understand, but you will

afterwards, later you will understand." Peter still shocked at this thought of Jesus washing his feet, quickly replied, "Oh no Lord, you shall never wash my feet!"

We have to remember that it was the lowest of the servants of the household that washed the feet of visitors, washing away the dust and dirt from their travel. Also remember that the people wore sandals on their bare feet. It was the custom of the day that if you had visitors you had your lowest ranking servant wash their feet when they came into your home.

Peter could not think that Jesus was acting out what the lowest household servant would do. He just was not about to let Jesus wash his feet, thinking if anything it should be the other way around, and he should be washing Jesus' feet.<sup>5</sup>

But Jesus answered him with, "If I do not wash your feet, you have no part in me." Simon Peter then said, "Well Lord, not my feet only then, but my hands and head!" Jesus said to him, "He that has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but he is clean all over; and you are clean but not all of you."

Jesus knew who it was that would betray Him, and that was the reason He said, "You are not all clean."

The disciples would have bathed themselves before attending the very important Passover meal. So they really were clean in a physical way, but in a spiritual way

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<sup>5</sup> **EDITOR'S NOTE:** Keith's view on the order of events here represents a minority point of view within the Church of God. The more common viewpoint and my personal view is that the foot washing occurred before the bread and the wine. If "supper being complete" is a correct past tense translation of John 13:2 it could possibly be understood to refer to the preparation of the meal, rather than the eating of it, being completed. Fred Coulter says the following about the order of events at the Passover. He writes:

"The Greek verb that is translated 'being ended' in John 13:2 is 'genomenou'. It is a present tense middle voice participle...A correct translation of this is 'while supper was taking place'. In 'The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, Berry uses the translation 'supper taking place'. Since the root of 'genomenou' is 'genomai' it is obvious that the time being designated was at or near the beginning of the Passover meal" (The Christian Passover, p.242-243).

The Greek word shares the "gen" component with "gennao" which means begettal or birth. Fred Coulter also writes:

"As we continue reading the account, it is clear that the context supports this translation. We are told that Jesus rose from supper (verse 4). After washing the disciples' feet, Jesus sat down again (Greek: reclined) to eat (verse 12). Jesus said 'The one who is eating bread with me...' (verse 18). Jesus dipped the morsel and gave it to Judas who ate it (verse 26). All these verses show that the foot washing took place at the beginning of the meal, soon after the disciples were seated at the table" (The Christian Passover, p.243).

there was need for a lesson to be learned in Jesus washing all of their feet, even the feet of Judas Iscariot.

They all needed to learn the lesson, which Jesus explained (and we'll get to that right away), but one of them (Judas) was unclean in many ways other than the physical. We have seen he was by now possessed by Satan the Devil himself.

When He had washed their feet, and taken up His garments again, and resumed His sitting place, He said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? I will tell you. You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, I am indeed both. If I then, your Lord, and your Teacher, have washed your feet, then you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an EXAMPLE, that you also SHOULD DO as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, BLESSED are you IF YOU DO them."

Jesus was demonstrating to them that they should be servants. And if Jesus could get down and wash His disciples feet, being much greater than they, being the one to send them out to do His work, and so if He could humble Himself to wash their feet, like a lowly servant, how much more should they be willing to wash one another's feet. He said He had set them the example, and that they knowing this should do likewise, and they would be blessed for knowing and doing as He had done to them.

So today God's people around the world, on Passover evening, not only take the bread and the fruit of the vine (wine or grape juice) but also wash each other's feet.

It is an outward symbol of a willingness to be a servant to others, to not think too highly of themselves, to remember they are called to serve each other, to live a life of serving and helping each other, and all mankind, in whatever good ways they can possibly do, with the gifts, talents, abilities, and material goods, they have been given from God in order to share and serve others with.

Jesus was saying all these things to all of them, but ONE, for He finished this event by saying, "I am not speaking of you all; I know whom I have chosen; it is that the Scriptures may be fulfilled, 'He who ate by bread has lifted his heel against me.' I tell you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives any one whom I send receives me; and he who receives me receives Him who sent me" (John 13:1-20).

The evening had taken on by now a VERY SOMBRE atmosphere, a grave foreboding was in that upper room. Many of the minds of the disciples were even more troubled and confused by all that Jesus had said and done.

Jesus was about to say to them words that He had said a little earlier. This would once more trouble them greatly.

## EDITOR'S NOTES:

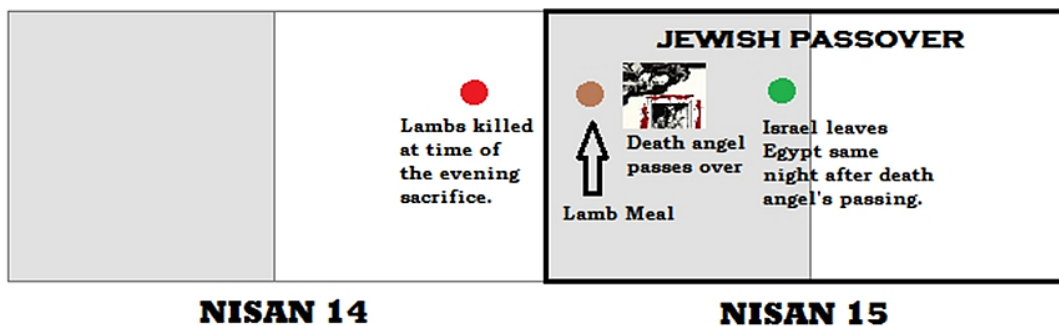
### **THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HOW JESUS AND THE JEWS KEPT THE PASSOVER**

Despite the plain instructions in Leviticus 23:5 the Jews do not keep Nisan 14 as the Passover today (Nisan being the first month of the sacred calendar that started in March/April).

They keep the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread, Nisan 15, as Passover, not Nisan 14. The majority of the Jews had it wrong in Jesus' day as well – they killed the lambs on the afternoon of Nisan 14 and had a lamb roast on the evening of Nisan 15 in contrast to the way that Jesus kept it.

Even today many in the Church of God mistakenly believe that with the original Passover that the lambs were killed on the afternoon of Nisan 14 and that the death angel passed over on the night of Nisan 15 and then a few hours later on the same night they left Egypt.

#### **JEWISH UNDERSTANDING OF THE ORIGINAL PASSOVER**



#### **BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF ORIGINAL PASSOVER**



If this view were correct then why celebrate the Passover on Nisan 14 as Leviticus 23:5 plainly states if the actual event it commemorated – the passing over of the death angel (Exodus 12:27) – occurred as they believe on the night of Nisan 15? It doesn't make sense.



The Feast of Unleavened Bread celebrated the day Israel came out of Egypt. Exodus 12:17 says: “And you shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For in this same day I have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt.”

These two great back-to-back feasts celebrated two different events – one the passing over and sparing of their lives by the death angel and the other their coming out of Egypt. They celebrate different events that occurred on two consecutive but different days.

When they kept the first Passover God told them – “And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning” (Exodus 12:22). It was on the night of Nisan 15, the night after they were spared from the death angel that the Israelites celebrated their freedom and were able to leave Egypt.

## CHAPTER 13

### JESUS' LAST PASSEOVER ON EARTH (PART 2)

#### Jesus Tells Judas To Do His Work Quickly

It was well into the night of the 14th. It was the early hours past midnight, and Jesus was very troubled in spirit, and said, "Truly, it is indeed true, what I say unto you; one of you shall betray me."

The disciples again with a sleepy dazed look on their faces, were not certain of whom He was speaking about. In fact "betraying" was just too hard for them to imagine. One of His disciples (it was John) was stretched out somewhat, lying half across Jesus' chest, as they were all in a relaxed and lazy lounging position. Simon Peter beckoned to John and asked him to ask Jesus, whom He was speaking about, as John was the closest to Christ. So John said to Jesus, "Lord, who is it?"

Jesus, paused for a moment, then said, "It is he to whom I shall give this morsel of bread, when I have dipped it." Jesus got up and dipped a small portion of bread and He gave it to Judas Iscariot. Then after Judas took it, Satan once more entered into him (the Devil had left Judas for a while, but was now back with a vengeance as we say). Jesus looked at Judas and said, "What you are going to do, do it quickly."

The disciples heard Him saying those words and still did not realize why He had said them, or what they meant. Some thought that because Judas had the money box (as he was banker for them) Jesus was telling Judas to go and buy things that was needful for them as they observed the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. Their minds were as far away from knowing what Jesus really meant and what about was to happen the rest of that night, as east is from west. Judas stood up and immediately left. It was a dark night in more than one way.

After Judas had gone, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and in Him is God glorified; and if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself."

The time had come in the history of the universe that God's great plan of redemption for the human kind, was to take its literal fulfillment, and the time that BOTH God the Father and Christ Jesus would be glorified as this plan of salvation took reality.

Jesus looking more intently at the eleven disciples, went on to say, "Little children, for yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' A NEW commandment I give to you, it is, that you LOVE one another, EVEN AS I LOVED YOU, that you ALSO LOVE one another. And by this all men will know that you are my disciples, IF you have LOVE one for another" (John 13:21-25).

Jesus had certainly set that perfect example of how love between brethren should be lived. He wanted all His disciples to emulate His example. Then people would indeed know that such people who lived as Jesus had lived towards His disciples while on earth, were His true followers. In this down-to-earth, nitty-gritty, sometimes hard ways to strive against, it is not always easy to live up to the example of Jesus, as we work with, fellowship with, talk with, and inter-act with, other disciples of Christ. But

we must try, we must endeavor, to follow His example in this matter of love towards others in the flock that belongs to Jesus.

### **To The Mount of Olives**

It was time to close this event of the Passover celebration in the upper room. They all sang a hymn, and then Jesus and His disciples went to the Mount of Olives.

Peter had not forgotten what Jesus had told them about Him going away, so he asked Christ, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now; but you shall follow afterwards."

Jesus was probably here talking about what would happen to Him in the next 12 or so hours, eventually dying on the cross. Though the disciples could not follow Him in all He would undergo the rest of the 14th day, many of them would in their lifetime, be put to death for their following in the footsteps of Christ.

Jesus then looked at all the eleven and said to them, "You will all fall away because of what I will go through this night; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered' (Zech.13:7). But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."

Turning once more to Peter, Jesus, said to him, "Peter, Peter, Satan desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat is sifted, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail; and when you are converted with the Spirit, I want you to strengthen your brethren."

Peter stood up straight at these words from Jesus. He put his shoulders back, raised his chin, got a strong defiant look on his face, and with boldness and with force in his voice, said, "Oh, Lord, even though they all fall away I will not. I am ready to go with you to prison and death, Yes, I will lay down my life for you."

Jesus smiled a little, then said, "O, Peter, it is true what I'm going to say. This very night before the cock crows twice, you will have denied me three times."

Peter vehemently and immediately shot back with, "Lord, if I must die with you, I will not deny you." And the other ten disciples all said the same thing. They had no idea their words would come flying back in their face, much sooner than they ever thought, for all of them would have to eat their words, as they would all forsake Jesus within a short while, as the events of that night would escalate and explode out of control.

Jesus said to them, "I sent you out once with no purse or bag, or extra sandals, and did you lack anything?" They replied that they did not. "Well now," Jesus continued, "let him who has a purse take it, and likewise a bag. And let him who has no sword, sell his coat and buy one. For I tell you this Scripture must be fulfilled, 'And he was reckoned with transgressors' (Isa. 53:12), for what is written about me has its fulfillment."

The disciples looked at each other, some of them moved their outer garment to reveal a few swords. "Look Lord," they said, "here we have two swords." And Jesus seeing this said, "Alright, that is enough, the prophecy is fulfilled" (Luke 22:31-38; Matt. 26:30-35; Mark 14:26-31; John 13:36-38).

## Some Final In-Depth Teaching On Faith, Hope, Love, And Obedience

There was still some time left before He would be betrayed by Judas Iscariot. Jesus would use that time to give His disciples some very important teachings and encouragement.

Jesus said: "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it was not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And in so preparing a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to be with me, that where I am when I come again, you may be also. You know the way to where I am going."<sup>6</sup>



**"I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, so that where I am, you may be also" (John 14:2-3).**

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<sup>6</sup> **EDITOR'S NOTE:** Many mainstream churches use this verse to support their belief in the rapture but this verse has nothing to do with the rapture. Here Jesus is drawing an analogy from the bridal customs of the day. A man would find a girl he wants to marry. He would then negotiate a bride price with the bride's father. and they would exchange a glass of wine to seal the deal and then the man would go to His father's place and build a new house or unit next to his father's place. This might take many months. The bride would have no idea how long it would take or when the bridegroom would come back for her.

The groom would normally be anxious to go back to his bride. He might ask his father if he could go to her and the father might say, "Not until you've finished the house. You can't bring her back to a half-built house." Over in Matthew 24:36 we read: "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." Now after the groom had finished his new house and raised the money as set out in the marriage contract a date was set to consummate the marriage at the bride's home. The bride waits with her maidens, for the arrival of the groom and his companions. They would blow the shophar and a messenger would announce it was time for the wedding.

Jesus was going to go back to be with God the Father in heaven. While there He would prepare positions of rulership for all His disciples. Then He would come again. He would receive His disciples at His coming, as we have seen, He would receive them in the clouds, in the air or atmosphere of this earth. The clouds are relatively close to the earth's surface. From there He would continue to descend with His followers to the Mount of Olives. His disciples of all ages from the time of Adam, would then be with Jesus forever more. I have in past chapters given you passages of Scripture to prove what I have just stated.

At these words from Jesus, Thomas said, "Lord, we do not know or understand where you are going; so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through me. If you have known me then you will know the Father also; so you really do know the Father and have seen Him."

Philip spoke up and said, "Lord, show us plainly the Father, and literally seeing Him we will be satisfied." Jesus replied, "Oh, have I been all this time with you, and you do not know me Philip? He who has seen ME has also seen the Father; how can you say, 'Let us see the Father'? Do you not believe that I am IN the Father and the Father IN me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from mine own authority; but the Father who DWELLS IN me does His works. Believe me that I AM IN the Father and the Father IS IN me; or believe what I say because of the works I do. Truly, very true indeed, I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I have done; and yes, even greater works than these, many will do, because I go to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in my name I will do it. IF you LOVE me, you WILL keep my COMMANDMENTS!" (John 14:1-15).

Jesus was the very personification of the Father. Seeing and knowing Jesus as the 12 disciples had for three years or more, was just like as if they had literally seen the Father. If the Father had actually come down from heaven and stood before the disciples, they would have seen another Jesus Christ. What Jesus was trying to convey to them was that He and Father were like identical twins. And if you have ever seen identical twins you will know that it is just about impossible to tell them apart, they are so much like each other.

Jesus and the Father were IN each other, as was the one so was the other. And Christ had done the works during His ministry to prove beyond any question or doubt that He was IN the Father and the Father was IN Him! Many would come after He was back in heaven, Jesus said, that would do the same kind of works as He did, even sometimes greater works. And this we shall see was indeed true, as we go through the book of Acts in this New Testament Bible Story.

Jesus once more reminded them to ask in His name, and many things would be granted, so God could be glorified in the Son. Then Jesus finished this part of His last hour of teaching them while still a human being, by telling them that if they loved Him, they would keep His commandments. This last request or command certainly does not sound like Jesus was "doing away with" commandments, but firmly establishing them. And a reading of the rest of the New Testament, especially the letters of the apostle John (1, 2 and 3 John) and the letter of James, clearly show that commandment keeping is to be a very important part of the life of anyone who claims to love Jesus.

## Promise Of The Holy Spirit

Jesus told His disciples, "And I will pray to the Father and He will give you another encouraging Counselor, to be with you at all times, even the Holy Spirit which will lead you into all truth. The world cannot receive the Holy Spirit, because it neither sees him or recognizes him; you know him, for he dwells with you now, and shall be in you later. I will not abandon you as orphans; I will come to you. In a little while the world will not see me again, but you will. For I will live again, and you will also. When I am raised to life again you will know that I am in the Father, and that you are in me, and I in you. Those who obey my commandments are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them, and I will love them. And I will reveal myself to each one of those who love me."

Judas (not Iscariot, but the other disciple with that name) said to Him, "Lord, why are you going to reveal yourself to us and not to the world at large?" Jesus answered him, "All those who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and WE will COME to them and LIVE in them. Anyone who does not love me will not do what I say. And remember my words are not my own. What I say is from the Father who sent me. I am telling you these things now, while I am still with you. But when the Father sends the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, in my name, he will teach you everything and remind you of everything I have told you.

"I am leaving you with a gift - peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is not like the peace the world gives. So do not be troubled or afraid. Remember what I have told you: I am going away, but I will come back to you again. If you really love me you will be happy for me, because now I can go to the Father, who is GREATER than I am. I have told you these things before they happen so that you will believe when they do happen. I don't have much more time to talk to you, because the prince of this world approaches. He has no power over me, but I will do what the Father requires of me, so that the world will know that I love the Father. Rise up now, and let's go a little further."

In Jesus' last in-depth teaching while still a physical man, this was the great promise He gave that the Holy Spirit would come to His disciples and unite with their minds. This came about on the great feast of Pentecost, as we shall read later in the second chapter of the book of the Acts of the apostles. From that day forward the Holy Spirit has ever been available to beget the children of God.

The Holy Spirit is the power nature that comes from the very being of God the Father and Jesus Christ, and in so coming into human kind, it is just as if God the Father and Jesus Christ were BOTH living inside that human being. That is why Jesus said that both He and the Father would come and live within the disciple. They live in the disciple by means of their Holy Spirit.

Jesus here uses "he" for the Holy Spirit, or so the King James Version and others translate. It is all really a "technical" Greek grammar rule of writing, which does not concern us here in this writing of the New Testament Bible Story.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> **EDITOR'S NOTES:** In a number of European languages, including Greek, a great many inanimate objects are given a gender of he or she though it is clearly understood by Europeans these objects are not actually male or female. I found this highly unusual when I ran across this learning German in high school.



The Holy Spirit is not a literal person, as are Jesus and the Father. Many writers in the Bible used what is called "personification" - which is giving human form and character to things not being a separate individual person. A very good example is that found in the book of Proverbs. There we see that "wisdom" (which is of God) is likened unto a physical human woman. And of course we today in our English language often call our car or boat "she" - we may say, "Well, something is wrong with my car today, she just would not start."

Jesus said He would give His disciples "peace" - of mind and heart. The child of God knows truths of life and death and the promise of what is to come, that the rest of the world does not know or understand, not in the way true Christians do. There is much comfort and peace in knowing the truths of God.

Jesus was freely giving His life as a sacrifice for sins. The Devil had no power over Him, except what Jesus Himself allowed, and He was going to allow Satan to kill Him physically because it was the Father's will, for the salvation plan of mankind that the Father had ordained from before the world began. And Jesus was willing to obey the Father's wish, desire, and commands.

### **Vine And Branch Analogy And Command To Love One Another**

Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that bears NO fruit, He takes away, and every branch that DOES bear fruit He prunes, so that they produce even more fruit. You have already been pruned for greater fruitfulness by the words and teachings I have given you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot bear fruit if it is cut off from the vine, and so you cannot be fruitful apart from me.

Yes, I am the true vine and you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me, cut off from me, you can do nothing that is everlasting, and eternally good. Anyone who parts from me is thrown away like a useless branch and dries up, being dead. Then such branches are gathered into a pile and burned. But if you stay joined to me and my words remain in you, you will receive many answers to your requests. My true disciples joined to me will produce much fruit. This brings great glory to my Father."



**I am the vine and you are the branches**

These are simple words to read and understand. They are also the heart and core of being a true disciple and child of God the Father. If we remain in Christ, which means we know His word, and we are willing to obey His commands, then and only then can we produce the fruit that is fit for eternal life. Not that we earn our salvation as I've said a number of times before, but we must remain IN Jesus so we will not be a cut off branch that is useless and only good to be burned up. As we stay in Christ, we will automatically produce fruit, and the Father wants fruit produced. He expects that when He gives His gift of grace through Christ to someone, they will use it to grow and produce worthwhile fruit. He will be glorified by branches (Christians) of the vine (Christ) producing much fruit.

Jesus finished this thought and teaching with, "I have loved you even as my Father has loved me. Remain in my love. When you obey me you remain in my love, just as I obey the Father and remain in His love. I have told you all this that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, you will have an overflowing joy.

"I command you to love each other as I have loved you. And here is how to measure it - the greatest love is shown when people lay down their lives for their friends. You are my friends IF you obey me. I no longer call you 'servants' because the master does not confide and open up to his servants in personal ways. But I call you 'friends' as I have opened up to you and told you everything the Father told me. You did not really choose me. It was I that chose you. I appointed you to go and produce fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you many other things that you may ask for, when using my name. I COMMAND YOU to LOVE each other!" (John 15:1-17).

Once more, some pretty simple words to understand, from Jesus. His followers are to remain in His love, and remaining in His love means they OBEY Him, as He obeyed the Father. Jesus commands His disciples to love each other, and the ultimate love is to lay down our lives for another. Jesus was in a few hours going to literally lay down His life for the love of His disciples and for all mankind. We may not be called upon to literally give our life up for another human person (some people do as we now and again see on TV news reports), but we must, as we have seen Jesus emphasize in parables and teachings of the past, be willing to serve and help others as we can, by the means that we can, especially those who are the disciples of our Lord and Savior. This was not a "suggestion" from Jesus, it was a COMMAND!

Yes, what we are reading, the words of Jesus just before He gave up His life for His friends, for you and me, are plain and simple....they are the plain truth.

## **CHAPTER 14**

### **JESUS' LAST PASSOVER ON EARTH (PART 3)**

#### **Jesus Warns Of Persecution**

Jesus continued with plain words to His disciples, "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, doing what the world does, the world would love you; but because you are not living like the general world lives, but I chose you to live differently, then the world will hate you. Remember the word I said to you that a servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they keep my word, they will also keep yours. They will persecute you because of me, for they do not know the One who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to the world, they would not understand what sin is; but now they really do not have any excuse for their sin.

He who hates me, hates my Father also. If I had not done in the world the works that I did do, which no one else ever did, they could say they do not understand what sin is; but now they have seen and heard, and they hated both myself and the Father. All this fulfills the words written in their law, 'They hated me without a cause.' But when the Holy Spirit comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, that proceeds from the Father Himself, he will bear witness of me; and you also are witnesses because you have been with me from the beginning of my ministry.

I have said all this to you to help keep you from falling away. They, your persecutors, will throw you out of the churches; indeed, the day is coming when whoever KILLS you will THINK he is offering SERVICE to GOD! And they will do all this because they have not known the Father, nor known me. But I have said these things to you, that when they do these things, you will remember I told you it would happen at times until I come again" (John 15:18 to 16:4).

And so the history of the last two thousands year has shown that at times some of God's true people have been persecuted even unto death, often by others who claimed the name of Christ, thinking that by killing people they were actually serving God. Such can be the depths of deception that the human mind can fall into, usually helped along in that deception by Satan the Devil and his demons.

#### **Words Of Comfort**

Jesus now goes into quite a long talk about Himself and the Holy Spirit, to give comfort and encouragement to all His disciples from the day He spoke them, to the day of His return in glory.

"I did not say these things to you at the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to Him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go, the Holy Spirit will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convince and convict the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. Of sin, because they do not believe in me; of righteousness because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

"I have many things to say to you, but now is not the right time, for you are not in the state of mind to hear all I have to say to you. When the Spirit of truth has come, he [it] will guide you all into the truth; for he [it] will not speak to you by his own authority, but whatsoever the Spirit hears that it will speak to you, and he [it] will declare and help you understand the things that are yet to come on this earth. He [It] will glorify me, for he [it] will take what belongs to me, and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore that is why I said to you he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

"In a little while, you will see me no more; then again in a little while, you will see me once more."

Some of the disciples said to each other, "What is this that Jesus talks about, 'A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me'; and 'because I go to the Father'? They said to each other that they did not understand what Jesus was saying by "a little while." They were again very puzzled by many things He was saying of late, and now puzzled over this, "a little while" talk.

Jesus knew they wanted to ask Him to be clearer in His talking to them. Jesus said to them, "Is this what you are asking each other, what I meant by saying, 'A little while, and you will not see me, and then a little while and you will see me'? Well, shortly you will all weep and lament, while the world will rejoice; you will be filled with sorrow, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. When a woman goes into labor and is ready to deliver a child, she has sorrow and anguish because her time to bring forth a child has come; but when she has brought forth her baby, her anguish she no longer remembers, for her joy that a child is born over shadows any anguish she had. So, you have sorrow now, you are down cast and low in the spirit of your minds, but I will see you again and your heart will then rejoice, and no one will be able to take away your joy of heart. On that day you will ask me no questions. But truly I say to you, if you do ask anything of the Father, He will give it to you, in my name. If you have not yet asked anything in my name, then ask, and you will receive, in order that your joy may be full.

Yes I know I have often spoken to you in parables and analogies; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in parables and analogies, but I will tell you clearly and plainly what comes from the Father. At that time you will ask in my name; and I will not have to pray to the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from the Father. So the Father will answer you. Yes, I have come from the Father into this world, and again I am going to leave this world and return to the Father."

"Ah, now you are speaking plainly," the disciples said, "and not in parables. We know that you know all things, and need no one to question you about that fact. And by all this we believe you have come from God."

Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will all be scattered, every man to his home, and will leave me alone; yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. I have said this to you, that in me you may have peace of heart. In the world you will at times have tribulation; but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world, and you can also, if you have me with you" (John 16:4-33).

Once more Jesus gave them the hope and comfort that the Holy Spirit would come and lead them, teach them, give them strength, and guide them into remembering all that Jesus had taught them, and also lead them into more of the truths of God.

Jesus was telling them that He would be taken away from them in a very short time, that they would be scattered, they would be in sorrow, anguish, very low in their hearts and minds, somewhat like being very sad over the loss of a close friend, or a pet dog or cat. But, He was also assuring them that they would see Him again, and they did indeed after He had risen from the grave. And Jesus told them that at that time they would be in utter joy, which, as we shall see later, they certainly were.

He told them to be asking the Father in His name, and He was telling them that the Father loved them, because they had loved Him and believed that He did come from the Father. He told them He did come from the Father, and that He now needed to go back to the Father.

The disciples could now understand those clear words of Jesus' and they told Him they very much believed He had come from the Father.

Jesus acknowledged what they now confessed, but wanted to tell them that even in their state of belief, they would very shortly be scattered by the events that would unfold, and He would be a lonely individual, yet not alone because the Father would be with Him.

Jesus told them that sometimes in the life of a disciple of His, there would be trials, tests, troubles, and tribulation; but He wanted them to know they could still have great joy, to be of good cheer, for as He had overcome the world with all its tribulations, so they likewise could overcome the world.

With God the Father and Jesus Christ living within us through the Holy Spirit, we can have victory over Satan, our carnal pulls of the flesh, and over all the tribulations that the world can sometimes throw at us. When those disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit on the feast of Pentecost (Acts 2), they were filled with the very power and nature of God, and did go forth into the world, did at times face tribulations, but they remembered and understood all the words Jesus had spoken to them, while He was with them on earth. They did have cheer in their hearts and they did overcome the world.

### **Jesus' Personal Prayer For His Disciples**

Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given Him power over all flesh, so that he might give ETERNAL LIFE to all whom YOU have given to HIM. And this is eternal life, that they may KNOW YOU the ONLY true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished and done all the works you gave me to do; and now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the GLORY I HAD WITH YOU BEFORE the world was made.

"I have manifested your name to the men whom you gave to me out of this world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they HAVE KEPT my WORD. Now they KNOW that EVERYTHING you gave me was FROM you; and they have BELIEVED that YOU DID send me. I am praying FOR THEM; I am not now praying

for the world, but for THOSE whom you gave to me, for they are YOURS. All mine are yours. And yours are mine. I am glorified in them.

"Now I will soon be no more in this world, but they will remain in this world, while I am coming to you. Holy Father, PLEASE KEEP THEM in the name which you gave to me, that THEY may be as ONE, even as WE are ONE.

"While I was with them I kept them in the name you gave to me; I have guarded and protected them, and not one of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you; and these things I have spoken while in the world that my disciples may have the joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given THEM your WORD; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Please Father, set them apart in the truth; YOUR WORD IS TRUTH. As you did send me into the world, so I send them into the world. And for their sake I set myself apart in you, that they also may be set apart in the truth.

"I do only not pray for these my disciples that are here, but also for those who will believe in me through their word of teaching, that they ALL may be ONE; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be IN US, so that the world may believe that you DID SEND me.

"The glory that you gave to me I give to them, that THEY may be ONE even as WE are ONE. I in them and you in me, that THEY may become PERFECTLY ONE, so that the world may know that you did send me, and have loved THEM as you loved ME.

"Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I will be, in your Kingdom, to behold my GLORY which you have given me in the love for me before the foundation of the world.

"O righteous Father, the world has not known you, but I HAVE KNOWN you; and these my disciples have known that you have sent me. I made known to them YOUR NAME, and I will make it known always, that the love with which you have loved me may be in THEM, and I IN them" (John 17:1-26).

There is little to comment on here, the words of Jesus in this pray are clear and simple to read and understand. It is worth going over them again, slowly, and often, with thoughtful meditation.

When Jesus had spoken these words He went on with His disciples, across the Kidron Valley to a garden called Gethsemane.



## CHAPTER 15

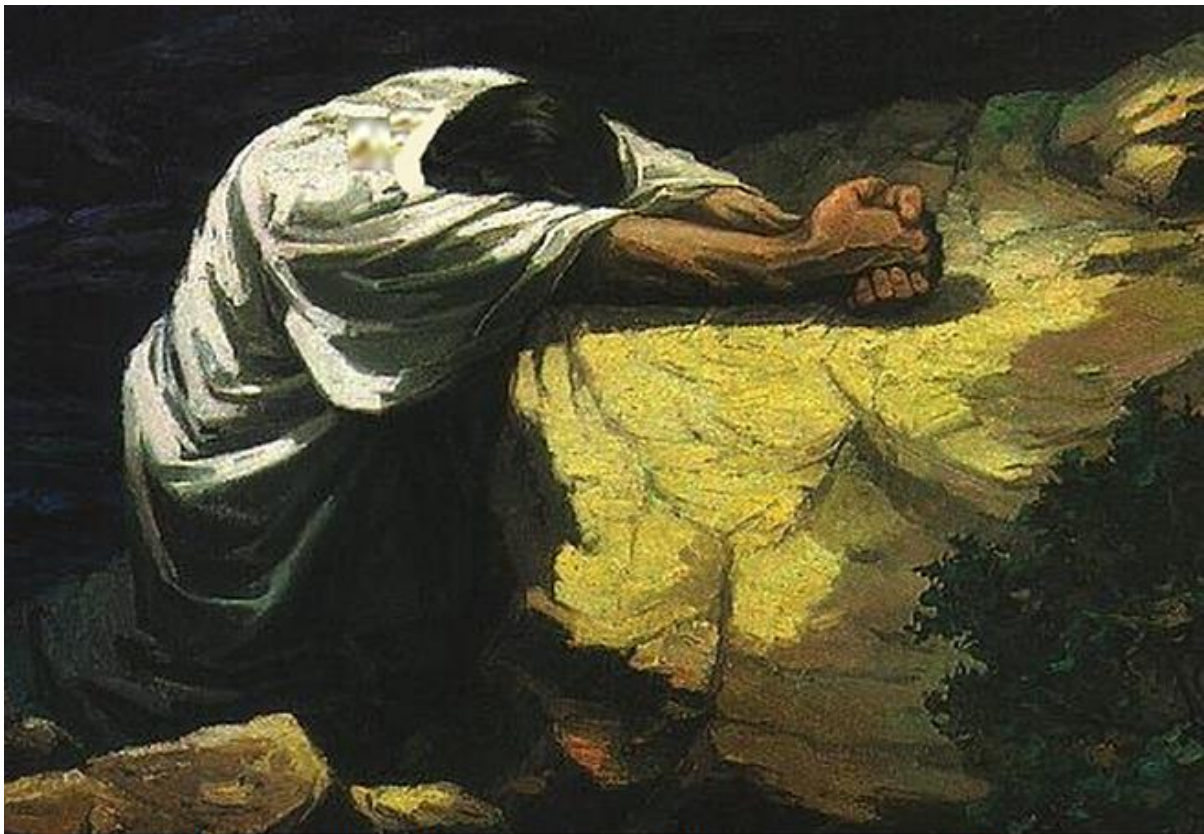
### JESUS IN GETHSEMANE - IS BETRAYED AND ARRESTED

After Jesus had told His disciples all the things we covered in the last two chapter, He and His disciples crossed the Kidron Valley and entered a garden called Gethsemane.

"I want you to sit here," Jesus told them all, as He Himself would go a little further into the garden. He took with him, Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, namely, James and John. Jesus became very troubled and sorrowful. He said to the three that were with Him, "I am very sorrowful, even unto death; I want you to remain here, and watch with me." He went on alone a little further, about a stone's throw, and fell down on His knees and with great anguish prayed, "O Father, if it be possible, let this hour pass from me; nevertheless, let it not be my will, but your will that is done."

Jesus was feeling weak in the knees, and as we feel when about to faint, there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, who was sent to strengthen Him.

And He came back to the three disciples and found them sleeping. He said to Peter, "Could you not watch with me for just one hour? Watch and pray that you will not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak."



**"O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me.  
Yet not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39).**

Jesus went away for the second time, and prayed, "My Father, if it be possible let this cup be taken away, so I don't have to drink it, but your will be done."

Jesus was in emotional agony by now, so much so that His sweat was mingled with blood. According to the medical world, this is quite possible, you can be so intense that your blood vessels break beneath your skin and blood does indeed mingle with your sweat. Jesus for the third time went away and prayed the same words.

Then returning to the disciples for the third time and finding them still asleep, said, "Are you still sleeping. Rise up and pray that you do not enter into temptation. Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man will be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see my betrayer is coming."

While Jesus was still uttering these words Judas Iscariot came. Now, Judas was well acquainted with the garden of Gethsemane, for Jesus often met there with His disciples. He knew Jesus would probably be in the garden during the hours of the Passover night. Judas procuring and gathering together a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and some of the Pharisees, came with lanterns and torches and weapons that soldiers of the day used in warfare. Judas had arranged that he would kiss Jesus, so the soldiers and Pharisees would know which one was Jesus. It was the dark of night, and Jesus looked very much like all Jews of the day, so the soldiers and Pharisees needed Judas to point out which one was Jesus. As soon as he came to the disciples in the garden of Gethsemane, Judas immediately came up to Jesus and kissed Him on the cheek. Jesus said to Judas, "Friend why are you here? Would you betray the Son of man with a kiss?" We are not told if Judas ever answered.

Jesus, knowing all that was to befall Him, then came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?"

They answered Him, "We seek Jesus of Nazareth."

"I am he," said Jesus. At those words they drew back and fell to the ground. They knew Jesus had great super-natural powers, and they were fully expecting that He would use them. They were at this point very scared as to what Jesus would do.

Again, Jesus said, "Whom do you seek?" And they once more replied, "We seek Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am he, so if you seek only me, then let these men that are with me, go." This was to fulfill the word which He had spoken, "Of those whom you gave me Father, I have lost not one."

The soldiers and Pharisees by now had realized no flames of fire were coming from heaven to devour them. Jesus was not using His mighty powers to fight them. They grew braver every second. Then they came forward to lay hands on Jesus and arrest Him.

Some of the disciples seeing all that was going on, asked Jesus if they should bring out their swords, the few they had, and fight. Jesus, with a wave of the hand, told them they should not.

Peter, either did not see Jesus' reaction to the disciples' question as to if they should fight, or simply was too angry at the whole scene. He could see what was going to take place, and now fully awake and on edge, he drew the sword that he had and slashed out with it, cutting off the ear of the high priest's slave as he ducked the silver flash of the sword as it passed over his head. In all probability, Peter was trying

to cut his head off and as the man ducked his head to where it was horizontal, the sword was just able to cut off his ear as Peter swung through.

For whatever reason John's Gospel account records the slave's name, it was Malchus, but we know no more about him, other than what Jesus did next.

Jesus said to Peter with a firm voice, "Put your sword away; shall I not drink of the cup which the Father has given me to drink?" Then bending down He picked up the ear of the slave and did a miracle by re-attaching it to his head as if it had never been sliced off.

Turning to His disciples Jesus said, "All who will take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you not realize that I can appeal to my Father, and He will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels to protect me. But then how should the Scripture be fulfilled, that must come to pass as written?"

Then turning to the crowd that had come to arrest Him, He said, "Have you come out as if I was a robber, with swords and clubs, to capture me? Day after day I sat in the Temple, teaching, and you did not arrest me. But I realize all this has taken place that the Scripture of the prophets might be fulfilled."

It was indeed the time for all that was written about this part of the Messiah's life, and His arrest, and His death, to come to pass.

So the band of soldiers and the officers of the Jews, with the Pharisees, seized Jesus, bound Him, and led Him away.

At this sight, of Jesus being arrested and led away, the eleven disciples panicked, and like scared rabbits, ran away as fast as their legs could go. By now some other people had come along to see all that was happening. It was Passover night and many were as I've mentioned, up all night on this particular day. A young man, only wearing a linen outer cloak followed Jesus, and they were going to arrest him also. They were laying hands on him, grabbing his linen cloak, when he also fled from them leaving his cloak in their hands, and ran away naked (Matt. 26:36-56; Mark 14:32-52; Luke 22:39-53; John 18:1-12).

Jesus, was now alone, all His disciples at this point were gone, but He was not alone, for as He had said, the Father, was ever with Him.

## CHAPTER 16

### JESUS ON TRIAL (PART 1)

#### Jesus Before The High Priest

The soldiers and the Pharisees that had come to the garden of Gethsemane with Judas, took Jesus first to Annas. Now Annas was father-in-law to Caiaphas who was the High Priest that particular year. His house (Annas) was probably the closest to Gethsemane, and Annas had been High Priest himself for a long period. History tells us that he had five sons who also had functioned as High Priest in Judea, and now his son-in-law was High Priest. They probably thought it was important to gain his counsel in the work of evil they were now planning against Jesus. And they wanted a little more time to gather more people from the Jewish Sanhedrin before taking Jesus to the High Priest himself, so they first went to the home of Annas.

They were not there that long, and Annas had Jesus bound and they were all off to the palace of Caiaphas the High Priest. It was Caiaphas who had given counsel to the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

By now it was probably between 3 a.m. and 4 a.m. when Jesus was inside the palace of Caiaphas. You will remember that the eleven disciples had scattered when they arrested Jesus in Gethsemane. Now Peter, after gaining back some courage, decided he would follow the band of people who had arrested Jesus, but he was keeping his distance, not wanting to get himself arrested. There was also another disciple who decided to follow also. The name of that disciple we are not specifically told by the Gospel writers, but we are told he had some "pull" or was as we say, "on the in" with the High Priest. Some Bible Commentators think this other disciple may have been the apostle John, but we simply cannot say for sure, because his name is not given to us in the Gospels.

The soldiers, the scribes (some of), the Pharisees (some of), the elders (some of), arrived at the palace of the High Priest, with Jesus who was now bound with a rope or chain. The palace had a kind of "porch" entrance, then a gate from the porch into a court-yard area, then there was a second story area that was not enclosed but open, so you could look down from it into the courtyard. Jesus was taken up onto the second story to face questioning by the High Priest, and others.

Peter had followed to the porch of the palace, but was not permitted to enter the "court" area. The other disciple who followed and was "on the good side" with the High Priest, was permitted to enter the courtyard and witness all that was going to take place. As this other disciple had some pull with the High Priest (how that was we are not told), he was able to go to the servant maid who looked after the door from the porch to the courtyard, and persuade her to let Peter into the court area. Peter was now inside the court area and Jesus could see from above, where He was, both of the disciples below.

Some of the following, was taking place at the same time, but I shall have to give them separately, but I will use at times the phrase "mean while this was happening" so you can get a better picture of the whole scene and what probably lasted for a couple of hours.





**Jesus before the High Priest Caiaphas**

Peter was now in the courtyard. The soldiers had built a fire to keep themselves warm, and Peter was also taking advantage of the fire, sitting with the guards to keep himself warm also.

The chief priests and Jewish council (the ones who were there) had been as busy as bees trying to find people who would testify against Jesus, even willing to lie about Jesus, so they could condemn Him to death. Well, it was all back-firing on them, as the witnesses were contradicting each other, even as they lied about what Jesus had done and said. Finally they managed to get two people to say, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it back again in three days.' " Now the religious leaders took those words of Jesus to mean He was talking about the great physical Temple in Jerusalem, but we know Jesus was not talking about any physical Temple, but was talking about Himself, His death and resurrection in three days.

The High Priest looked at Jesus and said, "Do you hear what these witnesses say about you? How do you answer what they have said you once said?" Jesus did not say a word in His defence. He gave no reply.

The blood pressure of the High Priest was rising. With a loud voice and nearly to the point of shouting, he barked out at Jesus, "I command you by the living God of our people, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God!!"

Jesus replied, "You have said it! Yes, I am! From now on Son of man will be sitting at the right hand of Power, the right hand of God. And will come again with the clouds of heaven."

"So you are the Son of God then?" many shouted back at Jesus. "You have said the words," Jesus replied, "and yes, so I am."

At this the High Priest and others were ready to blow their gasket as we say. They were hot under the collar, and just about ready to lynch Jesus on the spot. To them anyone saying he was the Son of God, was blasphemy. Many were crying out, "We have heard it from his own lips! We do not need to hear any more. This is blasphemy, and so he deserves to die. Put him to death!"

Meanwhile, as all this was going on up on the second floor of the palace, down in the courtyard a servant maid was looking intently and closely at Peter sitting by the fire. She kept gazing at him, finally it hit her like a bolt of lightning, and she said to all around, "This man here was also with him, part of his disciples!" Peter immediately responded by saying, "I do not know what you are talking about. Woman, I do not know this man called Jesus!"

Peter was disturbed, he arose quickly, and went to the porch area, near the gateway from the porch to the courtyard, trying to keep his head low, so no one could see him very well.

Back up on the second floor, they were so angry at the words Jesus had said to them, admitting He was the Christ, that some began to SPIT in His face. Some PUNCHED Him. Then others covered His eyes with a blind-fold, and began to SLAP Him and PUNCH Him, saying to Him, "All right you Son of God, you the Christ, work your powers and tell us who it was that just hit you!" The big strong guards wanted in on the action, and they also began to hit Jesus with their hands and fists. All were mocking Him and laughing at Him. Now that Jesus was blind-folded He could not prepare Himself for their punches. They all landed on Him with full force. He did not know when or where the slapping and punches would come from.

Meanwhile down where Peter was, at the gateway by the porch and courtyard, the servant maid whose duty it was to look after that area, the same servant maid who had allowed Peter to enter into the courtyard, after the other disciple had talked to her, was able to see Peter close at hand and for a longer time. She also said to others standing there, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth. He is one of his disciples."

"I tell you with an oath, I do not know this man called Jesus," Peter shouted out. The cock crowed.

Peter once more nervous, made his way back into the courtyard area, still keeping his head low, as not to be seen. An hour or so had gone by since Jesus had been brought to the palace of the High Priest. Then a servant of the High Priest, a blood relative to the man whose ear Peter had cut off in the garden of Gethsemane, and who had heard Peter speaking as he denied ever knowing Jesus, said to Peter, "I know you are one of this man's disciples. I saw you in the garden of Gethsemane with him, and your accent also bears this out, for you are from the Galilee area, where this Jesus is from."

"May my head of hair turn white," Peter began to loudly protest, "if I know this man. May the house of my parents crash down around them if I am lying. May I drop dead on the spot, if I do not tell the truth. I do NOT know this man from Galilee, who you



speak about!" Peter was now invoking various curses upon himself and swearing vehemently that he in no way knew this man called Jesus.

Then as Peter finished his last words, the cock crowed a second time. Like a sharp two edged knife cutting into his heart, Peter remembered at the sound of the cock once again crowing, that Jesus had said to him, "Before the cock crows twice, you will deny knowing me three times."

It was now way too much for Peter to bear, as Jesus looked down from above (the blind-fold having been removed from His eyes) at him standing in the courtyard, knowing that Jesus knew he had denied knowing Him three times, indeed before the cock had crowed twice.

Peter was shattered, he felt like he would break apart into a thousand pieces. He found himself a lonely spot in the court area, leaned forward, put his head in his hands and cried like a baby. He had denied his Lord, his Master, his Savior. He wept and he cried some more.

As Peter was crying his heart out, the assembly of scribes, Pharisees, elders, and priests, up on the second floor were making the decision to put Jesus before the whole Jewish council, the great Sanhedrin. It was close to daybreak, the sun was coming up, and soon it would appear over the horizon. Now it would be easy to call all the members of the Sanhedrin together and bring Jesus before them all, at Caiaphas' palace.

Word was soon sent that an emergency council meeting was needed, and before long Jesus stood before the great council of the Jews. They once more asked Him, "If you are the Christ, then tell us."

"If I tell you again," Jesus answered, "you will still not believe me. You haven't believed me at any time. But the Son of man will be seated at the right hand of God."<sup>8</sup>

They all said, "So you are the Son of God then?" And Jesus said to them, "You've said it."

The council members then replied, "Oh, what further testimony do we need? We have heard this man blaspheme with his own voice, from his own lips. We need to bring him before Pilate, and get Rome's permission to put him to death." The Jews could not put anyone to death without permission from the Roman authorities, that was the one thing the Romans would not allow the Jews to do. The Romans allowed the Jews freedom to practice their religion in pretty well all aspects save putting people to death.

It was now morning, the sun was just up over the horizon, when they led Jesus away to the Roman governor called Pilate (Matt. 26:57 to 27:1; Mark 14:53-72; Luke 22:53-71; John 18:13-27).

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<sup>8</sup> **EDITOR'S NOTE:** Jesus here is being very BOLD to them making reference to the prophecy in Daniel 7:13 which says: "Behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days". He was strongly implying He was the Son of man in this prophecy.

## CHAPTER 17

### JESUS ON TRIAL (PART 2)

#### Jesus Before Pilate

And they took Jesus from the palace of Caiaphas the High Priest to the palace (called "praetorium" in John's Gospel) that Herod the Great built for himself, and which became the palace that the governor of Judea resided in when on duty in the Holy Land. The governor at this time in history, over the area, was Pilate, who had risen in the ranks of the Roman Empire, and for his faithful dedication to the world power of Rome, was appointed governor of Judea by Tiberius in 26 A.D. The governor of Judea usually resided in Caesarea, but Pilate moved his headquarters and army to Jerusalem. He was there quite often, and especially it was the custom for the governor of Judea to be at Jerusalem, when the feasts of the Jews were being celebrated, to make sure peace and order was preserved.

It was very early in the morning of the 14th day of the first month, which corresponds to our March/April. They brought Jesus before Pilate. The Jews themselves would not enter the palace of a Gentile, or anyone they considered a Roman Gentile, especially just hours before they would partake of the Passover which they held, by traditions from the Pharisees, on the 15th of the first month, which was actually the first day of the seven day feast of Unleavened Bread. For them to have entered this palace would have been a religious "defilement" and would have kept them from the Passover they were to observe in about twelve hours.

It was Pilate who first came out to them, probably not pleased at all that Jews had got him up so early in the morning, concerning what he would have thought as "their religious problems."

"You have brought this man before me, for what reason? What is he accused of?" Pilate said to the Jews.

They answered, "If this man was not an evil doer, we would not have brought him to you."

"Why don't you take him yourself and judge him by your laws of Moses?" returned Pilate in a straight crisp tone of voice.

The Jews replied, "It is not lawful under Roman law for us to put a man to death."<sup>9</sup>

The Jews made various accusations against Jesus, and Pilate somewhat listened to them. Jesus did not try to defend Himself against their accusing vicious remarks. After a while Pilate told the Jews to be quiet, and turning to Jesus said, "Do you not

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<sup>9</sup> **EDITOR'S NOTE:** Whether this was true or not, it did not stop the Jews from stoning Stephen to death and attempting to stone Paul to death in the book of Acts. The reality was that they feared the people because Jesus was still so popular with them. From blasphemy they tried to change the charge to treason against Rome so the Romans could crucify Him and the people would not take it out on them.

hear how many things they testify against you? Are you not going to defend yourself and answer them?"

But Jesus made no attempt to answer the Jewish Sanhedrin members. And Pilate was greatly impressed, and was amazed at Jesus' cool composure, under the onslaught of Jewish accusations.

The Jews then said to Pilate, "We found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding us to give taxes to Caesar, and saying that he himself is a king." Now Pilate pricked up his ears and stood tall, when this was said about the man they had brought before him. Pilate would now want to speak in a private manner to the man called Jesus. He entered the palace and called to have Jesus come before him, and then asked this question to Christ, "Are you indeed the King of the Jews? Do you claim to be a KING?"

Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others, like those Jews outside, say this about me, and put this idea in your mind?"

Pilate replied, "Am I a Jew? Your own people and the chief priests have handed you over to me as a criminal; what have you done?"

Jesus replied, "My Kingdom is not of this age and time, you have nothing to fear. If my Kingdom was of this age and time, then would my servants fight, that I would not be handed over to the Jews so they could have me put to death. My Kingdom and Kingship is not of this world and age."



Jesus before Pilate

"So you are a King then?" Pilate said to Jesus.

"You have said it, that I am a King," Jesus said, "For this reason I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the TRUTH. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice,"

Pilate looked at Jesus in wonderment, and said, "Well, what indeed is truth?"

The governor Pilate, spent some years in the British Isles under the schooling of the famous Druids, who were quite well respected by Rome. The Druids were well known for asking the question "What is truth?" They would spend much time in debating that question. So when Jesus said He had come to bear witness to the truth, it was very natural for Pilate to have replied with "What is truth?"

We know from Jesus' own words as He prayed to the Father earlier that night, that truth is the WORD of God. Jesus had said, "Your word is truth" (John 17:17).

Pilate was very impressed and somewhat awe struck by this man called Jesus. He walked back outside to the chief priests and the other Jews, and said, "I find no fault in this man!"

That is NOT what the Jews wanted to hear. Those were the last words they wanted Pilate to say. And so they were more urgent and pressing in their words to Pilate, saying such things as, "This Jesus, stirs up the people, teaching throughout all of Judea, from Galilee even to this city."

When Pilate heard the word "Galilee" he asked if Jesus was from Galilee. And on hearing that He belonged to the jurisdiction of Herod, he immediately saw a way out from the problem before him, a way out so he thought. He would send Jesus over to Herod, who just happened to be in Jerusalem at this time (Matt. 27:2, 11-14; Mark 15:1-5; Luke 23:1-5; John 18:28-38).

### **Jesus Before Herod**

Herod [Antipas, son of Herod the Great, who ruled Galilee] was delighted to meet Jesus, for he had heard about Him for a long time, and was hoping to see some kind of miracle performed by Jesus. Herod questioned Him at some length, but Jesus made no answer, which then upset Herod, for the chief priests and scribes and others from the Sanhedrin stood by, vehemently accusing Him. Herod was displeased with the whole scene, but especially with Jesus, after waiting for so long a time to meet Him.

Herod and his soldiers finally treated Jesus with contempt and mocking laughter, then, putting on Him some very expensive apparel (mocking Him as a King) they sent Him back to Pilate.

Herod and Pilate that day became very good friends, whereas before that day they were at enmity and had disdain for each other (Luke 23:6-12).

### **Judas Hangs Himself**

Judas saw all that was going on, first with Pilate, then with Herod, and now back with Pilate. Deep remorse and sorrow filled his heart. Satan had by this time left him. He brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying to them, "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood." Things just did not go the way Judas expected. Jesus was not defending Himself or using His mighty power to crush His enemies.

The chief priests and elders said to Judas, when he returned the money and declared Jesus to be innocent, "What do we care about what you say. See if you can do anything about it now! It's too late!"

And so throwing down the pieces of silver Judas departed from the Temple, and straight away went and committed suicide by hanging himself.

The chief priests and elders now had the thirty pieces of silver. What would they do with them was the big question. One of them said, "It is not within our law to put this money into the Temple treasury, since it is now 'blood money'." They sat with each other to figure what to do. They decided to use the money to buy a no good piece of land called "the potter's field" in which strangers were buried, people who no one

knew where they were from, or who were their relatives. Somewhat like what we today call "homeless" or "street" people. That piece of land then became known as "The field of blood." All this was done that the words spoken by the prophet Jeremiah might be fulfilled, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me " (Matt. 27:3-10).

Jeremiah never wrote down those words. They are not contained in the Old Testament book called Jeremiah. They are words that Jeremiah must have said at one time, and others took note of them and one way or another had preserved them and handed them down from generation to generation.

### **Back Before Pilate**

Jesus is now back before Pilate at the palace built by Herod the Great. Jesus is inside being questioned again by Pilate. The Jews are outside, not going in lest they be "religiously" defiled (entering the palace of a Gentile) and would not be able to observe the Passover which they kept on the 15th day of this first month.

Pilate goes out to the Jews, and says to them, "You brought me this man as one who was perverting the people; and after examining him, I find this man not guilty of any of your charges against him. Neither did Herod, for he sent him back to me. There is nothing done by this man that is worthy of death. There is no crime done by this Jesus. I will chastise him some, and then release him."

The Jewish leaders, now supported by many people who had become disgruntled and impatient with Jesus (because He had not brought them together and used His mighty power to overthrow the Roman armies), immediately, upon hearing Pilate's words, began to shout and cry out at the top of their voices, that they wanted Jesus condemned to death.

Pilate was shocked at their reaction, was speechless for a moment, then an idea flashed into his mind, that he hoped would spare the innocent Jesus. It was the custom at Passover time that the governor release a prisoner, one of their own choosing. In prison at this time was a notorious fellow by the name of Barabbas. He had killed people in an insurrection or uprising against Rome. He was also a robber of some fame.

"Whom do you want me to release for you? Shall it be Barabbas or shall it be Jesus who is called the Christ?" Pilate called out to the Jews.

Now he knew very well that they had delivered Jesus up to himself because they were envious of Him. Then, besides that, while he had been sitting on the judgment seat, questioning Jesus, his wife had sent word to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much over him today in a dream."

The chief priests and elders had already persuaded the people to demand that Jesus be destroyed and Barabbas released. They knew that Pilate might resort to this tactic, so they were prepared for it. Pilate once more shouted out to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you." He himself was hoping they would say it was Jesus they wanted to have released.

But the crowd shouted back, "Release to us Barabbas!"

Pilate then said to them, "Well, what shall I then do with Jesus who is called the Christ?"

All with one voice loudly proclaimed, "Let him be crucified!"

Pilate could not believe what he had heard, "Why crucify him, what evil has he done? I have found nothing in him worthy of death," he replied to the crowd.

The crowd ignored his question and shouted even more loudly, "Let him be crucified!"

When Pilate saw that he was gaining no ground, but rather that a riot could well break out, he took a water bowl and washed his hands before them all, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this man; see to it yourselves." And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children."

And so it was that Barabbas was released to the Jews, while Jesus was handed over to them, to be crucified. And Jesus' blood was indeed upon them and their children. That generation with their children, did not repent as a whole from the sin they committed, and their attitude led them into huge troubles with the Roman authorities over the next 40 years. It finally culminated in the Roman general Titus bringing his armies against Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and destroying most of the city, and the people therein (Matt. 27:15-26; Mark 15:6-15; Luke 23:13-25; John 18:38-40).

### **Conclusion Of Jesus' Trial**

Pilate told his soldiers to take Jesus into the palace. He then called for all the whole battalion of soldiers to come and be present while Jesus would be "scourged." The scourging that Roman soldiers did was often VERY brutal, so brutal at times that many people did not live past being scourged. They used a whip that had little bones attached to the long thong strips of the whip. These little sharp bones would tear the skin apart on the back and around the sides of the person being scourged. It was most brutal a whipping, was the Roman scourging, and there was no limit as to how many whip lashes could be inflicted.

Jesus was of magnificent bodily health and strength, and He did live through the scourging, but much skin and blood was lost from His back and sides. The soldiers were not finished with Him yet. They stripped Him of what clothes He had and put on Him a purple cloak and then a crown of plaited thorns was placed on His head. They put a reed in His right hand. Then they began to salute Him, some kneeling before Him in mockery, and saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

Some took turns beating on His head with a reed. The sharp needles of the crown of thorns were now being hammered into Jesus' skull. The pain....well you can imagine if you ever have had a thorn needle stuck in your hand.

The soldiers also spat upon Jesus and hit Him with their fists as they continued to mock Him for quite some time.

Pilate took Jesus back out to the railing mob of Jews outside the palace. "Look, I am bringing Him out to you so you can know that I find no fault or crime in this man."



Jesus stood there wearing the crown of thorns smashed into His head and the purple cloak. Pilate again said, "Here is the man." When the chief priests and the elders and those of the Sanhedrin, saw Jesus, they cried out with frenzied voices, "Crucify him, crucify him!"



**Jesus is scourged by the Romans**

Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him; for I cannot find any fault or crime in this man."

The religious leaders shouted back, "We have a law, and by that law he should die, because he has made himself the Son of God."

When Pilate heard those words he was even more afraid. He hurried Jesus back into the palace again and said to Him, "Where are you from?" But Jesus did not answer. Pilate therefore said, "So you will not speak to me. Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" Jesus then answered, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given to you from my Father above; therefore he who delivered me to you has the greater sin."

Pilate was by now very upset and certainly afraid, and sought even the more to release this Jesus, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend; everyone who makes himself a King sets himself against Caesar."

The Jews were now resorting to every "political" angle they could think of, to insure Jesus would be crucified.

When Pilate heard these last words from the Jews, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place in the palace called the "Pavement." All was in full view of the mass of Jews and the members of the Jewish Sanhedrin. It was the "preparation" day as the Pharisees Jews called it, the day they prepared for the keeping of their Passover on the 15th day. It was still the 14th day of the first month and it was about the 3rd hour (as it should be, not the 6th hour as the KJV gives in the Gospel of John, which was an error, as the original Greek manuscripts say "it was the third hour"), which was as we count time, between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m.

Pilate said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" They answered, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!"

Pilate replied, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar."

Then Pilate had the purple cloak removed from Jesus and His own clothes put back on, then handed Jesus over to the Jewish leaders and the mob of people, for them to crucify Him. The prophecies of how the Messiah would die were now quickly coming to pass (Matt. 27:27-31; Mark 15:16-20; John 19:1-16).

## CHAPTER 18

### JESUS IS CRUCIFIED ON GOLGOTHA (PART 1)

So the members of the Sanhedrin and the Jewish mob took Jesus, and He went out having to carry His own cross, to the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew "Golgotha" (meaning - place of a skull).



**Jesus carrying His cross to His crucifixion**

Jesus was so weakened by now with all the beatings and the scourging He had endured, that it became impossible for Him to carry His cross. So they compelled a passer-by, one name Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry Jesus' cross.

There had by now a large crowd gathered behind Jesus and along the sides of the road. Many women were crying and lamenting in sorrow for Him. It is perhaps more than interesting, that we see here and will again up to the time of Jesus' resurrection, while the men were at the point of giving up (going back home and back to their secular jobs) many women were quietly in their hearts holding on to their faithfulness to Jesus.

Christ could see and hear many of the women crying for Him as He was being led to His death on the cross. He turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never gave suck to new born children!' Then they will begin to

say to the mountains, 'Fall on us'; and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they do this action when the wood is green, when things are relatively good, what will happen when it is dry, when they will really have something to complain about."

They were doing evil against a man that did nothing but good for people, and taught wonderful truths of the word of God. The Roman government allowed the Jews freedom to travel, freedom to practice their religion, times were quite "green" in many ways. If they were doing this kind of evil in the time of green, Jesus was saying, then what on earth would they do when it was dry? Christ was once more telling them that the time was coming, in the next generation of the children many of them would have, and the children of their children, that people would have wished they never would have brought children into the world. It would all come to a head in 70 A.D. when the armies of Rome would sweep into Jerusalem, destroy much of the city and the all of the Temple except a part of the outer Temple retaining wall (which is still standing in Jerusalem today, called the Wailing Wall), and kill tens of thousands of Jews. It would be a bitter and terrible time that would lay ahead for the people of Judea.

### **Jesus On Golgotha And Crucifixion**

Jesus, with two other criminals, who were to also be crucified and put to death for their crimes, and the large crowd, arrived at the place of the skull, or Golgotha in the Hebrew tongue.

We need to stop here and learn a few things about "crucifixion." There are a number of false ideas people have about the death of Jesus and about crucifixion itself, as generally practiced by the Romans. And they did practice it a great deal in putting criminals and their enemies to death.

I will quote from "Manners and Customs of the Bible" by James M. Freeman. This is from the old original edition, not the new one that most are familiar with today.

Crucifixion was NOT a Jewish punishment, though among the Jews culprits were sometimes tied to a stake by their hands AFTER death. See Deut. 21:22. It was an ancient mode of capital punishment....It was used by the Persians, Assyrians, Egyptians, Carthaginians, Scythians, Greeks, Romans, and ancient Germans. It was a shameful and degrading punishment, and among the Romans was the fate of robbers, assassins, and rebels. It was especially the punishment of criminal slaves.

There were several kinds of crosses used. One consisted of two beams of wood laid across each other in the form of an X. Another had two beams of unequal length, the shorter placed on top of the longer, like the letter T. In a third variety, a small portion of the longer piece appeared above the transverse beam; and on this the inscription was placed [the shape as the popular Christian cross that appears in churches etc.]

This was doubtless the form of cross on which our Lord was crucified. From the center of the perpendicular beam there projected a wooden plug or horn, on which the body of the condemned rested. The bottom of the cross was sharpened, that it might be more easily driven into the ground....It was not generally more than ten feet high, so that when erected, a part of it being in the earth, the feet of the sufferer were not far from the ground.

The condemned man was first stripped of his clothing, which seems to have been the perquisite of the executioners. He was then fastened to the cross, which had been previously fixed in the earth - though sometimes he was first fixed to the cross - which was then lifted and thrust into the ground.

He sat on the middle bar or horn, already mentioned, and his limbs were stretched out and tied to the bars of the cross. Large iron spikes were then driven through the hands and feet. Sometimes the feet were nailed separately, and at other times they were crossed and a long spike was driven through them both.

In this situation the poor sufferer was left to linger until death slowly came to his relief. This usually required two or three days, though some lingered a longer time before their sufferings ended.

The pain was severe, though not so intense as has sometimes been represented. On this subject Dr. Stroud says, 'The bodily suffering attending this punishment were doubtless great; but either through ignorance or design, have been much exaggerated. The insertion of the cross into its hole or socket, when the criminal was previously attached to it, did not necessarily produce the violent concussion which has been supposed; and; as the body rested on a bar, it did not bear with its whole weight on the perforated extremities. At all events there have been many examples of persons enduring these sufferings with the utmost fortitude, and almost without a complaint, until relieved from them by death. A fact of importance to be known, but which has not been sufficiently regarded, is that crucifixion was a very lingering punishment, and proved fatal, not so much by loss of blood - since the wounds in the hands and feet did not lacerate any large vessel, and were nearly closed by the nails which produced them - as by the slow processes of nervous irritation and exhaustion' (The Physical Cause of the Death of Christ, p. 55).

After death the body was left to be devoured by beasts and birds of prey. The Romans, however, made an exception in favor of all Jews who were crucified; this was on account of their law, as contained in Deut. 21:22, 23. They were permitted to bury the crucified Jews on the day of crucifixion. This usually made it necessary to hasten their death, which was done by kindling a fire under them, or by letting hungry beasts attack them, or by breaking their bones with an iron mallet." ("Manners and Customs of the Bible" old edition.)

I think it would be good to re-read the quote above, slowly, and let it all sink in. There are things mentioned that most Christians do not understand and have not been taught about Roman crucifixion. Especially to note is that it was NOT usually a quick death. It was not DESIGNED to be a quick death, in fact the opposite was true. It was designed to be a slow humiliating death. And we need to note that there was a peg on which the body of the victim rested, so the weight was not on the hands, and the victim was not having to pull himself up to breath. When this is understood we can see why the victim often lived for two or three days or in some cases even longer, before death came to them.

True, in the case of Jews their death was hastened, often by breaking their bones, so they could die on the same day they were crucified, in keeping with their law, as given by God through Moses, Deut. 21:22, 23.

We shall see, as we come to it, that they did come to break the legs of Jesus, but found He was already dead, and the reason for this, His already being dead, I will give as I cover that part of the crucifixion. It is another bit of truth that most do not realize because in most translations of the Gospels, a verse has been missed out that was in the original Greek manuscripts.

Golgotha was near the city of Jerusalem. The now they had Jesus up on the cross, with the other two criminals, one on His right hand and one on His left hand, also up on crosses. Pilate wrote an inscription and placed it above Jesus' head. The inscription was in three languages, Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. Just about anyone could read it, the Greek language was especially the most common language of all



who were within the Roman Empire. The inscription read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

The chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.' "

Pilate with a cold and straight face answered them, "What I have written I have written. It will not be changed."

The Gospel of Mark tells us that it was the "third" hour when they crucified Jesus.<sup>10</sup>



**Jesus is crucified on a cross outside of Jerusalem**  
(Close to the sin offering altar on the Mount of Olives)

Now, hours by the Jews were counted this way. 6 a.m. to 7 a.m. was hour ONE. 7 a.m. to 8 a.m. was hour TWO. 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. was hour THREE.

The Jews only gave "the hour" (at least in the Gospels). They did not give any exact time as we might today, in saying something like "8:30" or "8:45" or "ten minutes to 9 a.m." We only know Jesus was put up on the cross between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. on the morning of the 14th day of the first month in the Jewish calendar.

Many who were looking on and passing by were laughing and making fun of Jesus. Here was this man that had worked many mighty miracles for over three years, but now he was badly beaten, His back and sides shredded by the Roman scourging, the crown of thorns smash into His head, and black and blue bruises all over His face, chest, arms, from being slapped and punched. Here was this miracle working man, who claimed to be the Son of God, who had raised Lazarus from the dead, now He was helpless under Roman crucifixion. Yes, many were laughing at Him. Many said, "You who would destroy the Temple and build it back in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross."

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<sup>10</sup> **EDITOR'S NOTE:** We are told He was put up on the cross about the third hour (about 9 am) and in Matthew 27:46 that He died about the ninth hour (about 3pm). Jesus' death fulfilled the symbolism of the morning and evening sacrifices which were done at 9am and 3pm respectively.



The chief priests, with many of the scribes and the elders, and some of the Pharisees, mocked also, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. If he is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he is special in his eyes; for he said, 'I am the Son of God.' "

It is recorded that the soldiers also did their share of mocking Jesus. They must at that time have really been feeling like they had the power, and not this Jesus man. Probably thinking this man's power was not so great after all.

Yes, Jesus' enemies, and those who had become disenchanted with Him, for not doing things their way against the Romans, were now having a field-day, a great time deriding Him as He hung there on the cross, seemingly completely helpless to do anything about the situation He was in. Little did they know it was all in the salvation plan of the Father in heaven, for all sinners who would repent and accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

Some standing by offered Jesus some wine mingled with myrrh. But He refused it. This was a wine that had some bitterness added, such as myrrh, that was a bitter substance, produced in Arabia. It had the effect of stupefying the senses. It was often given to those crucified to help make them insensitive to the pains of death as they hung on the cross. Jesus knew this, and so refused to drink it. He had to suffer the full physical suffering and not be numbed from it in any way. This was the Father's will.

With most now deriding and laughing at Him, saying all the things recorded for us in the Gospels, and probably a whole lot more not recorded, Jesus looked at them, knowing they were blinded by Satan, and their own human mind, and said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they are doing."

Jesus was, as we have seen, stripped of His clothes. He may have been put on the cross naked, but then they may have left His under garment on him, that covered His private parts. We cannot say for sure. But His clothes that were looked upon as useful for others to have, were stripped from Him. There was enough clothing for four parts, one for each soldier the apostle John tells us. There were obviously four main soldiers that were in charge of this crucifixion. Jesus' outer tunic John tells us, was woven without a seam from top to bottom. This was a special and costly way to make a tunic. It would have been regarded by anyone in that day, as one of the finest tunics you could have. The soldiers knew this tunic was of the highest quality, and so they said, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who shall have it."

This was done to fulfill the prophecy of the Scriptures that said, "They parted my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots" (Psalm 22:18).

## CHAPTER 19

### JESUS IS CRUCIFIED ON GOLGOTHA (PART 2)

#### **The Criminal Who Jesus Will Remember**

And two criminals were crucified with Jesus, one on His right hand and one on His left hand. One looked over at Jesus, and with disdain sarcasm in his voice said, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us also!" The other criminal on hearing this, immediately replied to him, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation and death? And we indeed justly are condemned, for we are receiving our due reward for our actions; but this man Jesus has done nothing wrong." Then looking and speaking directly to Jesus, he said, "Please remember me when you come into the power of your Kingdom." Jesus replied, "Yes, for truly I say to you today, you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:39-43).

Jesus could see that the heart of this man was in a humble state of repentance, a heart that was in the right godly attitude. He had never been called by God in this physical life as far as we know. He will one day be resurrected in the great White Throne Judgment resurrection spoken about in the last verses of Revelation chapter 20. This resurrection takes place after the 1,000 year reign of Christ and His Kingdom on earth. Millions who never had a chance for salvation, who were never called by God in their physical life (like babies who die, young children that die, people in remote areas of the world who never hear the Gospel, and people just plain blinded to the truths of God's Kingdom and salvation) will be raised again and the book of LIFE will be opened to them. They will live and they will be judged by the word of God, just as we today who are called and chosen are being judged. If they, like us, will confess their sins, repent of being a sinner, call on God for mercy, accept Jesus as our personal savior, be willing to serve and obey God in a humble attitude, and remain faithful to their calling to the end of their physical lives, then they, like us, will inherit eternal life and be with God in His paradise for ever more.

Jesus could see this man's attitude was in the right condition. When he is raised again in that general resurrection, his attitude that he died with on the cross, will be the same. It will be the right attitude to receive salvation. Jesus was confident that he would serve God and so would indeed inherit eternal life, so He was able to say to him that very day, as they hung on their crosses together, that he would be with Him, Jesus, in Paradise.

The paradise of God is shown to us in the book of Revelation, it is the throne of God in the eternal holy city of God, the new Jerusalem that will one day come down from heaven and be placed on the earth that is made new (see Rev. 2:7 with 22:2, 14; read the context of all of Rev. 20, 21, 22).

God has a wonderful plan of salvation for ALL people that have ever lived. That plan of salvation will not be finished until the GREAT general resurrection, spoken about in Revelation 20, has taken place. Everyone will have their day when salvation will be plainly offered them. No more deception, no more blindness of mind. They will have revealed to them the truths of God. They will then have to decide which way they will go, the way and life that is of God, or the way and life that is of Satan the Devil. They will have to choose, the way of life or the way of death, but all in their time will be clearly offered that choice, with no blindness of heart or mind standing in

the way. God will be there to ask them to choose LIFE!(see Deut. 30:19). Praise the Lord for His wonderful ways and work and great mercy.

### **Jesus Takes Care Of His Mother**

There were many standing around the cross of Jesus. Many were weeping and crying for Him. Many bewildered and confused, in anguish of mind, just not understanding why all this was happening. There was standing close by, Jesus' mother, and also Mary the wife of Clopas, and there was Mary Magdalene. Jesus turned His eyes towards His mother and towards the disciple He had a close bond with. Many believe this was the apostle John, the John who wrote the Gospel that bears his name. Jesus said to them both, "Mother, behold your son!" And to the disciple, "Behold your mother!"

From that very hour the disciple took her to his own home and looked after her. We are left to presume that Joseph, the husband of Mary, Jesus' mother, was no longer living, hence Jesus wanted His mother to be taken care of by this particular disciple.

### **Darkness Covers The Land**

It was about the sixth hour, for us today that would be anywhere from 11 a.m. to noon or 12 p.m.

"Look....look, see what's happening to the sun," someone shouted. Dozens of pairs of eyes immediately looked up, and what they saw was shocking and terrifying, they could hardly believe their eyes we would say. The bright shining of the sun was dimming. The sunshine of the day was beginning to fade away as if it was evening time. It was growing darker much faster than it did at the natural sunset time of the day. It was a cold foreboding darkness that was fast coming, even an unnerving darkness. Many were looking white like snow as their blood drained from their faces at the sight of the sun being darkened.

It was only a few minutes of time, and all the land was covered with darkness as if it was night. It would last for about three hours, and most by then knew it was something that only the power of God had brought about.

The Roman soldiers in charge of the three crucifixion crosses, on which hung Jesus and the two criminals, tried to be bold and strong, not wanting anyone to see that in their minds they were also getting worried and a little scared at what had taken place in the heavens above.

Three hours of this intimidating, harrowing, and shivering darkness passed. It was now about the ninth hour, which for us would be between 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. Jesus had been silent. All the people that were still gathered there were mostly silent. Because of the extraordinary and peculiarly bizarre darkness over the land, some were looking for Jesus to work a great miracle, maybe, they thought, He would heal Himself of all His wounds and pull out the nails that fastened Him to the cross, and climb down. Many of Jesus' disciples were still expecting Him to come down from the cross. All that they were witnessing must be a dream, and was not really happening, many of them were thinking. They were expecting Jesus to perform a miracle for Himself, just as He had performed many miracles for so many others during His ministry.

But nothing was happening, one hour had gone by, then two hours, and now it was the third hour of this darkness over the land.

Suddenly, the dark silence was shattered by Jesus crying out with as loud a voice as they had ever heard from a human being, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" Which being translated was, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

The time had come for the Father to step aside, to step back into the darkness that was all around. Jesus would have to bear the sins of the whole world on Himself now, without any help or any kind of softening pillow to cushion the sacrifice of His life in death, for the sins of mankind.

Some of the bystanders hearing Jesus cry out, said, "This man is calling for Elijah." And one of them ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, put it on a long reed and raised it up to Jesus' mouth for Him to drink. As the person was doing this they said, "Wait, let us see if he is going to work a miracle, and bring Elijah to save him and help him come down from his cross." (Matt 27:45-49).

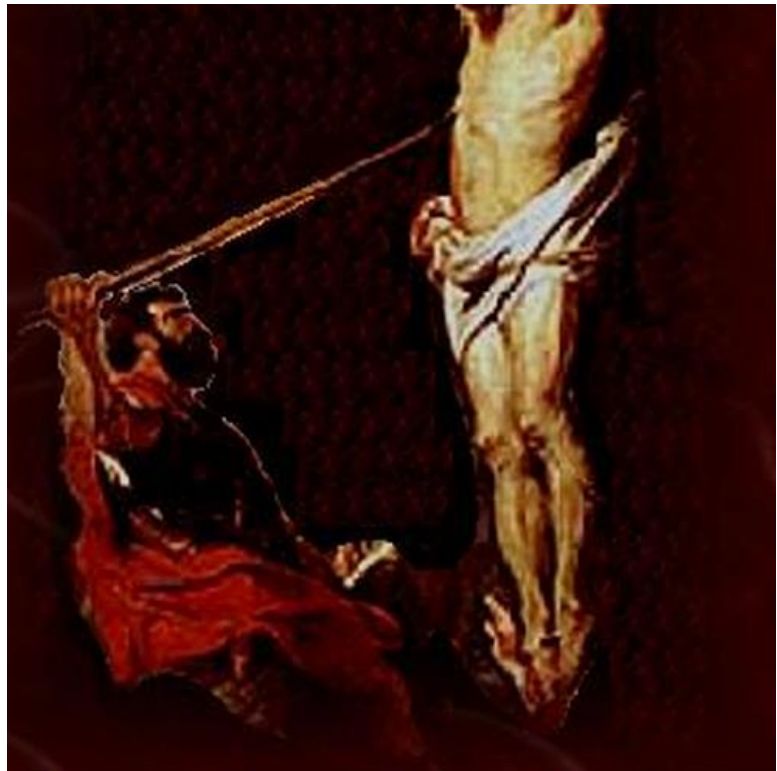
### **Jesus Is Killed As A Lamb Led To The Slaughter**

There was again only silence from Jesus. No miracle was happening, no Elijah the prophet of old was appearing to save Jesus.

Now it was all just too much for one soldier standing there. He was thinking that kind of talk from people about Elijah, and people crying for this Jesus man, people thinking that Jesus would yet work a mighty miracle, was just too much. It was now, for this hardened soldier, all way too much. He would show everyone that this man was just a man, and nothing more, that he could not work any miracles. He would show everyone that he, as a soldier of the mighty Roman army, had the power to kill this Jesus that hung helpless before him.

He would show those Jews that were Jesus' disciples, that this man they thought of as the Son of God, the Messiah, was just merely a human man and nothing more. This soldier also knew that Jews who were crucified were to have their life ended on the same day as they were nailed and hung up on their cross.

He, this tough powerful soldier....well he would now show everyone that he was greater than this Jesus, he would now finally KILL this man called Jesus Christ, and so declare to all standing there that Jesus was not the Son of God.



**A Roman soldier is about to pierce Jesus' side with his spear**

The soldier grabbed hold of his war spear and with one thrust plunged it into the side of Jesus' body, the spear head breaking through Jesus' bladder. As the soldier pulled it out of Jesus' body out came the water from His bladder together with a gushing flow of His blood.

Jesus cried out, "It is finished! Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" and having said those words, He bowed His head and breathed His last breath.

Jesus, God in the flesh, the Messiah, the Son of God, and the Son of man, was now hanging DEAD on the cross. The soldier walked away a few steps with a large confident grin on his face. The scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and elders of the people that were present and who had longed for this event, the death of Jesus, were smiling also. The moment they had planned for and wanted to see, had finally come, this Jesus was finished and done with. They thought they were rid of Him forever, and that the people would soon forget about Him and they would once more have full power and control over their "religious little empire." They were, in a very short while, to see how wrong they were for thinking such thoughts.

As Jesus hung there dead, so very dead, His disciples were now in complete and utter shock and disbelief. They had up to this point still clung to the thought that He just could not die, that He would somehow live and come down from His cross.

The eleven disciples were especially broken to pieces, like dropping a china dish from the top of a twenty-story building on to the concrete pavement below. They were shattered in heart and mind. All the women disciples were weeping and crying even more than they would have imagined possible.

All the hopes and dreams and expectations of all of Jesus' followers that were present there, had flown away, disappeared it would seem into the blackness all around them, with that one action of that one soldier who had thrust his spear into the side of Jesus, and put an end to His life.

Yes, Jesus did not die of a broken heart, or of not being able to breath. He did not die of suffocation. He died as the prophet Isaiah had been inspired to write about. He died as a sheep led to the slaughter. He was slain with an instrument designed to slay and kill people. He had His blood SHED, for the sins of mankind.

That through the shedding of His blood, people who will accept Jesus as their personal Savior, can have forgiveness of their sins, and can have the grace and mercy of God the Father bestowed upon them, so they need not die, but live in the Father's Kingdom for all eternity (see Isaiah 52:13-15; with chapter 53; and Ephesians 2:8; with Romans 3:23-26).

We know that Jesus died with a spear thrust into His side from the original Greek manuscripts of Matthew 27. There is a verse missing in most translations, but it is in the original Greek. All of verse 50 of Matthew 27, should read this way, "But another taking a spear pierced His side, when blood and water came out. Jesus, however, having again cried out with a loud voice, resigned His spirit" (Fenton translation).

We shall see shortly that John in his Gospel account verifies that Jesus died by being slain, so indeed like a lamb is led to the slaughter.

## **The Father Makes Clear Jesus Was His Son**

No sooner had the soldier walked away from slaying Jesus with his spear than the ground started to shake and rumble and roll. There was an earthquake over the whole Jerusalem area. People were screaming in fear. Many were running this way and that way.

Many large rocks were broken into pieces, and many of the tombs of the dead were opened, the stones sealing the entrances flung to one side. And it is recorded for us that AFTER Jesus had been resurrected, many of these physical people in the tombs were resurrected back to physical life and walked back into Jerusalem, and showed themselves to their friends and relatives and others. This would have been an awesome witness to all in Jerusalem of God's witness that Jesus was truly His Son seeing all these dead people coming back to life again.

Among all this shaking of the earth, the mighty curtain of the Temple that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place (see a pictorial Bible Dictionary of the Temple structure) was, with one tremendous and mighty crack, split into two from top to bottom. The Most Holy Place of the Temple (that no one ever entered except the High Priest, and only on one day of the year - the Day of Feast of Atonement, on the 10th day of the 7th month in the Hebrew calendar) was open for all who stepped into the Holy Place of the Temple to see.

This happening to the monstrous curtain of the Temple, would have put into panic and complete disarray to all that may have been taking place in the Temple at the time, which would also have been put into some disarray from the three hours of darkness covering the land. Some of the activity that was going on within the Temple was the evening sacrifice and the slaying of Passover lambs, as the Pharisees and their followers were traditionally doing, in preparation for observing the Passover on the evening of the 15th day of Nisan, that was only hours away.

Remember Jesus had observed the Passover with His disciples already, at the beginning of the 14th, and on into the night of the 14th, when He was betrayed by Judas, as we have already seen. The correct Passover, and time to observe it, was when Jesus observed it, but the Pharisees had built their own traditions over the centuries and were observing the Passover at the beginning of the 15th, which is really the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a totally different festival of the Lord, than the Passover. Such false traditions of the Pharisees, were why Jesus said what He said, as recorded in Mark 7:5-13.

Well, whatever was going on in the Temple when Jesus was slain and the earthquake hit the area, and the curtain of the Temple torn into two, you can pretty well guess correctly that everything would have come to a grinding, and chaotic STOP! There was nothing but confusion, perplexity, disorder, and pandemonium, going on inside and outside the Temple, and in and around Jerusalem.

Then on top of all that, after all that had taken place, the darkness suddenly, and as quickly as it came on the land, it was gone! Light, and the sun was blazing brightly once more in the heaven.

So amazing was it all that the centurion, and all who were with him watching over Jesus, were filled with great awe and said to each other, "Truly, indeed, this man was innocent, and THIS WAS the SON of God!"



The earth stopped shaking, the darkness was lifted, the sun was casting forth its mighty light again. There was no more physical signs of anything, all returned to being as the physical day had begun. The soldiers and the crowd of people around the crucifixion area, also returned to a somewhat normal disposition of mind. They were no longer thinking the end of the world had come upon them.

Many of the women that had served in different ways Jesus and His men, when they were in the Galilee area, were present, looking on, but keeping themselves at a distance. Among those women were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee, and many other women who had come up with Jesus to Jerusalem.



**A Roman centurion declares:  
"Truly this was the Son of God"**

Others of Jesus' followers did not stay around for very long after He had been killed. They departed to their homes, downcast and very distraught, still in confusion of mind about all that had taken place (Matt. 27:51-56; Mark 15:38-41; Luke 23:45-49).

### **The Apostle John's Further Account**

It was now about the tenth hour or between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. as we reckon time. Much of the crowd had dispersed and were making their way to their homes or back into Jerusalem. Jesus' disciples were so upset and confused, none of them thought about Jesus' dead body on the cross, and what they should do with it. Not one of them at that time had their mind on such a detail. Jesus was left there, dead on the cross, and none talked about removing it.

But there were still two criminals alive. And as we have seen, Jewish law (actually a law given to them from God) said that persons hung on a stake should be taken down and buried the same day as when put on the stake, or tree (Deut. 21:22-23).

It was also what many Jews (especially those of the Pharisee sect) called "the preparation" day. It was the 14th of Nisan and not a Sabbath day, and the Jews who followed the Pharisees were getting ready to observe their Passover supper, starting at evening time, which was the beginning of the 15th of Nisan, and which was also an annual Sabbath day, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. They were also cleaning out their homes of leaven bread and getting ready to eat unleavened bread for the next seven days. So the 14th day of Nisan, for many Jews, became known as "preparation day." They were preparing for the 15th day.

The Sabbath day that was coming at evening time, was not the weekly Sabbath, but the Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and such a Sabbath became known as "a high day" or "a high Sabbath day." That high Sabbath day was a Thursday. Jesus had observed the Passover with His disciples on a Tuesday evening, the beginning of the 14th of Nisan. He was put on the cross Wednesday morning, and died as we have seen, in the early afternoon of Wednesday.

The evening and the beginning of the high Sabbath day of the 15th of Nisan, a Wednesday evening, was fast arriving. Many of the Jews knew that no Jew should be left for the night hanging on a tree or cross. The Romans allowed the Jews to obey that law given to them by God through Moses. The Jews went to Pilate and asked if they might break the legs of those on the crosses, to speed up their death and so be taken down from the crosses and buried, before the Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread arrived.

Pilate was in Jerusalem, and he granted them their wish, but did not send a message to the soldiers already keeping watch over Jesus and the other two criminals, but sent a few other soldiers that were at his palace in Jerusalem, to go and do the job of breaking the legs of those on the three crosses.

So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first criminal, and then of the other criminal. But coming to Jesus they saw He was ALREADY DEAD. No one had told them, well.....there was by this time just about no one standing around to tell them anything. It would seem even the original soldiers that had been keeping guard from the beginning of the crucifying, were no longer there to say anything to them.

They saw that Jesus was already dead and so did not break His legs, no need to, as He was dead. Then John says this in his Gospel, "But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water."

Now, in the Greek that John wrote, the word "pierced" is in the "aorist" or past tense (an single action done and completed in the past), and so what John actually wrote was this, "But one of the soldiers HAD ALREADY pierced His side with a spear...."

John is telling us the reason as to WHY the soldiers coming to break Jesus' legs, found Him already dead, it was BECAUSE another soldier HAD BEFORE those soldiers came, ALREADY plunged a spear into Jesus' side and killed Him, hence He was already dead when the new soldiers arrived to start breaking the legs of all three men on the crosses. They then had no need to break Jesus' legs to speed up His death, as He was already dead. And exactly how that took place we have seen just a short while back. It was indeed by a soldier taking his spear and thrusting it into Jesus' side.

The apostle John finishes this part of his Gospel by saying, "He who saw it (referring to himself) has borne witness - his testimony is true, and he knows that he has told the truth - that you also may believe. For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled, 'Not a bone of Him shall be broken' (Psalm 34:20). And again another Scripture says, 'They shall look on Him whom they had pierced' " (Psalm 22:16, 17).

This part of God the Father's plan of salvation was indeed as Jesus cried out just before He died, FINISHED! (John 19:31-37).

The power of Satan and sin, had been forever broken and defeated. Through the shed blood and death of Jesus on the cross, all who want and desire to be saved from eternal death, can find the way to eternal life through Jesus as their personal Savior.

"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

## **EDITOR'S NOTES:**

### **WHERE WAS JESUS CRUCIFIED?**

In Hebrews 13:10-13 we read: "We have an ALTAR from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered OUTSIDE THE GATE. Therefore let us go forth to Him, OUTSIDE THE CAMP, bearing His reproach."

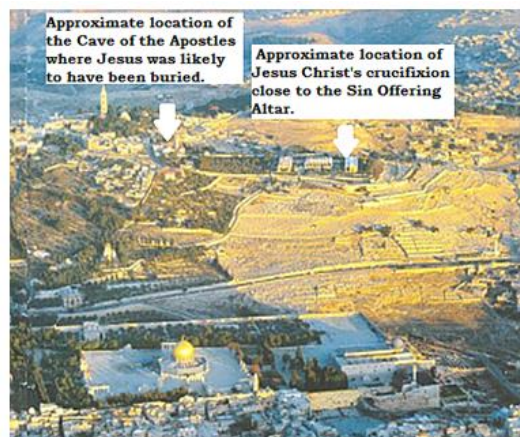
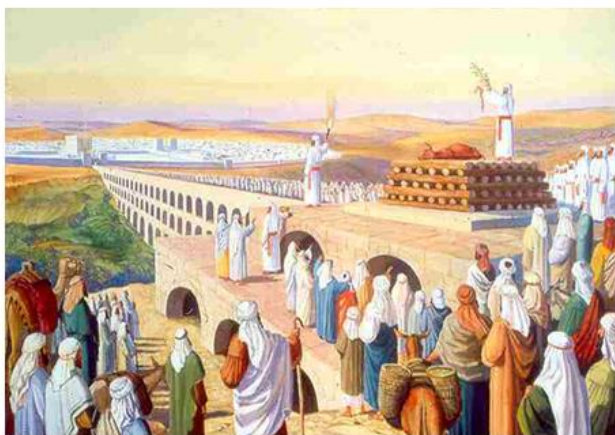
The Apostle Paul tells us that Jesus was crucified "outside the gate" AND "outside the camp." The altar Paul speaks of here is the sin offering altar. The priests could not eat of those sacrifices. All the entrances of the Holy Place and Holy of holies were to the east.

The traditional Catholic and Orthodox site of the crucifixion, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, is NW of the Temple site and the Garden Tomb and its Skull Hill are North of the Temple. Both were only barely outside the city walls in Jesus' day and not sufficiently far away from the city walls to be outside the camp.

The Jews plainly state that the sin offering altar where the sin offerings and the red heifer (a special type of sin offering) were burnt was to the east of the Temple on the Mount of Olives.

THE PRIEST THAT BURNED THE [RED] HEIFER, THE HEIFER, AND ALL THAT AIDED HIM WENT FORTH TO THE MOUNT OF OLIVES." (Middoth 1:3).

Sin is abhorrent to God and so these offerings that represent sin were consumed outside the camp and far away from the presence of God.



The apocryphal Acts of John appears to give some historical support for Jesus being crucified near the sin offering altar on the Mount of Olives:

Jesus said to John on the MOUNT OF OLIVES at the moment of the crucifixion: 'John, someone must hear this from me; for I have need of one who will hear it' (The New Testament Apocrypha, Vol.I, p.301).

The Romans usually crucified criminals near the scene of their crime, where they were arrested or on a major crossroads. Jesus was arrested at Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives and the road from Bethany across the double-arched Roman bridge that used to cross over the Kidron Valley went near the sin offering altar site.

We are told that Jesus was crucified on a tree.

"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a TREE' (Acts 5:30).

"We are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem: whom they slew and hanged on a TREE' (Acts 10:39).

The Romans normally stripped the branches off an existing tree and nailed a cross beam with the criminal on and remember they were usually crucified naked to emphasise the humiliation.

Jesus was buried in a nearby tomb which was likely hewn out of a cave. Before Constantine's mother picked out the holy sites venerated by Catholics today, Eusebius in the 3rd century wrote:

"Believers in Jesus all congregate from all parts of the world ... that they may worship at the Mount of Olives opposite the city ... TO THE CAVE that is shown there" (Proof of the Gospel, Bk. VI. ch. 18)

This cave was known as the Cave of the Apostles. Today the Pater Noster church at the T junction half way between the Church of the Ascension and the Seven Arches hotel sits over this cave.

In 70 AD the city of Jerusalem was utterly destroyed by Titus' Roman army. Josephus wrote that the siege of Jerusalem began on Nisan 14 in 70 AD on the very same day of the year that Christ was crucified. If Jesus was crucified in 30 AD that would be exactly 40 years to the day when Jesus was crucified.

But wait there's more! Jewish records record four miraculous events that started 40 years before the Temple was destroyed and continued every year until Jerusalem fell. The Jerusalem Talmud says the following:

"Forty years before the destruction of the Temple:

The western light went out,  
The crimson thread remained crimson, and  
The lot for the Lord always came up in the left hand.

They would close the gates of the Temple by night and get up in the morning and find them wide open” (Sotah 6:3).

These huge gates took 20 men to open and close so to have them open by themselves would have spooked them out like some poltergeist movie.

The number 40 is the Biblical number for judgment and trial. These miraculous signs, like those that occurred on the day of Jesus’ crucifixion (the darkness, earthquake and rising from the grave of many saints) seem to be signs from God pointing the Jews to the fact that Jesus Christ was indeed the Son of God and the true Messiah.

## **CHAPTER 20**

### **JESUS IS BURIED IN A TOMB**

#### **And When Evening Had Come**

The three hours of darkness over the land of Jerusalem, on that Wednesday of the 14th of Nisan (in the year 30 A.D.) had been mysteriously foreboding, even scary. At the end of it all, Jesus had been slain by the spear from a soldier. Those there, from the scribes and Pharisees and elders of the people, walked away smiling to themselves and to each other. They could not have cared less what happened to Jesus' dead body. They, of all people, were certainly not doing to apply the law of Moses, which said that the body of a dead person hung on a tree or stake, should not remain on it all night, but should be taken down on the same day they were placed on the tree or wooden stake, before the night came, and buried (Deut. 21:22, 23). Those religious leaders and elders who were happy to see Jesus dead, went their way, and as far as they were concerned, Jesus' body could rot off the cross and be devoured by the birds of the air and the wild beasts and dogs of the city of Jerusalem.

As for Jesus' disciples, we know from the Gospel accounts and what was to transpire, as we shall soon see, they also went their way, with a downcast heart, a sad, grieved, desolate, and dejected mind. They felt utterly crushed, troubled and despairing. Even Jesus' close inner circle of eleven disciples felt defeated and spiritually forsaken. They could not understand the events that had just taken place over the last night and into the late afternoon of this 14th day of Nisan. It would seem even they had no plans or were not giving it much thought if at all any, as to what would happen to the body of Jesus, now hanging dead on the cross.

Yes, all but a few of Jesus' disciples left that cold place of death. All that is but a few women from Galilee, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus. They felt they had to stay, even if it was at a distance. They were sure that some of Jesus' disciples would come and take away His body before nightfall. They wanted to see where Jesus would be taken.

A half hour passed, and no one returned to take Jesus down from the cross. Then an hour went by, and still no one came for Jesus. Then an hour and a half, then two hours, and still no disciple of had returned.

By this time, it was being whispered around among Jesus' followers in Jerusalem, that no disciple had claimed the body of Jesus. Finally someone decided he had to do something about this situation of Jesus still hanging on the cross, alone, with all of His close disciples oblivious it seemed, even to be thinking they should claim Jesus' body. Perhaps many thought that with Mary, Jesus' mother, being there, and no doubt some of her other children, it would be they who would have claimed Jesus' body. (You will remember in some of the past chapters, we saw that Jesus did have brothers and sister....well half brothers and sister, we would say, for Joseph, Mary's husband was not the father of Jesus, but God the Father in heaven was.)

Whatever were the thoughts of Christ's disciples at this time, it is clear from the Gospel writers that no one was going to do anything about taking Jesus down from the cross and laying Him to rest in a tomb.



So it was, that finally one man was going to come forward to ask for the body of Jesus from the governor Pilate. He was not one of Jesus' close disciples, but it is said of him that he was a disciple. Time had passed quickly since Jesus had been slain. Matthew and Mark record that it was now "evening." Matthew says, "When it was evening...." Mark puts it this way, "And when evening had come...."

If we research ALL the verses in the New Testament where the word "evening" is used, and we let the New Testament interpret itself, without putting any additional ideas of man into the truth of it all, we see that the New Testament interprets for us that "evening" is NOT BEFORE the TWELFTH hour as the Jews then reckoned time, or 5 p.m to 6 p.m. for us. Evening, as interpreted by the New Testament, did not arrive until the twelfth hour had finished. Evening then was AFTER 6 p.m.

This all makes sense and adds up to the fact that all of Jesus' disciples had left the area where He was now dead on the cross, and none were coming back to reclaim and remove His body. It would have taken a few hours or more for the word to get around that no one was claiming Jesus' body, not even His closest eleven disciples or His immediate family members. It was now "evening" but Mark adds these additional words, "And when evening had come, since it was the day of Preparation, that is the day before Sabbath...."

Let us remember that the Sabbath talked about here is NOT the weekly Sabbath, but the Sabbath of the 15th day of Nisan, a Thursday, the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread, in the year 30 A.D. when all this took place. And the Jews were indeed preparing, putting out leaven from their homes. Many had already done so as we saw that it was a custom for Pharisee following Jews to start putting leaven out at the beginning of the 14th day, and getting ready for this Sabbath of the 15<sup>th</sup>. Again I remind you that the Pharisee Jews were preparing to observe the Passover supper at the beginning of the 15th, as they do to this very day.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> **EDITOR'S NOTE:** Keith's view of the burial occurring after the start of Nisan 15 is a minority view within the Church of God. I personally support the more common view of the burial occurring just before Nisan 15 began. Fred Coulter in his Faithful Version of the New Testament translates Matthew 27:57 the following way: "And when evening **was coming on**". He translates Mark 15:42 as "Now evening was coming on and since it was a preparation (that is, the day before a Sabbath)". The King James Version translates Luke 23:53-54 this way: "And he [Joseph] took it [Jesus' body] down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. And that day [when Jesus was buried] was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on."

In Leviticus 23:15-16 Pentecost is said to be 49 days after the wavesheaf offering and we are also told to count 50 days TO the day after the seventh Sabbath which makes the beginning of the 50 day count **the Sabbath day before the wavesheaf offering**. To me these two different counts only make sense if they symbolise two different but important days - when He was resurrected and when He ascended to heaven to fulfil the meaning of the wavesheaf offering. Keith claims the resurrection and the ascension to fulfil the meaning of the wavesheaf offering both occurred on the same day (1st day of the week).

Many, thinking that a Sabbath begins at sunset, or when the evening first starts, will have a question as to why Mark wrote it the way he did, that evening HAD come, but it was preparation, the day BEFORE this coming Sabbath.

Well it may all be answered when we understand that a large part of the Jews in Jesus' day (and still even in our day) did not count the Sabbath as STARTING until the first STARS appeared in the heavens. Understanding this, we can see that evening could well have come, that is the time after 6 p.m. but still be the preparation day, for the Sabbath that was yet to arrive when the stars came out.

### **The Men Who Claimed The Body Of Jesus**

I said "a" man finally came forward and asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Actually, according to the Gospel of John, there were TWO men, but it seems one man was the main one who started the process and was the one who went to Pilate. The second man was Nicodemus! Yes, the same Nicodemus that came to Jesus by night, to tell Him that he and many other religious leaders KNEW He was from God (John chapter 3).

The man who went before Pilate to request the body of Jesus was a man called Joseph. From all that the Gospel writers have to say about this man, we can list these things:

1. He was from a town in Arimathea. The Bible Dictionaries say it was situated NW of Jerusalem, in the hill country of Ephraim.
2. He was a rich man.
3. He owned an empty tomb in the Jerusalem area, in which no person had been put to rest in. In other words the tomb had never been used as a burial grave.
4. It is said he looked for the coming of the Kingdom of God.
5. He was a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin council.
6. He was said to be a righteous man, who had NOT consented to the Sanhedrin's purpose and plans and deeds to kill Jesus.
7. It is also related to us that he was one of Jesus' disciples, but kept it under cover, did not relate this in a public way, because of fear of the Jews. He had not till now stood up to be counted as we say.

But now, with no person coming forward from among Jesus' disciples or immediate family, and as time had reached the evening, and the Sabbath of the 15th day was soon to begin, Joseph, says Mark, TOOK COURAGE and went to Pilate to request that he be granted Jesus' body. Joseph had obviously also talked to Nicodemus about the urgent situation for someone to claim Jesus' body, and Nicodemus would help out, as we shall shortly see.

### **Joseph Before Pilate**

There stood Joseph, in the palace of Pilate, waiting for the governor to grant permission for him to come before his presence and ask his question. Joseph was nervous, ringing his hands, being a little fidgety, his heart beating faster every minute he had to wait. He knew that by doing this action and if he was granted the body of Jesus, that all the Sanhedrin and all Judea would know the truth of him being a disciple of Jesus Christ. But keeping that fact hidden for so long a time....well now he thought, it was time to come clean, to come out in the open. It was as he thought the very least he could do, to ask for Jesus' body and lay it in a tomb of his that was

empty and had never been used. Joseph knew God was wanting him to do this, especially as not one other person was making any move to request if they could take Jesus down from the cross and bury Him.

Joseph was nervous yes, but courage had finally come to him. He knew God was with him.

Pilate summoned Joseph to appear before him. With a firm upper lip and courage in his heart, Joseph walked into Pilate's presence.

"What can I do for you," Pilate said to Joseph. "Please, governor, I request that you give me permission to take down Jesus from the cross and bury him, after our custom of the Jews."

Pilate looked somewhat puzzled. Said nothing for a few seconds. Then said words to the effect that everyone present knew he was shocked to hear that Jesus was already dead. Pilate was not even thinking about any laws of the Jews, or thinking very much about what had taken place on Golgotha that day. He was used to the fact that some people continued to live hanging on a cross for a few days or even longer, before they died. No one had said anything to him about a soldier taking a spear and thrusting it into Jesus' side and so putting an end to His life.

So now with Joseph standing before him and requesting Jesus' body, Pilate was realizing that Joseph was saying that Jesus was dead.

But it all still sounded a little strange to him, so Pilate called in the centurion that was in charge of keeping watch over the three men who had been taken to Golgotha to be crucified.

"Centurion," asked Pilate, "has this Jesus man been dead for somewhat of a time already?"

"Yes, indeed he has, governor, Jesus has been dead for a while now," replied the centurion to Pilate.

Pilate now looked back at Joseph, and said, "Very well then. You may have the body of Jesus and bury it according to your customs."

Joseph sighed a sigh of relief, silently gave thanks to God, and quickly walked out of Pilate's palace. Waiting outside for him was Nicodemus. Joseph told him that the request had been granted, and both men hurried as fast as their legs would go to the place called Golgotha, where Jesus was hanging lifelessly on His cross.

### **Jesus Is Buried**

Joseph was doing his part in all this by providing a tomb for Jesus. Nicodemus, would do his part by bringing along with him, a mixture of myrrh and aloes, to help preserve to some degree the torn and broken flesh of Jesus' body. It was not a small amount either that Nicodemus brought, it was about one hundred pounds in weight, a considerable large amount. It is possible Nicodemus had servant help to carry all this mixture of myrrh and aloes.

The two men soon arrived at the cross upon which Jesus hung. The two women, both having the name Mary, were still watching over Jesus, but from a distance. They knew Joseph and Nicodemus, and were so relieved to finally see that men were coming to take Jesus down from the cross.

Joseph and Nicodemus soon pulled out the nails from Jesus' hands and feet. Nicodemus then got busy putting the mixture of myrrh and aloes into all the wounds of Jesus' body. When that was done, Joseph was busy wrapping Jesus' arms, legs, body, and even the head, with long cloth bandage type rolls. This was how the Jews buried their dead, certainly not with a "shroud" of one piece cloth draped over the body. Remember when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, and when Lazarus came out of the tomb, Jesus told people to unwrap him, because he could not unwrap himself, as his hands had been wrapped. Lazarus could walk, because Jesus called to him and told him to come out of the tomb. So we know the legs were wrapped individually.

Jesus' dead body was wrapped like Lazarus' body had been wrapped. And Joseph with Nicodemus, were quickly off to rest Jesus in the tomb owned by Joseph. The tomb was quite close at hand we are told. Actually Jesus was crucified in a garden type place on Golgotha. Joseph had probably chosen that spot in that garden, for his resting place, upon his death, and hence had that tomb hewn out of a rock within that garden.

The two ladies who had been standing by, at a distance, ever since Jesus had been hung up on the cross, followed Joseph and Nicodemus, and they saw where they laid Jesus.

After Christ was placed in the tomb, Joseph had a huge massive rock rolled in front of the entrance. This would indicate that Joseph and Nicodemus were not alone, but had either friends, or servants with them, as two men alone could probably not roll a huge stone, unless of course the entrance to the tomb was much smaller than we imagine.

By the time all this was done, and Jesus was in the tomb, Luke records this, "It was Preparation, and Sabbath drew on" (Luke 23:54 KJV).

Just about everyone has missed how the Greek reads in this verse. The words "drew on" are, in the Greek, in the IMPERFECT tense. The imperfect tense in the New Testament Greek, is an action that has ALREADY taken place but is ALSO CONTINUING TO TAKE PLACE. What Luke actually said was "....and Sabbath HAD COME AND WAS CONTINUING TO COME!

Luke did say it was "preparation" - yes, Joseph had started all this action at evening, when evening had come. That is when he went to Pilate to request he be given the body of Christ, and the Sabbath of the 15th day was yet to arrive (Jews reckoning the start of the Sabbath when the stars appeared). But by the time he and Nicodemus put Jesus in the tomb and rolled a rock in front of the entrance, the Sabbath had already come and was continuing to come.

Stop and think. It was evening (not earlier than 6 p.m.) when Joseph went to Pilate. By the time he and Nicodemus went to Golgotha, took Jesus from off the cross, wrapped Him up (which was not just placing a one piece cloth over His body) and placed Him in the tomb, it could well have been between 8 and 9 p.m.

It was the early hours of the 15th day Sabbath, the annual Sabbath of the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when Jesus was placed in the tomb. He had previously told people that He would be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, the tomb, and would then rise again (Matt. 12:40).

Three days and three nights after being placed in the tomb, in the first hours of the 15th, the Sabbath, which was a Wednesday evening in our understanding of time today, Jesus would rise again.

And so it was, for Mark records for us, "Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene...." (Mark 16:9). The first hours of the first day of the week, as God and the Jews count days, is the first hours of what we call Saturday evening. Jesus was resurrected to immortal life, within the first hours of the first day of the week. I shall have more to say on that when we arrive at that section of the Gospels.

The two ladies from Galilee, saw where they put Jesus to rest. They were so pleased they had waited near the cross of Jesus, and saw all that Joseph and Nicodemus had done, especially where they could find Jesus, for they had by this time determined between themselves, that they would buy and prepare spices after that 15th day Sabbath was over (which was a Thursday), buy and prepare them on the Friday, rest on the weekly Sabbath (our Saturday), and then come back to the tomb very early on the morning of the first day of the week (our Sunday) and anoint Jesus' body with the spices. How they were going to roll away the massive stone that now covered the entrance to the tomb, they just never gave it a thought, for they were too exited in knowing where they had laid Jesus, the one they loved so much.

### **The Priests And Pharisees Plan More Evil Work**

It was not long after Joseph and Nicodemus had placed Jesus in Joseph's tomb that word got around to the members of the Sanhedrin and chief priests and Pharisees, what the two men had done. They were soon gathering together, even in that night of the now 15th day of Nisan, to determine where they would go from this point, for they now realized, at least some of Jesus' followers were not about to "go away" and forget about this man called they believed was the Son of God. These conniving, conspiring men were once more together in secret to plan their next move, in making sure the disciples of Jesus would be halted and stopped in whatever work they were going to do with the dead Jesus.

Those men would go very early in the morning, just after sun up, to Pilate. They stood before the governor and said to him, "Sir, we now remember how this Messiah imposter, said while still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Therefore we beseech you, and request, that you order the tomb to be made secure until at least the third day from last night when he was placed in it. We want you to order this be done in case his disciples go to the tomb and steal away his body, and so go around telling the people that he did rise from the dead as he said he would. And if they do this, the last fraud will be worse than the first fraud."

Pilate thought for a moment, and to keep himself on the good side of those Jewish leaders, whom he knew had great influence with the people, and did not want any riot to take place with the people, said to them, "Alright, take a guard of soldiers; go, make the tomb as secure as you can."

So off they happily went, and they put a cement like substance between the tomb entrance and the stone rolled in front of it, to seal it up tight. And they set soldiers around the tomb to keep anyone from trying to enter the tomb and steal away Jesus' body.

They left, feeling they had now fully and completely sealed the fate of Jesus, and with that, the fate of all His disciples. Finally and at last, once and for all, they thought, they were rid of this Messiah imposter and His disciples would soon disappear into the forest and fade away (Matt. 27:57-66; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42).



## CHAPTER 21

### JESUS RISES FROM THE DEAD

#### Ladies Prepare To Anoint Jesus' Body

The two ladies both called Mary (Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses and James), told other ladies what they had witnessed that evening of the 15th day.

They told other ladies where Joseph and Nicodemus had buried Jesus, in a tomb in the garden of Golgotha. It was probably Mary Magdalene's idea to buy spices, prepare them, and come and anoint Jesus in the tomb.

The anointing was a kind of preserving a body for a while, so it would not decompose as quickly as not being anointed with the special spices. This shows that they never expected Jesus to rise from the dead. Indeed none of the disciples were expecting such a miracle to happen.

It was now the annual Sabbath, the 15th of Nisan, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It seems none of the ladies had in stock in their homes any of the spices needed to anoint Jesus' body. They would have to buy them after the annual Sabbath of the 15th of Nisan (which was a Thursday), was over.

Friday, a work day, the second day of the feast of Unleavened Bread would be the day they would purchase the spices and prepare them. This they did, then rested on the weekly Sabbath (Saturday) according to the fourth commandment (see Mark 16:1 with Luke 23:56).

They were now all ready, very excited, with the thought of rising very early the first day of the week, our Sunday, a work day, and head for the tomb in which Jesus was laying and anoint Him with the spices.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> **EDITOR'S NOTE:** If we read Luke 23:53-56 we can clearly see the order of events and see there were two Sabbaths - the annual Sabbath (Nisan 15 on a Thursday) and the weekly Sabbath between the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

“And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. And that day was the preparation **[Wednesday]**, and the Sabbath **[Thursday Nisan 15, 1st Holy Day of Unleavened Bread]** drew on. And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.

“And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments **[This preparation wouldn't have happened until after the annual Sabbath so it happened on Friday Nisan 16]**; and [then they] rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment **[The weekly Sabbath - Saturday Nisan 17]**”.

## **Jesus is Resurrected!**

The ladies had bought and prepared the spices on Friday, and they had rested the seventh day, in accordance with the fourth commandment of God's great Ten Commandments. That Sabbath was now over, the sun had set, it was getting very close to three days and three night, or 72 hours, that Jesus had been placed in the tomb. Darkness was closing in, the stars were about to shine in the heaven above. It was a pretty normal Saturday evening we would say, for most people that is. But in that Golgotha garden, and in one particular tomb, something was about to happen that was far from normal, in fact it had NEVER happened before, in the history of mankind being on the earth.

God in heaven above, was watching over His Son Jesus in the tomb where He lay. Jesus had died in complete FAITH that His Father in heaven would, three days and three nights later, RESURRECT Him from the dead, but not to just being once more a physical man, but to being GLORIFIED and made IMMORTAL, made eternal, having once more the GLORY that He had when He was with the Father before becoming a human being (that was made clear to us in Jesus' prayer to the Father during the night He was betrayed - John chapter 17). No other human person who ever lived had ever been made IMMORTAL! Some had been raised from the dead, like when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, but not one single individual from the time of Adam and Eve, had ever been made ETERNALLY IMMORTAL.

The time had COME....it was now 72 hours since Jesus was placed in the tomb. The Almighty Father in heaven said, "LET IT BE DONE. LET MY SON LIVE AGAIN WITH THE GLORY HE HAD BEFORE HE BECAME A HUMAN BEING!!"

Glory FILLED the tomb where Jesus lay. The Father filled the tomb with the POWER of His Holy Spirit....and in one split second, Jesus' literal body was made IMMORTAL! Jesus opened His eyes. He was ALIVE once more! He had been dead, had NOT EXISTED for three days and three nights. He had died in full FAITH, given His spirit over into the hands of the Father in heaven, and He was NOW ALIVE again! His body was filled with eternal GLORY. He now once more had the power and majesty to appear as flesh and bone, and to vanish away into the unseen world of SPIRIT!

God and the angels live in a different dimension than we humans do. We are ONLY physical. But God, Jesus once said, is SPIRIT (see John chapter 4), meaning He has a Spirit body, eternal and full of GLORY. His world is a world made of Spirit. The heavenly Jerusalem, and all it contains, with all the angels and beings in that world that God has created (last chapters of the book of Revelation) is made of Spirit. And is, unless God chooses otherwise, not able to be seen by the human eyes. God's face is like the SUN, and even more. We are told in the Bible that Moses once asked God to show Himself to him, in His GLORY form. God said He would show Moses His glory form, but only His back parts, for God said to Moses, "Mankind cannot look on my face and live" (see Exodus 33:11-23).

Then God can, if He so desires, make Himself into physical matter, of flesh and bone. He can then appear to humans, talk to them, eat a meal with them, have them touch Him. We see this in the Old Testament, in such chapters as Genesis 18, where God appeared to Abraham, even ate a meal with him.

Jesus was again alive, but alive with the GLORY of IMMORTALITY. He was laying in the tomb wrapped all over with cloth, arms, legs, torso, even His head. No problem, in His now glorified state, He simply came through all the cloth around His glorified body, just in a sense walked through it all, or as we might think of it today in our space age....He beamed Himself through it and beamed Himself back into physical form of flesh and bone. He stood there inside the tomb, and glorified the Father in heaven for His watchful love and power.

It did not matter that the great stone was still over the entrance to the tomb, and was sealed shut by the soldiers that Pilate had sent on the request of the Jewish religious leaders. Jesus just "beamed" Himself, so to speak, through the walls of the tomb, and stood outside in His invisible form, the soldiers guarding the tomb, completely oblivious to what had taken place.

There was singing and joyful praising going on by all the angels and created beings in heaven. They were praising the heavenly Father for His glory and His power. Jesus had overcome SIN and DEATH. And Christ was the very FIRST of millions of more humans that one day would also be raised to eternal IMMORTAL GLORY! Yes, this was a time to praise and give the Father great glory.

We are not told what Jesus did the rest of that night, but then we are not told what Jesus did on many days (only some events we are told) while still on earth after His resurrection, and before going back to heaven to sit on the Father's right hand.

### **The Ladies Come To The Tomb**

From all the Gospel accounts we learn that specifically planning to come to the tomb was Mary Magdalene, from whom Christ had cast out seven demons. She was as we have seen one of His most faithful followers. The other Mary was the mother of James and Joses. Mark informs us that a lady by the name of Salome was with them. Salome was the wife of Zebedee, and the mother of James and John. From Luke (chap. 14:10) Joanna, wife of Chuza, Herod's steward (see Luke 8:3), was also with them. Luke only mentions the two Mary's but says other women were there also. This could mean the women Salome and Joanna, but it could have been possible that more than those FOUR women were part of the party who were going to visit Jesus' tomb.

The two Sabbaths had come and gone, the one Sabbath of the 15th of Nisan which was a Thursday, and the weekly Sabbath had come and gone. The ladies had no idea that Jesus had risen from the dead in the early hours of what we call Saturday evening, which to the Jews was the early hours of the first day of the week. Matthew says, "After the Sabbath, and as it began to illuminate or grow light towards the first of the week...." (Matt. 28:1).

Albert Barnes, in his famous Bible Commentary, explains it all this way:

"The word 'dawn' is not necessarily in the originals. The word here properly means, as the first day 'approached,' or drew on, without specifying the precise time. Mark says (16:1, 2) that it was after 'the Sabbath was past and very early in the morning, at the rising of the sun,' i.e., not that the sun was risen, but that it was ABOUT TO RISE, or at the early break of day. Luke says (24:10), that it was very early; in the Greek, DEEP TWILIGHT, or when there was scarcely any light. John (20:1) says, it was 'early, when it was yet DARK,' i.e., that is, it was not YET full daylight, or the sun had NOT risen. The

time when they came therefore, was at the break of day, when the sun was about to rise, but while it was yet so dark as to render objects OBSCURE, or not DISTINCTLY visible" (Barnes' Notes on the New Testament, single volume edition).

Yes, the ladies had prepared the anointing preservative spices before the weekly Sabbath, had rested on the weekly Sabbath according to the commandment of the Lord, and could hardly sleep all that Saturday night, waiting with great anticipation the time when they would set off for the tomb where Jesus lay. And as John clearly tells us, they were up and walking to the tomb WHILE it was YET DARK, when people and objects could not be well seen.

Now, it would seem, as they were getting close to the tomb, they started to realize in a practical way, that they would not have the physical strength, even among all of them together, to push away the great stone that covered the entrance to the tomb. And besides that fact, there were soldiers guarding the tomb, so how were they going to get permission to enter the tomb and embalm Jesus' body?

They discussed these two problems, what seemed then, as impossible obstacles to their dreams and plans of showing loving care towards Jesus. They did not know how they were going to overcome those two hindrances to what they wanted to do, but they kept their faith in knowing that somehow God would provide the answer and make their loving deed come to reality.

This is a wonderful example of faith in action, a faith that could remove mountains, but this time in the specific, a faith that could remove a huge stone and remove soldiers guarding it.

### **God Had Answered The Ladies Prayers**

God in heaven saw the faith and love of those women. He had made it all possible for them to be the first to see inside the NOW empty tomb. It is Matthew who records it for us as it had happened. Sometime BEFORE the ladies ever reached the tomb, Matthew put it this way as translated in the KJV, "And behold, there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men" (Matt. 28:2-4).

The key here is the little word "was", the fourth word in as given in the KJV. In the Greek this word is in the "aorist" tense, meaning a single action done and completed in the PAST!

What Matthew actually wrote and said was, "And behold there HAD BEEN a great earthquake...."

Sometime AFTER Jesus' resurrection in the early hours of Saturday evening or the first day of the week (as God counts the beginning of days) and BEFORE the ladies arrived at the tomb, while it was YET DARK, on that Sunday morning, of still the same first day of the week, an angel from God had come down, the soldiers fainted at his sight, and lay as if dead on the ground. The angel then rolled away the stone to the entrance of the tomb. All of this was done because God was honoring the faith

and love those women He knew were coming to the tomb that early, but dark, Sunday morning.

### **Jesus is Not in the Tomb!**

The ladies were getting all uptight but excited at the same time, as they were coming around the last corner towards the tomb. When they turned this corner the tomb would be in front of them, but as they thought so would be the stone in the entrance way and the soldiers guarding it all.

What a SHOCK came across all faces, mouths dropped open, eyes blinked twice and three times, they froze in their tracks. None could believe what they were seeing. None could speak for a few seconds. It was as if it was all a dream. Still no one saying a word, they slowly moved closer to the tomb. Finally they realized it was all very true what they were seeing....the stone had been rolled away, the entrance to the tomb was OPEN, and the soldiers keeping guard....well they were laying on the ground as if they were dead men.

The ladies now looked at each other, puzzled, yes, having joy in their hearts, yes, but also they were scared to some point. For how on earth they thought and said to each other, could this be possible. Then thoughts crossed their mind that some men had already come, killed the soldiers, rolled away the stone to the entrance, and had stolen Jesus' body. Some, with this thought in their minds, fell to their knees and started to weep in sorrow.

It was all too much for Mary Magdalene, she could take no more of all this. She had been faithful in staying with Jesus all the while as He was being crucified on the cross, she had stayed around when all others had forsaken and left Jesus dead on the cross. She had waited and had seen that finally Joseph and Nicodemus had come back to take Jesus down from the tree of death. She had followed them to where they placed Jesus in this tomb. She had helped prepare the embalming spices on the Friday, had patiently waited through the hours of the weekly Sabbath. She had risen while it was yet dark, on the first day of the week, and was now standing here in front of the tomb. The stone had been rolled away, the soldiers were as if dead men. Someone she thought had come and taken Jesus out of the tomb and now no one knew where they had lain Him.

It was all just too much for this Mary. Running with tears falling down her cheeks, away she went, back to Jerusalem, crying her heart out. She ran and she ran, finally making it to where Peter and the disciple that Jesus loved (which most believe it to be John who is relating this to us) were staying.

With tears streaming down her face, she said to them, "My heart is breaking. I've been to where they laid Jesus in the tomb. Someone has taken the Lord out of the tomb, and I am in great agony of mind, for I do not know where they have laid Him" (John 20:1-2).

Peter and the other disciple could really not believe her. They were thinking she was just too emotionally upset at all that had transpired over the last three day. They were to Mary dragging their feet as we might say. She could see they were not really believing her. With another outburst of loud crying, she turned and started back as fast as her legs could go, back to the tomb. Maybe she thought, if she just waited at

the tomb someone would eventually come along who would know what had happened to Jesus' body and where it had been taken.

### **Meanwhile At The Tomb**

Back at the tomb, where the other ladies were still in shock and amazement, still very puzzled about what they were seeing and what it all meant. SUDDENLY they saw, sitting on the huge stone that had been over the entrance, the ANGEL of the Lord that had come down previously and had rolled away the stone. He was bright and glorious....they were at first very afraid, but the angel soon calmed them down to a degree by saying to them, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He has risen, as He said. Come, see the place where He lay. Then go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead, and He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. Yes, I have told you what is truth" (Matt. 20:5-7).

The angel said those words and then he was gone, just vanished out of their sight. The ladies looked at one another wondering if they really had seen and heard what they thought they had just seen and heard. They were not sure, could it really be true they thought. They decided they must enter the tomb and see if Jesus was inside or was really gone. So inside they went, looking around none could see the body of Jesus. Had they indeed seen an angel? Did they indeed hear that angel say Jesus had risen from the dead? The whole thing for them was perplexing. Then as they were thinking and looking, behold SUDDENLY ONCE MORE....not just one angel, but this time TWO angels appeared next to them, in dazzling apparel! They were frightened out of their minds, and bowed their heads to the ground. Once more they did not know what to think, by now it had all become a little too much, their minds were in a spin. Then one of the angels spoke:

"Do not be amazed or frightened. Why do you seek the living among the dead? You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has RISEN, He is not here; see the place where they laid Him. Remember how He told you, while He was still in Galilee, that the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise from being dead. He had RISEN! Go, tell his disciples and Peter, that He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see Him" (Luke 24:4-7; Mark 16:5-7).

The ladies were astonished, still very unnerved by all they had seen and heard. Trembling, they quickly left the tomb. They spoke not a word to each other, but started back to Jerusalem, determined to say nothing about what they had witnessed, for they feared people would think they had gone insane.

As they were just a little way from the tomb, who should they see coming back towards them but Mary Magdalene. She came closer and in passing the other women now returning to Jerusalem, she said to them, "No one will believe what I told them, that someone has taken Jesus out of the tomb, and put Him somewhere else....they just will not believe me."

The other ladies said not a word to her, but passed her by as they set out back to Jerusalem.





**An angel tells the women that Jesus has risen from the dead**

### **Mary Magdalene The First To See The Risen Jesus**

Mary reached the tomb still weeping. She looked inside and saw the two angels in white, that the other ladies had just seen. They were sitting where Jesus' body had been laid to rest. One where Jesus' head had been and one where His feet had been. The angels saw Mary looking in and said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She replied, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have put Him."

As she said this she felt that someone was behind her, turning around she saw a man. It was Jesus Himself, but she did not know it was Him. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?"

"Well sir," Mary replied, thinking she was speaking to the gardener, "if you have carried him away, please tell me where you have put Him, and I will take Him away with me, and take good care of Him."

Jesus then said to her, "Mary." Her heart dropped to the bottom of her feet, then sprang back up again.

She exclaimed with the biggest smile anyone could possibly give, "Rabboni!" (a Hebrew word). Which meaning is "TEACHER." She KNEW, YES SHE KNEW....IT WAS JESUS! How her heart leapt for joy, she was floating on air, up on cloud nine as we say. She wanted to dance around, dance the fastest and most joyful dance any Jewish girl could possibly do. She wanted to go over and touch Him, hug Him, just to make sure this was a reality, that what she saw with her eyes and heard with her hearing....that it really was her TEACHER, her MASTER, her LORD.



Mary Magdalene was the first to see the resurrected Jesus

Jesus knew she wanted to come and touch Him, and so said to her, "Do not hold or touch me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them that I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God" (John 20:11-18).

We are not given much more than the words above, to explain to us this fact that Jesus had to ascend to the Father before any physical human could touch Him. I will discuss it more as to what it may have been all about, in a short while.

Mary was ecstatic, overjoyed, she had seen the Lord and He had talked to her. Mark is the one Gospel writer that records that Mary Magdalene was the first human person that Jesus appeared to. Part of the reason as to why it was to Mary Magdalene that He first appeared must be the fact that she not only loved Him so much, but was probably the leader among the women to (1) stay near His cross all the time, even after His death. (2) follow Joseph and Nicodemus to see where they laid Jesus (3) determine to buy spices and prepare them and come and anoint Jesus' body, while it was yet dark in those early hours of the daylight portion of the first day of the week.

All of this, what took place as the sun was about to rise on that first day of the week, during the feast of Unleavened Bread in 30 A.D. is a wonderful testimony to the devotion and love of some of the women among Jesus' disciples.

Mary Magdalene was off as fast as she could go, like being chased by a wild bear. She was off to do as Jesus had instructed her to do. The joy she was feeling made her legs move and run like never before in her life. Soon she had caught up to the other ladies who were already making their way back to Jerusalem. She told them what had happened to her at the tomb, and how Jesus had appeared to her, and talked to her. All were now beginning to see they had not been in a dream, not imagining things. They realized too many things had happened, and so it was indeed a reality. They then recalled how Jesus had spoken in the past about how He must suffer at the hands of sinners, be put to death, but rise again after three days.

It all began to click together for them, their minds becoming clearer and clearer on everything. Yes, now they knew it was all true what they had witnessed, they now knew Jesus was ALIVE, that He had been RAISED from the dead, and was alive forever more. They had a deep fearful awe for God and His power and great joy at the same time.

### **Jesus Appears To All The Women**

All the ladies who had come out early that Sunday morning and had experienced all that they saw and heard, and Mary Magdalene now having seen Jesus, were busy talking about it all, and relating many stories of Jesus as they had in the past followed Him at times when He preached and taught and healed people. Oh, how busy they were talking about it all as they made their way back to Jerusalem to tell everything that had happened to Jesus' other disciples, especially to the eleven. They had no idea what was about to take place.

Suddenly, out of the blue, Jesus met and appeared to them, saying, "Hail!" How splendid, how grand, how royal it was. All of the ladies knew it was Jesus, no question about it. They all ran up to Him and falling at His feet, taking hold of them, they worshipped Him.

Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brethren to go into Galilee, and there they will see me" (Matt. 28:8-10).

You will notice when Jesus appeared to all the ladies, He allowed them to touch Him! Yes, they took HOLD of His feet!

He would not, shortly before, allow Mary Magdalene to touch Him, for He had said to her that He had not yet ascended to His Father in heaven, but NOW He does allow them all to touch Him. There is ONLY one answer. In the time when He appeared to Mary Magdalene and the time He appeared to all the women making their way back to Jerusalem, He had ascended to heaven, appeared before the Father and had returned to earth.

### **Jesus The First Of The First Fruits**

What seems like a strange happening, Jesus going to heaven, and back again in a relatively short time, before anyone was allowed to touch Him, may be answered in the symbolism of what the priests did at this time, even on this day, Sunday morning, in the Temple.

God through Moses, had given instruction to Israel that the new year harvest of barley grain could not be started to be gathered in UNTIL the first cutting of it had been done and presented or offered in the Temple by the priests, on the first day of the week, DURING the feast of Unleavened Bread.

It is also very interesting that the Sadducees, cut the first sheaf of the new barley grain harvest AFTER the weekly Sabbath had ENDED, hence a first day of the week cutting, or what we call Saturday evening. Then they ground it up, put it in a basket or container of some kind, and waved it around while holding it, in a Temple ritual early on the first day of the week (our Sunday) during the feast of Unleavened Bread.

All of this it would seem, Jesus fulfilled. He was resurrected in the first hours of the first day of the week, or Saturday evening, after the weekly Sabbath had ended. As Mark records for us, "Now when He was risen early the first day of the week....."(Mark 16:9). Risen within the first hours of the first day, which in God's counting of days, begins at evening time (Genesis 1). Indeed it is just not possible that the disciples did not know WHEN Jesus had been resurrected to life. Many must have asked Him, and He must have told them, for there would be no reason for Him not to tell them.

The apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15, that Jesus is the FIRST of the FIRSTFRUITS, and others will be at His coming. All in the first resurrection at the coming of Jesus in glory back to this earth, will be "firstfruits" to God the Father. The day of Pentecost is to be held on the first day of the week, our Sunday.

Jesus ascended to heaven, to the Father, on the first day of the week, and back again on that same day. Before he ascended no human person could touch Him, but after ascending He did allow people to touch Him.

The whole symbolism is just to coincidental to ignore. Jesus was the wave sheaf in type. He was the FIRST to ever be raised to glorified, immortal life. He was the first of the firstfruits to God the Father from the human population of the earth. Those in the first resurrection will be "firstfruits" according to the apostle Paul. The feast of Pentecost, which pictures the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the first New Testament church, is on the first day of the week.

Jesus fulfilled the wave sheaf offering. It was being offered in the Temple right at the time He was ascending and descending to the Father and back again to the earth, on that morning of the first day of the week, during the feast of Unleavened Bread. He was in heaven for that short period of time, to be accepted as the spiritual human/resurrected wave sheaf before God the Father.

The ladies who had come to that tomb, that early morning, were now exhilarated, elated, stimulated with heartened spirit of mind. They had seen and touched the risen Christ. They were told to go and tell Jesus' other disciples who were in Jerusalem. This they would do gladly, but would anyone believe their words?

## CHAPTER 22

### MORE DISCIPLES SEE JESUS

#### **The Ladies Tell The Eleven that Jesus Appeared To Them**

The group of ladies that had come out that early Sunday morning were close to being back in Jerusalem. In the meantime, the soldiers that had been struck unconscious by the angel who came to roll back the great stone over the entrance to the tomb that Jesus had been put in, were now awake. A few other soldiers had arrived to take their shift of guarding the tomb. They were all looking into the empty tomb, and realizing Jesus was gone. They, of course, had no idea what had taken place. They hurried off and made it back into Jerusalem before the ladies did. Straight to the chief priest they went, telling them the tomb that Jesus was in, was empty, and the stone had been rolled away from covering the entrance.

The chief priests were in shock, the worst possible thing as far as they were concerned had actually come to pass. They immediately called for the members of the great Jewish Sanhedrin to assemble. After some debate on what now to do in this situation, they decided to give money to the soldiers and have them say, "Go, tell people, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were sleeping.' And if all what has taken place comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him with some story that will keep you out of trouble."

And so the soldiers took the money and did as they were directed. The Gospel writer Matthew says that, that story has been spread among the Jews to this very day (Matt. 28:11-15).

The ladies finally arrived back in the city of Jerusalem. Straightaway they found where the eleven apostles were staying.

"We have seen Jesus," they excitedly and loudly proclaimed. "He is alive! He has been resurrected to glorious immortality," they continued.

The apostles looked at each other, then back at the ladies, saying nothing. The women could sense they did not believe them.

"Jesus appeared to us out of the blue, and we worshipped before His feet, actually holding and touching His feet," the women shouted back at the apostles. "It is true, He is ALIVE, He is ALIVE," some of the women proclaimed.

Some of the eleven men finally said, "No, it cannot be, you have imagined it all. You have been so emotional since Jesus was crucified, that you just think you have seen Jesus. If He has been resurrected, why would He appear to you first, and not to us, His chosen eleven apostles? You are all just dreaming!" (Luke 24:9-11).

Mary Magdalene looked over at Peter and John, and said, "I was there standing and weeping as I looked into the tomb, and it was empty, then two angels were there and they told me Jesus had risen from the dead. Then I saw, who, at first, I thought was the gardener, and I asked him that if he had taken Jesus, to tell me where he was. He then spoke, and I knew it was Jesus. And it was! I'm telling you Jesus has been resurrected, and is ALIVE. Go and see, the tomb is EMPTY!"



Peter looked at John and said, "Alright John, let's go to the tomb and see if what happened to the women and Mary Magdalene happens to us."

Both men were pretty good runners, but John was the better. He outran Peter to the tomb. Looking in he saw the linen cloths lying there but no body of Jesus. John did not go into the tomb. Simon Peter arrived, and he did go inside the tomb. He saw also the linen cloths lying there. The cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head was there but neatly rolled up and lying in another place in the tomb. Jesus' body certainly was NOT there.

John, finally decided he needed to go inside the tomb also, and he did. For John it was all proved as the women said. He knew within himself, that Jesus indeed had been resurrected to life.

None of the apostles yet understood the Scriptures that Jesus would rise from the dead. But John knew in his heart that Jesus was indeed alive.

Peter on the other hand, though having to admit Jesus was not in the tomb, still could not believe Jesus had been resurrected to immortal life.

They both returned to the other nine apostles. John kept his inner belief to himself. Peter was not convinced that Jesus was alive and had appeared to the women. The other nine could not be convinced either no matter how the women insisted it was true. The apostles went to their homes or places they were staying in Jerusalem (John 20:3-10). And Simon Peter was alone for a while, to think upon all he had seen and heard from the women who had been to the tomb earlier that morning.

### **Jesus Appears On The Road To Emmaus**

Later in that day two disciples were going to the village named Emmaus, about seven miles west of Jerusalem. They were talking to each other about all the things that had happened, from Jesus' betrayal in the garden of Gethsemane, during the night of the 14th of Nisan, to the crucifixion on the afternoon of the 14th, to the guard watch being set in front of the tomb in the early hours of the 15th of Nisan. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus drew near to them and started to walk along the road with them. But their eyes, we are told, were kept from recognizing Him.

Jesus said to them, "What is this conversation about, that you are having with each other."

One of them, by the name of Cleopas, answered, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem this Passover feast time, who does not know the things that have happened in the last number of days?"

And Jesus said, "What things?" And answering him they replied, "Why, concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deeds and words before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one, the Messiah, the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since all this happened, since he was crucified, placed in a tomb, and a watch of soldiers, set guard over it, to keep people from taking Jesus' body. Moreover, some women of our company, have amazed us today. They were at the tomb early this morning and did not find his body in the tomb; and they said they had seen angels

that told them that Jesus was alive again. Some of those with us in Jerusalem went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said, empty, but Jesus did not appear to them. So we doubt their story is true that the women told us in saying he had appeared them."

Jesus now looked at them with pity and amazement at the same time, and said, "O foolish men and so slow of heart to believe ALL that the prophets have spoken! Was it not written, and was it not God's plan, that the Christ should SUFFER these things and then enter into GLORY?"

Then Jesus, beginning with the books of Moses (first five books of the Bible), and all the prophets, interpreted to them ALL the Scriptures concerning Himself. It was a lesson in Bible study like they had never heard before, their hearts beating faster and faster with every explanation of all that was written about the Messiah Christ that was to come.

They walked on and got closer to the village of Emmaus. Jesus made out that He was going to walk further, but they constrained Him, saying, "Please stay with us, for it is towards evening and the day is far spent." So He went in to stay with them.

The two men prepared a meal. When Jesus sat down to eat with them, He took the large loaf of bread and blessed it and broke it in pieces, and gave some to each man (remember in those days they did not have "sliced" bread, so people at meal times literally had to break the bread into pieces).

Immediately their eyes were opened and they KNEW it was JESUS! Then He just VANISHED out of their sight!

Oh they were ecstatic with joy and praise. They said to each other, "Did not our hearts BURN within us when he talked to us and opened to us the Scriptures? Yes indeed! Praise be to God, we have SEEN Jesus. He is ALIVE!"

Those two men forgot about eating, they were not hungry any more, eating a meal was now the furthest thing from their minds. They put their sandals back on and headed as fast as they could go back to Jerusalem. They knew they had to tell the eleven apostles that Jesus had appeared to them.

When they got back to Jerusalem they found ten of them in one place again. Much had happened they were not aware of. The soldiers had been telling people that some of Jesus' disciples had stolen away His body to make it look like He had been resurrected. Of course what the women that morning had witnessed had not just been kept to themselves or the eleven, it was now pretty common knowledge as to what they said they had seen and heard, so to the people hearing the soldier's story, they thought that Jesus' disciples were indeed up to trickery. Many Jews were very angry and ready to do harm to the eleven apostles. They thought it would be safer for them to all be together in one room, with the doors and windows barred shut.

Then, what the two men coming back to Jerusalem did not know was that before they arrived and before the apostles were together as one group again, Jesus had appeared to Simon Peter.

We are NOT told anywhere in the New Testament exactly when and how and what was said between Jesus and Peter. We are only told that Peter had seen Jesus.



Peter was still in doubt about everything, though he saw for himself that the tomb was empty, he still was not convinced by the women that Jesus had been resurrected to eternal immortal life. Sometime before the two men arrived back in Jerusalem from Emmaus, it would seem Jesus appeared to Peter, and so ended Peter's doubts about all the events that had taken place that Sunday during the feast of Unleavened Bread.

The two men from Emmaus came running into where the apostles were gathered, and before they could get a word out about Jesus appearing and talking with them, the apostles, with loud excited voices said, "The Lord HAS RISEN indeed, and has appeared to Simon (Peter)!"

Then the two men told the ten apostles (Thomas was not with them for some reason) the fascinating episode that they had been part of, and how their eyes had been opened to recognize Jesus when He had blessed and broke the bread.

There was by now, little doubt in the minds of all those disciples in that room in Jerusalem, that Jesus was alive once more, and was alive in a glorified immortal sense (Luke 24:13-35).

### **Jesus Appears To Them In Their Closed Up Room**

John records that it was the same first day of the week, and at evening, of that same first day. Now, you are thinking how can this be possible, when God starts a day at evening (Genesis 1)? Should John not have written it was the SECOND day of the week and at evening?

There are two reasons why John wrote it the way he did. First, it could well have been that John was using ROMAN time (12 midnight to 12 midnight for a day, as most of us in our countries that we live in, do). Then that evening of the first day, would indeed in Roman time language still be the first day of the week.

On the other hand if John was using Jewish or God's counting time for a day, there are times when the Almighty Himself counts the EVENING as PART OF the PRECEDING day. We find an example of this in Exodus 12:18, 19. God is talking about the feast of Unleavened Bread (verse 17), and as this and many other Scriptures prove and teach, the Israelites were to eat no leaven, but only unleavened bread for 7 days, from the start of the 15th (at evening time) to the end of the 21st (at evening time) of the first month of Nisan or Abib. But in this verse in Exodus 12, God puts it this way to them, "In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at EVEN, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month, at even. Seven days shall no leaven be found in your houses....in all your habitations shall you eat unleavened bread" (Exod. 12:18, 19).

We know from verses like Leviticus 23:6, that the feast of Unleavened Bread was for 7 days, from the 15th to the 21st inclusive. During those days they were to eat unleavened bread only, seven days of no leaven bread but only unleavened bread.

Yes, in this instance, the evening was PART OF the previous day. God can do things like this you know, if He wishes. He can throw a curve ball now and again among all the straight fast balls, the basic true balls. Genesis 1 is the basic true ball of how God counts days 99% OF THE TIME, but now and then He pulls a curve ball, just to keep you on your toes.

It was the evening time of the first day of the week, and the eleven, well actually only ten (because Thomas we are told was not there with them, for whatever reason, which we are not told) plus the two from Emmaus were all together in a room that had the doors shut, bolted tight. They were there for fear of the Jews.

There they were talking over the great and wonderful events that had taken place in the last 12 plus hours. Then....just there....no doors opened, Jesus STOOD IN THE MIDST of them! He said, "Peace be with you." Immediately He showed them His hands with the nail hole scars and the gash in His side where the soldier's spear had been thrust. They knew it was Jesus and not some demon playing tricks. They were delighted to see the Lord. Jesus again said to them, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." And after saying this He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."



**Jesus out of nowhere appears in the midst of the disciples**

Maybe sounds a little strange to you. Jesus breathed on them as typifying that the Holy Spirit had been with them in many ways in the past, for that set them apart from those Jews who could not understand because it was not given to them to understand. Then the breathing on them for the Holy Spirit signified the Holy Spirit would be continually with them, and even as a direct begetting IN their mind on the coming day of Pentecost. And all of that we shall soon find out about as we proceed through this Bible Story in the book of Acts.

What about Jesus saying that what sins they retain shall be retained and what they forgive shall be forgiven?

When is it that ministers or disciples of Jesus have the power to retain or forgive sins. Probably in the main when they are leading someone to baptism, or having to determine the attitude of someone when they request to be baptized, for baptism is the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ. People who are going to baptize in the name of Jesus, must, with the help of the Holy Spirit, determine the person or persons have truly come to understand what being a disciple of Christ means, and that they understand sin, and what they are requesting to be forgiven from. Sometimes people are ready for baptism and sometimes they are not. If they are, then sins will be forgiven. If they are not ready, then sins will be retained, until they are ready for baptism.

Jesus was telling those disciples that the Holy Spirit would be guiding them as they worked with, served, helped, and led others towards baptism and salvation.

Thomas, called the Twin, was not with them that evening when Jesus came, so they had to tell him later that they had seen the Lord. But Thomas said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the print marks of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe!" (John 20:19-25).

Would Thomas get his chance to do what he said was the only way that he would believe that Jesus was alive from the dead? We shall see in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 23

### THE DISCIPLES FINALLY BELIEVE JESUS IS IMMORTALLY ALIVE

#### Thomas Gets To See Jesus

The Gospel of John says it was "eight days later." Now the Bible uses "inclusive" counting and it uses "exclusive" counting. If John was using "inclusive" counting then that first day, when Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene, the other women, to Peter, and then the other nine disciples, was day number one....eight days later was then a another Sunday. If John was using "exclusive" counting, then day number one was a Monday and day number eight was a Monday.

So either a Sunday or Monday, ALL eleven disciples, including Thomas, were together in the same room as before, with the doors (the Jews were still in an angry mood towards them) shut tight. But the doors shut, made no difference for Jesus. He was now glorified, and doors being shut....well He had no need of doors. He could appear anywhere He desired. Those born of God, made immortal, have the power to beam themselves wherever they will, shall we say, de-molecule their atoms as invisible and put those atoms back together as physical, wherever and whenever they desire.

The eleven disciples were together behind closed doors, and in the blink of an eye, Jesus stood among them, and said, "Peace be with you."

The apostles were STARTLED and even frightened that they thought they were seeing a spirit or a ghost.

Here we need to understand a few things that the Bible in an overall ways teaches. We can see in the Bible that God has the power to make Himself flesh and bone (it was God that came to Abraham and had a meal with him, in Genesis 18), and God can show His glorified form, His back parts (because no man can live if they saw His glorified face and front parts (see Exodus 33:11-23), to a human, if He so chooses.

Angels, the good righteous ones, who obey and serve God, can also appear to humans as flesh and bone. We have many examples of this throughout the Bible. And Paul told us to entertain strangers, for in so doing some have entertained angels and did not know it (Hebrews 13:2). The other two person that came with the Lord to Abraham (Genesis 18) were angels. They went on to Sodom and Gomorrah. They actually took hold of Lot at one point and pulled him back into the house (see Genesis 19:10).

Angels can then transform themselves into flesh and bone if they need to. But the fallen angels, or those known as "demons" in the Bible, are NEVER ever said to be able to do such a transformation, as to become flesh and bone. They can only appear to mankind as a "spirit" or "ghost" type. And they have and still do, appear to people as a "spirit." If you were able, or if they allowed you to walk up to them and reach out to touch them, you would touch nothing, your hand or arm would just pass right through them, come out the other side, and you would feel nothing.

God has NOT given the RIGHT or the POWER for fallen angels or demons to appear as flesh and bone, and we can be mighty thankful He had not, for they do

enough evil damage on this earth as it is, without having the power to transform themselves into flesh and bone. Just think what a mess, much bigger and faster than we could ever imagine, we would be in, if demon spirits could appear as flesh and bone people. We would never know which human was really a demon spirit. That is a frightening thought just to imagine, but praise the Lord He has never allowed demon spirits to appear as flesh and bone humans, only as "ghost" type phantoms.

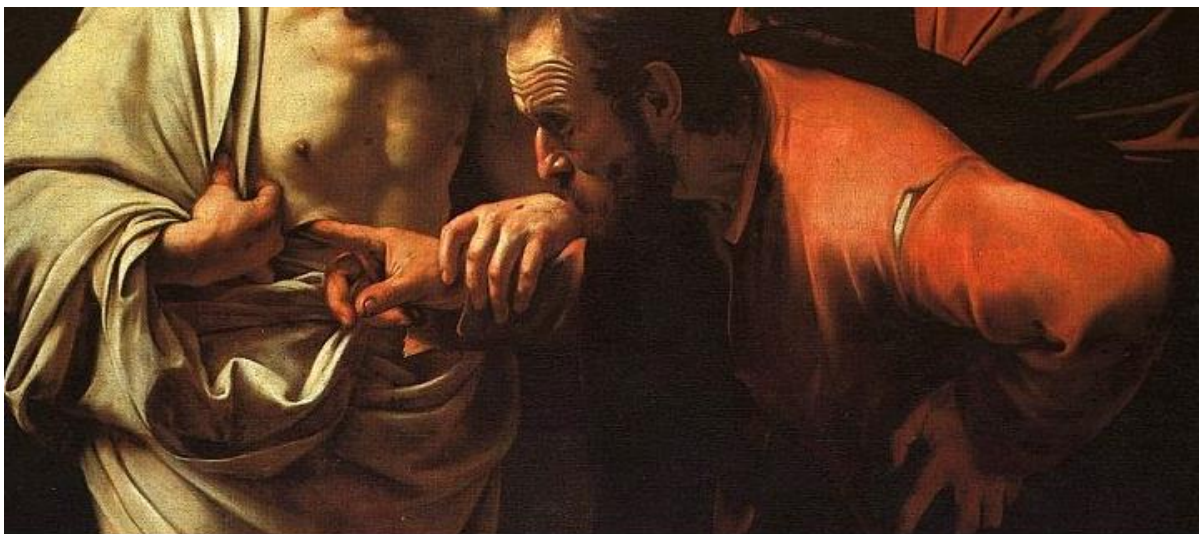
When Jesus now appeared, HE just stood in the midst of the apostles (in a split second not there, and the next split second there among them), they were frightened, thinking they were seeing an evil spirit, looking like a Jewish man, looking in fact a lot like Jesus.

Christ said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do you have questions in your heart about what you are seeing? See, look, my hands and my feet, that it is myself; come handle me and see; for a spirit ghost has not flesh and bones as you see that I have."

"And while they still were in a disbelief for joy and wonderment, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave Him a piece of broiled fish, and He took it and ate it before them.

A spirit ghost it would seem cannot do such a thing. Another impossibility God has set on demon spirits. Yes evil spirits can only do certain things, God has not allowed them to do other things that could deceive the human race even more than they are deceived already by their own human nature and Satan's influence. Good righteous spirit angels as we can see from Genesis 18 and other places, can appear as flesh and bone, and eat a meal with humans. They, being righteous and faithful to God, would NEVER with those miraculous attributes use them to harm or deceive the people of this earth.

Jesus now looked over at Thomas, and said to him, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; put out your hand and place it in my side; do NOT be FAITHLESS, but BELIEVING!" And Thomas answered, "O my LORD, and my GOD!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? BLESSED are THOSE who have NOT SEEN and yet BELIEVE" (Luke 24:36-43; John 20:26-29).



**Doubting Thomas puts his hand into the side of Jesus after His resurrection**

Thomas got his chance to see Jesus and believe. We who have come AFTER all this, after Jesus returned to the Father in heaven, have not seen Jesus in this manner, but Jesus said those who have not seen Him but BELIEVE anyway, are truly BLESSED. One day, when Christ returns, we with millions of others, will see Jesus, we will be able to see Him as flesh and bone, and also as spiritually glorified, in His GLORIOUS POWER form, that is portrayed to us in Revelation 1:11-15. We will be able to see Him from a frontal view, not just the back parts as Moses was only allowed to see, but we shall see His face, and we shall live, because we then shall also be in our glorified spiritual bodies, we also shall be able to appear to humans as flesh and bone, as being a part of the very family of God.

Jesus departed from them. A few days went by and they were reminded by the women who had gone to the tomb that very early morning, on the Sunday during the feast of Unleavened Bread, that Jesus had said He would go before them to the Galilee area, and so meaning they, the apostles should go there also. In fact Jesus had instructed the women to tell the apostles to go to Galilee.

So they all set off for the land of Galilee. Some of them at least, maybe all of them, were at or very near the shore of Tiberias. Sometimes the Sea of Galilee is called Sea of Tiberias, after the name of the Roman emperor Tiberias Caesar. There was also a town situated on the south west shore of the Sea, called Tiberias.

On one particular day Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee (James and John), and two others of Jesus' disciples were together, seven of them.

Simon Peter said to the others, "I am going fishing." The others said to him in reply, "We will also go with you." Perhaps all seven of them were or had been fishermen before they were called by Jesus to be His apostle.

They proverbially hung a sign on the door "gone fishing" and went. But though they toiled through the night, they caught not one fish.

Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach, maybe because of the morning mist, or the dimmed morning light, or because they were about one hundred yards off shore, they did not know that it was Jesus standing there. He shouted to them, "Fellows, have you any fish?" They shouted back, "No, not one." Jesus replied with, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." So they did, and within a minute they were not able to haul the net in because of the number of fish in it.

Then John said to Peter, "It is the Lord you know!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his top clothes, for he was stripped down to his under garments, for the hard work they had been doing all night long. He jumped into the sea and headed for the shore. The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not that far from land, about a hundred yards away.

When they got onto the land, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish lying on it, being cooked, and bread to one side. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have caught." So Simon Peter went aboard the boat and hauled the net of fish ashore, full of large fish, in fact there was exactly a hundred and fifty-three fish, and though so many, the net was not torn.





**Jesus makes breakfast for the disciples on the shore of the Sea of Galilee**

Peter no doubt was either given strength from God to haul this net of fish from off the boat to near where the fire was, or the inspiration of the moment shot his natural adrenaline up sky high.

Jesus said to them, "Come, and have some breakfast." None doubted who He was, because they knew it was indeed the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so also with the fish.

It is recorded that this was the **THIRD** time Jesus appeared to the apostles, after He was raised from the dead. The first was to them, when Thomas was absent, then 8 days later, when Thomas was present, as we have seen. The third time then was this time here, at the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

### **Words From Jesus To Peter**

After they finished eating breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you **LOVE** me more than these others here?" Peter said to Jesus, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you."

"Then feed my little lambs," Jesus answered.

A second time He said to Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you **LOVE** me?" Peter replied, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Christ then told him, "Tend to my sheep."

Jesus said to Peter the **THIRD** time, "Simon, son of John, do you **LOVE** me?" Now Peter was grieved because He said to him the **THIRD** time, "Do you **LOVE** me?" And Peter answered saying, "Lord, you **KNOW EVERYTHING**, you **KNOW** that I **LOVE** you." Jesus said to him, "Then **FEED** my sheep. Truly, truly, I say to you, when you

were young you clothed yourself and walked wherever you wanted to; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you but not with clothes, and carry you where you do not want to go."

Jesus said this to show in parable language that Peter would, when older, be taken by the authorities and led to execution. And history tells us that is exactly what happened to Peter. He was finally put to death by crucifixion. Peter is it claimed asked to be crucified up-side-down, saying he was not worthy be to crucified like his Lord was.

After Jesus said this to Peter, He ended by saying, "FOLLOW me."

Maybe it was deliberate on Jesus' part to ask Peter THREE times if he LOVED Him, for Peter had DENIED Jesus THREE times, you will remember. Peter was to be a LEADING apostle, not head apostle as some claim, but certainly a leading one, and so it was fitting that Jesus told him three times to take good care of the sheep of Jesus' fold, the ones who would come to believe IN and ON Jesus the Christ, as their Master and Savior.

Peter turned around and saw following Jesus and himself, John, to whom Jesus had a special kindness towards. John was the one who leaned across Jesus' chest at the Passover supper meal on the evening of the 14th of Nisan, and had asked, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" When Peter saw John, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man, what is going to happen to him when he gets older?" Jesus replied, "Look, if it is my will that this man remains until I come again, what is that to you? It is really none of your business. You follow me and do the work I've given YOU to do."

After these words from Jesus, the story went around and was spread among the followers of Jesus that John was NOT to DIE! But, Jesus did NOT say to him that he was not to die, but only, "IF it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?"

Jesus was just pointing out to Peter that it should be of no concern what other apostles and disciples were doing per se, or how they would end their lives in death, the kind of death they would die. Peter was told what HIS would be like, from Jesus Himself, and that was ALL that he was told. Jesus never told any other of the ten apostles how they would die, and so He never did say that John would remain alive until He would come again to earth from heaven. I guess not, for if that was the case, then John would still be alive today, and be over 2,000 years old (John 21:1-23).

### **Jesus Appears To The Eleven On A Mountain In The Galilee Area**

Jesus told the eleven to go to a certain mountain and stay there until He would appear to them. They did, and in due time Jesus did exactly as He said He would. He appeared to them, and when they saw Him they worshipped Him. But it is recorded that some of them doubted. They were still in "shock" mode so to speak, for it had never be known that any human person ever rose from the dead INTO IMMORTAL GLORIFIED LIFE!

Jesus came close to them and said, "ALL authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. I want you to go therefore and make disciples from all nations of the earth, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

I want you to TEACH them to OBSERVE ALL that I have COMMANDED YOU; and I will be with you always, even to the END of the age."

It is fitting that people be baptized INTO the Father, He is the Supreme one, the one who is the HEAD of all, even of Christ (see 1 Cor. 11:3). It is fitting that people be baptized INTO the Son, for He is our SAVIOR. It is fitting that people be baptized INTO the Holy Spirit, for it is with the Holy Spirit that God leads, guides, directs, inspires, and gives power and a sound mind to all His children. The Holy Spirit is the very divine nature of God that imparts the germ of ETERNAL LIFE to all who come to the Father through Jesus.

We baptize by the name of, by the AUTHORITY of Jesus, but we should baptize people INTO the Father, then Son, and the Holy Spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ.

We also notice Jesus was here making it very clear that OBEYING the commandments, all that Jesus commanded, which was also the commandments of the Father, for Jesus had said He spoke nothing that was not given to you from the Father, and Jesus made it clear that man was not to live by physical bread alone, but by EVERY WORD that came from the mouth of God, which is the WHOLE Bible - see again Matthew 4:4 (Matt. 28:16-20).

It was time for the disciples to return to Jerusalem. For Jesus told them He would ascend back to heaven from that area and that they needed to be in Jerusalem to wait for the promise of the Father, for the Holy Spirit to be poured out on them in a mighty and in a great POWERFUL way.

John the apostle, says in his Gospel that Jesus throughout His ministry did MANY OTHER signs in the presence of the disciples, which have never been recorded by anyone. So many other things Jesus did and said that, John says, if they had all been written down he supposes that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written (John 20:30, 31; 21:24, 25)

Now of course John uses a figure of speech here, and means that the amount of books needed to contain all that Jesus did and said, would be larger than any Library on earth, maybe as large as all the large famous Libraries of the earth put together. But God has given us enough of the life and ministry of Jesus the Christ for our knowledge and for our salvation at this time. Who knows maybe in the age to come the New Testament Gospels may be increased in size and contents to contain much more of what Jesus did and said while on earth as a human being.

### **Back In Jerusalem**

After the disciples were in Galilee and Jesus appeared twice to them (at least two times that is recorded for us), it was time to return to Jerusalem, for Jesus would say his final goodbye to them, as He went back to heaven to sit at the Father's right hand. He also instructed them for the last time in a personal way. By the time 40 days had passed from Jesus' resurrection to His ascension back to heaven, the disciples were fully and finally convinced that Jesus was indeed raised from the dead to glorious immortality. All of this and Jesus' ascension into the clouds and then back to be with the Father, we shall cover when we go through the book of Acts.

## **The Appearances Of Jesus After His Resurrection That Are Recorded**

In or around Jerusalem

To Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9; John 20:11-18)  
To the other women (Matt. 28:8-10)  
To Peter (Luke 24:34)  
To ten disciples (Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25)  
To the eleven including Thomas (Mark 16:14; John 20:26-29)  
At His ascension (Mark 16:19, 20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:4-12)

To the two disciples on the road to Emmaus

(Mark 16:12, 13; Luke 24:13-25)

Twice in Galilee

(Matt. 28:16-20; John 21:1-24)

To five hundred all at once

(1 Cor. 15:6)

To James and the apostles

(1 Cor. 15:7)

To Paul on the road to Damascus

(Acts 9:1-6; 18:9, 10; 22:1-8; 23:11; 26:12-18; 1 Cor. 15:8)

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**FROM THE EDITOR (Roger Waite):** We have now come to the end of the Gospels in this New Testament Bible Story.

In volume 3 Keith Hunt will continue the story of the true Church of God as we learn about the story of the apostles spreading the truth about God's Word and proclaiming that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah as we cover the book of Acts. In the same volume Keith will also cover what are referred to as the general epistles.

We hope that you have enjoyed and learned a great deal from this New Testament Bible Story so far and hope that you will join us in reading volume 3 of this New Testament Bible Story.