

Devotional Studies in the Gospel of Luke

HARVESTING DEEP TRUTH FROM SOME OF GOD'S GREAT TEACHERS:

Ironside, G. Cambell Morgan, Edersheim, Kelly, Coates, Mitchell, Darby, Grant,
MacIntosh, Marsh, McGee, Morris, Ryle, Scofield, St. John, Trench, Westcott

Old Harvesters
Bible Study

Volume I

*"Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me
cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27).*

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GROWTH AND GOALS

*“But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit”
(2 Cor. 3:18)*

*“Beyond the sacred page
We seek THEE, Lord.
Our spirits pant for Thee
Thou living Word!”*

Mary Ann Lathbury, 1877
“Break Thou the Bread of Life”

“Knowledge of the Scripture can not be attained at first sight, but grows gradually as we go on with it, and in proportion to our diligence and the progress of our own souls with God.” (F. W. Grant, “Luke,” *The Numerical Bible*, New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1894, pp. 5-7).

1. Restate this quote in your own words.

God’s word is not a graded lesson series—where each class in the different stages of spiritual growth with different degrees of knowledge may find a section appropriate for its own lesson. For every one of us, the lesson-textbook in every part is far beyond us all. It is God’s way to humble us by making us aware of depths we cannot touch, yet to stimulate us to explore. We know in part (1 Corinthians 13:12). There is yet much land to be possessed (Joshua 13:1) (Grant).

2. What does Mr. Grant mean that God’s Word is “far beyond us all” and that it contains “depths we cannot touch”?

3. What does he mean that “there is yet much land to be possessed”?

God wants us to know His Word.

“Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God” (1 Corinthians 2:12).

His things are freely given.

There are only certain requirements for knowledge:

a. A seeking heart—with self-judgment and waiting upon God.

But let all preachers remember that Paul preached repentance. He called upon sinners to judge themselves—to repent in dust and ashes, as was meet and right they should.

He himself had learned the true meaning of repentance. He had not only judged himself once in a way, but he lived in the spirit of self-judgment.

It was the habit of his soul, the attitude of his heart, and it gave a depth, solidity, seriousness and solemnity to his preaching of which we modern preachers know but little. We do not believe that Paul’s repentance ended

with the three days and three nights of blindness after his conversion.

He was a self-judged man all his life long. Did this hinder his enjoyment of the grace of God or of the preciousness of Christ?

Nay, it gave depth and intensity to his enjoyment (MacIntosh, "The Great Commission," p. 11)

4. Why is self-judgment part of the requirement for knowledge of God's Word?

5. What does it mean to "wait upon God"?

b. Readiness to do God's will—in order to know the doctrine which is of God.

6. Why is readiness to do God's will necessary in order to know "the doctrine which is of God"?

c. Experience—a truth cannot be learned without an experience which mere words cannot convey (Grant, pp. 5-7).

7. What kind of experience is Mr. Grant calling for?

The Bible Student

(by Patricia St. John from *Harold St. John: A Portrait*, excerpts from 117-131)

The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life; and in all Mr. Harold St. John's (pronounced Sinjin) studies he was searching for two things—never for mere knowledge, but firstly, for a fresh, fairer view of Christ. Knowledge that stops short of this becomes an end in itself, he said, a dangerous stumbling

block to any age. To an old friend, Mr. Robert Balloch, he wrote,

"We who are constantly thinking of the Scriptures are in danger of becoming mere channels of information from the book to its hearers. May you and I be kept in simplicity, more engaged with Christ than with (preparing) sermons or readings."

And to a group of young people, he uttered this solemn warning with regard to their study:

"It is not enough for us to be living in the Book, blessed and holy as that Book is. It is always possible to be greatly engaged with the text of Holy Scripture, and even to be considering its meaning, without ever really reaching Christ. So remember, the Bible is never the end in itself. It is not the home of the heart, but it's the official highway that leads to it. It's the path by which you reach Christ, and it is that which tells you all you know of Him historically.

"But tell me, is that all you want? Will a historical Christ satisfy you? Do you want simply to know facts about Him, or to keep company with Christ, to have Him show things to your heart that are in the Bible, but which come fresh from Him to you?"

8. What two things was Harold St. John looking for in his Bible study?

9. Why those two things?

"There is no man (he continues) who gives more reverence, more honour, more love to this Book than I. But I'm sure that even in the use of it there's a danger lest we should stop short of reaching the One to whom this Book

bears witness. If your mind's been merely engaged with texts, or you've merely been considering passages out of the Bible, you've lacked something. You haven't gone all the way, for all the way is this: that the Lord Jesus Christ should present Himself to you as the only safe Guide on the dangerous road of life and the only way by which you can keep your pathway shining; that is, that the face of Christ should shine upon you and you should behold as in a mirror the glory of the Lord.

"The Word, yes; but not the Word only; always the Word with the Spirit. There are scholars who have devoted forty years to the most painstaking study of every preposition and word in the Old Testament, but some of them are still a million leagues away from Christ."

10. Harold St. John says, "The Word, yes; but not the Word only; always the Word with the Spirit." What does this mean and why is it significant for our lives today?

"But remember, this is the problem: how can youth keep its way shining through a dark world? How can you reach the goal—Christ? By taking heed thereto, by stepping carefully and guiding your life by what your soul is learning of God in the text of Holy Scripture, and by keeping company with Christ as your best Friend—never ceasing until you are on such terms with Him that you talk to Him more intimately than to wife or child, lover or friend, and He talks with you. That does not only mean you have a Bible in your pocket—thank God if you have—but it means that you have Christ in your heart."

11. Why isn't knowledge of a historical Christ all we really need for our day-to-day walk with Him?

Secondly, Harold St. John never considered any study really worthwhile unless it affected one's daily conduct in a practical way.

He insisted on this in particular when he studied the prophetic books, where a student may become side-tracked into the pursuit of dispensational truth [see note at the end of the chapter] (thinking that what is in the future is only for the future), while neglectful of any immediate practical value.

In a series of lectures on the (Book of) Revelation he emphasized this strongly:

"I think that this has been a great mistake in the study of dispensational truth: People have taken a passage and found, sometimes with a great deal of ingenuity, that they can fit it into the future, and they are enormously pleased with the discovery.

"But that never finishes the thing unless you read it again and say, 'Lord, what has this got for me today?'"

"The dispensational interpretation of a passage is never its final meaning. The final meaning is always in the court of conscience.

"A dispensation is temporal, but you must find the eternal meaning. How does it fit into the realm of the soul? How does it answer some need of the heart?"

"For God never places any event in the future without anything that saints can enjoy today. To every saint today, if only he has insight and spirituality enough to receive it, God says, 'You can by faith have everything now that I'm going to give to my saints in the future, and there's

not a single blessing in the Millennium that you cannot enjoy by faith today.”

12. Summarize what Mr. St. John is saying about the application of truth.

And how he strove to impress upon the assemblies, where he visited, the need of systematic Bible teaching, book by book, chapter by chapter, and how he mourned the dying out of this practice in many circles. [He would tell them:]

“Now we understand that the first thing for which an assembly of God stands is that it be a place where the Scriptures are interpreted as God gave them; that is, by chapters, by books, and by sections, not in (isolated)-text preaching. I do not object to text preaching; I’m only saying it’s not the way God gave the Scripture. He gave it in big masses, not in texts, and I would say with great deference to my elders, I beseech you that you be exercised that you feed the flock of God.

“On your bookshelves you have books of lectures delivered by God’s servants many years ago, but what is the use of them if you are not having any lectures (now)?

“And the first thing to expect of an assembly is that it be a place for the exposition of the Word, to declare unto us the parable, open the Bible book by book, chapter by chapter, section by section, till our youth is grounded and settled in the Word of God as He gave it.”

13. Why did Mr. St. John think this method of Bible teaching was so important?

14. How would the teaching of God’s

Word in this way affect you?

15. Has this practice died out in our country? Why? Should we let it go? Why or why not?

“Here we come to this dear Book that we’ve learned to love as light,” he once said as he opened a meeting; but that love was the result of countless hours of patient study, self-tuition in Greek and Hebrew, and exhaustive exploration along every channel that might throw new light on some word or verse.

One wrote of him,

“Behind his outstanding facility of speech was an industry that explains it, though this was so far-reaching that few could grasp it fully.

“We have in our possession some of his working books in which every Hebrew or Greek word used in the book he was studying at the time is listed.

“There would follow separate lists, giving every reference to certain main themes in the book, the leading ideas, and sometimes the minor points also, set out in the same careful detail; the divine names, etc., etc., so that each working book so filled represented the most indefatigable workmanship.

“Nothing was left to chance or feeling, and his knowledge of Scripture was based upon the most thorough research. . . .”

These notes filled thousands of loose-leaved sheets and represented the passion of his life.

“Many a night in my youth, “ he once told his young hearers, “(though God forbid you should be so foolish) the blaze of the light of Scripture has so grown upon me that I have seen light breaking in the dawn before I could tear myself

away from my Bible as the Book poured its treasures out. Many a time long hours have passed chasing one word to its lair, one tense to its perfection.

“And remember this, man’s life will never be lonely, never be broken, never be wearisome, if he makes friends with Moses and the prophets, and supremely, with Christ.”

16. What things in our lives today keep us from this kind of study? What can we do about them?

One thing that specially struck Professor F. F. Bruce was the way Mr. St. John never reverted to old study.

“To the end of his days,” wrote the Professor, “he imposed upon himself the discipline of study and that was one reason for the perennial freshness of his ministry. The gold which he brought forth from the Divine Treasury was always freshly minted.”

“Let my younger brethren remember,” Mr. St. John warned them, “that true ministry must rest upon a platform of knowledge only acquired by holy, constant meditation in the Word of God. Kept manna breeds worms. A man who meditates in the Law day and night will always be fresh and thoughtful in his teaching of Christ.”

Like David he could have said, “Oh, how I love Thy Law!”

“I have been fifty years a Christian,” he once remarked. “I’ve never suffered five minutes’ boredom in all those years. Every new morning sees something fresh to study.”

And indeed he would come out from his room in the early morning, his face radiant like the face of a man who has

seen God’s glory.

Often the lingering joy of that communion was so great that he must find someone with whom to share it and would seek out some other member of the family and greet him with “I’ve had such a wonderful time with the Lord this morning!”

Then he would sit down beside them and eagerly point out the verse or passage in question with the suppressed excitement of one who has made some great new discovery.

17. What would it take for us to be able to say, “I’ve had such a wonderful time with the Lord this morning”?

He sought to inspire every earnest young Christian with this ideal of finding Christ in the Scriptures through painstaking, sanctified study; for he considered it an integral part of the Christian’s life. He once visited a young Christian university student and examined with pleasure a score of neat notebooks representing months of research in science.

After careful examination of these volumes, Mr. St. John said, “Now show me your Bible study books,” to which the young man replied with some embarrassment, “I haven’t any, Sir, and indeed I shouldn’t know how to treat the Bible that way.”

The incident stirred Mr. St. John deeply. Here, as he pointed out, was a young man, able to give hours daily to meticulous, accurate study, yet only occasionally flinging a few bits of time to the profoundest subject that can engage the human mind—the study of the Book so marvelous that it cost the death of Christ

to make its production possible; so powerful that by it alone we can keep ourselves from the power of the destroyer.

From the first glow of conversion to almost the last day of his life, he never lost his appetite for the study of the Bible; and when he could no longer pass on his findings in public addresses, he said quietly, leaning back in bed with the worn old Book in his hand, "It is no longer seed for the sower, but it's wonderful bread for the eater."

18. Describe Harold St. John's method of Bible study. Is this necessarily out of reach of a person in today's work-a-day world?

19. Mr. St. John considered Bible study "the profoundest subject that can engage the human mind." Why would he think this? Should we?

20. This study in Luke will be an expansion of Mr. St. John's comment: "It is no longer seed for the sower, but it's wonderful bread for the eater." What may we expect to learn from this?

MARY AND MARTHA

Luke 10:38-42: Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me.

And Jesus answered and said unto her,

Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Only one thing is needed. We need to learn the Martha lesson. "All great service springs from the center of a quiet heart." There is no true service without first sitting at the Lord's feet. There we learn what brings pleasure to His heart. What we learn of Christ can never be taken away. This is the one thing needful.

21. How does this mention of Mary and Martha summarize the whole intent of this chapter?

22. Psalm 119:11 says, "Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee." According to Harold St. John, is scripture memory the golden key to the spirit-filled life?

A dispensation is a period of time during which God tests man regarding obedience to some specific revelation of His will. Theology divides mankind's term on earth into seven dispensations or periods of time. They are:

Innocency—Creation to expulsion from Eden (Genesis 2:23-24)—And the man said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

Conscience—ended with the flood (Genesis 8:20-22)—Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal

and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

And the LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth, and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

Human Government—from the flood to Abraham (*Genesis 9:1-2*)—*And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. And the fear of you and the terror of you shall be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given."*

Promise—Call of Abram to the giving of the law (*Genesis 12:1-3*)—*Now the LORD said to Abram, Go forth from your country and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*

Law—ended at the cross (*Exodus 19:8*)—*And all the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do!"*

Grace—will end at the rapture (*John 1:17*)—*For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.*

Kingdom—the future (*Ephesians 1:9-*

10)—*He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth.*

Hyperdispensationalists limit the significance of each Bible verse to its position in its dispensation. They find no blessing or obligation for themselves if a verse occurs in the Old Testament or in the Gospels.

A good rule to follow is that if something is presented in the Gospels and practiced in the Book of Acts and taught in the Epistles, we should do it. Baptism and the Lord's Table meet this standard and are the common practice of believers today.

Some churches choose to observe as sacraments practices found only in the Gospels (footwashing) or only in the Epistles (praying for the dead).

23. What does Harold St. John mean: "The dispensational interpretation of a passage is never its final meaning?"

24. What influence might this chapter, called "Growth and Goals" have on the way you will want to study God's Word after this?

***"Master, speak! And make me ready,
When Thy voice is truly heard,
With obedience glad and steady,
Still to follow every word.
I am listening Lord, for Thee:
Master, speak, oh speak to me!"***

Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-79)

"Master, Speak, Thy Servant Heareth"

INCIDENTS AND EVENTS EXCLUSIVE TO LUKE

1. Zacharias's vision and Elisabeth's conception, 1:5-25
2. Mary's salutation, 1:26-38
3. Mary's visit to Elisabeth, 1:39-56
4. John the Baptist's birth and Zacharias's hymn of praise, 1:57-80
5. The enrollment decree of Caesar Augustus, 2:1-3
6. Christ's nativity in Bethlehem, 2:4-7
7. Details of the birth of the Lord Jesus, 2:8-20
8. The circumcision of the Child Jesus, 2:21
9. The Presentation of Christ in the temple, 2:22-24
10. The story of Simeon and Anna, 2:25-38
11. The silent years at Nazareth, 2:39-40
12. Jesus at the Passover and among the rabbis, 2:41-52
13. Dating of the beginning of John's public ministry, 3:1-2
14. John's success, 3:10-15
15. Human genealogy of Christ from Mary, 3:23-38
16. Christ's rejection at Nazareth, 4:15-30
17. Details of the call of Peter, James, and John, 5:1-10
18. Discourse of Christ on the plain, 6:17-49
19. Raising to life of the widow's son at Nain, 7:11-17
20. The woman who anointed Jesus in Simon's house, 7:36-50
21. The women who ministered to Christ, 8:1-3
22. Episode of James and John, 9:51-56
23. The seventy sent out, 10:1-12
24. Their return and report, 10:17-24
25. Parable of the Good Samaritan, 10:25-37
26. Christ at the house of Mary and Martha, 10:38-42
27. Parable of the friend at midnight, 11:5-8
28. Christ entertained by a Pharisee, 11:37-54
29. Discourse to a great crowd, 12:1-53
30. Pilate's murder of the Galileans, 13:1-5
31. Parable of the barren fig tree, 13:6-9
32. The woman afflicted 18 years, 13:10-17
33. Problem of the number to be saved, 13:22-30
34. Reply to the Pharisees concerning Herod Antipas, 13:31-33
35. The man with dropsy, 14:1-6
36. Parable of the ambitious guest, 14:7-14
37. Parable of the great banquet, 14:15-24
38. Difficulties of the discipleship, 14:25-35
39. Parable of the lost sheep, 15:3-7
40. Parable of the lost coin, 15:8-10
41. Parable of the prodigal son, 15:11-32
42. Parable of the dishonest manager, 16:1-18
43. The rich man and the beggar Lazarus, 16:19-31
44. Instructions to the disciples, 17:1-10

45. Healing of the ten lepers, 17:12-19
46. Questions concerning God's kingdom, 17:20-37
47. Parable of the importunate widow, 18:1-8
48. Parable of the Pharisee and publican, 18:9-14
49. Zacchaeus's conversion and call, 19:2-10
50. Parable of the pounds, 19:11-27
51. Christ's weeping over Jerusalem, 19:41-44
52. Warning to Peter, 22:31-32
53. Warning to buy a sword, 22:35-38
54. Appearance of an angel in Gethsemane, 22:43
55. The bloody perspiration, 22:44
56. Pilate's sending Christ to Herod, 23:6-12
57. Christ's message to the women of Jerusalem, 23:27-31
58. The penitent thief, 23:39-43
59. The risen Christ's appearance to the Emmaus disciples, 24:13-35
60. Details of His appearance to the eleven, 24:37-49
61. Christ's ascension while blessing His disciples, 24:50-5

LUKE

THE SON OF MAN AMONG MEN

1	2	3	4:14	5	6:12	7	8	9:51	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19:28	20	21:5	22	23	24
PREPARATION		IDENTIFICATION		INSTRUCTION								SACRIFICE											
ELIZABETH--MARY		GALILEE		LATER JUDEAN AND PEREAN MINISTRIES TO JERUSALEM								AT JERUSALEM											
		MIRACLES ABOUND HERE		PARABLES ABOUND HERE								THE GREAT & GRAND SACRIFICE MIRACLE											
		"MIGHTY IN DEED"		AND WORD" (24:19)								LAST MESSAGES		MISSION ACCOM- PLISHED									
30 YEARS		1 1/2 YEARS		6 MONTHS								8 DAYS		50 DAYS									
		KEY PHRASE: "SON OF MAN"		KEY VERSES: 19:10-24:19																			

PRAISE
Chap. 1

PRAISE
24:50-53

I. INTRODUCTION TO LUKE'S GOSPEL

(Luke 1:1-4)

FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

REVIEW: Notes to the lesson on Growth and Goals.

Looking back, what example from Harold St. John's life speaks especially to you today? And what impressed your heart in regard to Bible study in the introductory lesson and Luke 1:1-4? Underline and, if you are studying with a group, be ready to share.

GOALS (Optional): Consider your specific goals for Bible study.

A. Ask the Lord's direction before setting your goals.

B. Schedule time for Bible study each day this week.

C. What are your goals in undertaking this study in Luke?

MEMORY (Optional): Memorize Luke 19:10, a key verse of the Gospel: "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

CHART: Before you go any farther, read the Gospel of Luke through. Then, on the chart "The Son of Man Among Men," using a pencil, fill in the chart completely, writing the themes of Luke and the contents of the chapters in the spaces provided.

From the chart, tell the four main divisions of Luke. Give the chapters and sec-

tion titles (as Division 1 – Preparation – 1:1-4:13).

Spend a session with your group going over your findings and making any changes that may be necessary. This might take more than one week. Let it.

Regarding the questions that follow and the questions at the beginning of each lesson in this manual, some students may wish to spend a week (or weeks) studying and answering the questions without referring to the text of the Lesson.

Then they will spend the following weeks in the Notes, enlarging on their answers with new insights from the text. Others may wish to study questions and text at the same time.

I. THE AUTHOR AND HIS TEXT

READ: 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-2

DO QUESTIONS: 1-5

READ PAGES: 5-9

1. Luke is part of "all scripture . . . inspired by God and profitable." According to these verses, tell in your own words what your study in Luke will do for you.

2. Luke is rarely mentioned in Scripture

MEMORY (Luke 19:10): "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

(see below). What does that tell you and what do these verses tell you about him?

Acts 1:1—The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach;

Luke 1:1-4 (Prologue)—(1) Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, (2) just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the Word have handed them down to us, (3) it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; (4) so that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught;

Colossians 4:14—Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings;

Philemon 24—as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow-workers;

2 Timothy 4:11—Only Luke is with me.

You might consult “Luke” in a Bible dictionary. Write down all you can discover about him.

What clue does “Theophilus” in Acts 1:1 and Luke 1:3 give about the authorship of these two books?

Acts 1:1—The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach.

Luke 1:3—It seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus.

The name “Theophilus” means “lover of God.” Do you see any spiritual significance in the fact that the gospel of Luke was written to a “Theophilus?”

3. What is Luke’s subject (Luke 1:2; Acts 1:1)?

Luke 1:2—Just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the Word have handed them down to us.

Acts 1:1—The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach.

4. Who are his sources (Luke 1:1-2)? Is this contrary, then, to 2 Peter 1:21? Explain your answer.

Luke 1:1-2—Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the Word have handed them down to us.

2 Peter 1:21—For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

5. Identify four things Luke tells us in his prologue.

II. LUKE’S METHOD OF PRESENTING THE SAVIOR

DO QUESTIONS: 6-19

READ PAGES: 9-13

6. Since Luke tells his method (Luke 1:3—*It seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in*

MEMORY (Luke 19:10): “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus) and his purpose (Luke 1:4—so that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught) does Luke 1:3-4 have any application to your own life? According to this verse, what will the study of Luke’s gospel do for you?

7. Read Luke 1:2; 24:19; John 1:1; Hebrews 1:1-2. Tell why you think Jesus is called “the Word” and “the Prophet.”

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

Luke 24:19 (And He said to them, “What things?” And they said to Him, “The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people);

John 1:1 (In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God);

Hebrews 1:1-2 (God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.)

8. The text on page 7 (col. 2) suggests that “each gospel presentation of the death of Christ corresponds to one of the offerings of Leviticus: Matthew—the trespass offering, Mark—the sin offering, Luke—the peace offering, John—the burnt and meal offerings.” Read Harry A. Ironside’s comment on page 7 and contemplate why each offering is appropriate to each gospel. Be able to explain your thoughts.

9. C. A. Coates writes on page 6 (col. 2), **“If we do not know what it is to study Him in His course through this world, we shall not know Him as He is now in heaven.”** What does he mean? How does that apply to us?

10. What four words beginning with the letter “P” describe this gospel (page 7)? How is Christ such a gospel Himself? How can the story of our life be the same kinds of gospel?

11. The Holy Spirit (page 7) chose to present Christ in the gospels as King and lion, Servant and ox, Son of Man and the face of a man, Son of God and eagle. Why these? What do they mean to you?

12. Think about Hebrews 1:2. How has God spoken to you through His Son? How?

Hebrews 1:2—In these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

13. Why are we fortunate Luke selected the method he used?

14. What do the items he alone relates add to our knowledge of our Savior as He lived his life among men (generalize your answer). Refer to chart p. xi

15. List and comment on the eight characteristics of Luke’s “artistic order” (pages 10-12).

16. State Luke’s and God’s purpose in

MEMORY (Luke 19:10): “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

presenting this gospel in this form.

17. Why would it be appropriate to think that our name—each of us—might well be

“Theophilus” during the course of this study?

MEMORY (Luke 19:10): "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

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I. INTRODUCTION TO LUKE'S GOSPEL

**Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord:
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb!
Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see,
Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with men to appear,
Jesus, our Immanuel here."**

— Charles Wesley (1739)

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

I. THE AUTHOR AND HIS TEXT

THE WORD

What human brain could even imagine the plan of redemption where Almighty God Who is Spirit would humble Himself and become flesh—Emmanuel (God with us) that He might become the sacrificial Lamb and die for the sins of the whole world.

God the Son became the Son of Man. God has spoken to us in His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2). The deity of Christ is emphasized in Luke from its very beginning in Luke 1:2 where He is called "the Word," the Revealer of the thoughts and heart of Father God. That Christ is the Word is also presented in John's Gospel where

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. . . . And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory (John 1:1-2, 14).

God tells out His heart in His Son. Christ is the full telling out of what God is in His nature, thoughts, and heart. God has also spoken in creation (His power, deity, Romans 1:20; Psalm 19:1); but creation cannot give us His heart.

We see a wristwatch and know it has a maker. But it can give us no expression of the maker's thoughts, heart and desires.

God has created beings capable of understanding and appreciating His thoughts and nature, and He has come to us in person and spoken to us. He has not come for a visit as royalty would come—with pomp, distance and reserve. But, surprisingly, He has come as a lowly, humble Man, Christ Jesus. "*The Lord Jesus went in and out among us*" (Acts 1:21).

This Man was coming and going "**in all the ordinary circumstances of human life**" and there "**expressing the nature and character of God**" (C. A. Coates, pp. 2-3).

MEMORY (Luke 19:10): "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

He is the God-Man.

No wonder “*many have undertaken to compile an account of the things*” which He accomplished (*Luke 1:1*).

SON OF MAN

The Gospel of Luke presents Christ as God the Son, the Son of Man—man as God intended him to be, perfect as he was before sin ever came into the world. Nevertheless, this Man is seen to be truly God. The Greeks had ideals of human perfection. Luke presents Christ as excelling them all.

Norval Geldenhuys in his *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* says that the Greeks’ passion was the perfection of the human personality. Educated Greeks were always looking for their ideal, the perfect person.

He says that Luke found in the Lord Jesus the One who fulfilled all his ideals as well as all the ideals of his nation.

He says that this accounts for Luke’s bringing in so many evidences that Christ as the God Man “**fulfills to the highest and most absolute extent the ideal of perfection—in love and severity, in tenderness and might, in humility and in fearlessness, in wisdom and in all other virtues of character**” (Geldenhuys, p. 45).

Luke presents Christ as Son of Man among men.

This is manhood which God could crown with glory and honor (Hebrews 2:7). Today, He sits upon the throne of heaven. He is the Man in the glory. This Man was seen on earth by eyewitnesses.

We need the gospels, especially Luke, to give us the knowledge of the Person who is now on the throne in heaven.

“We need to learn Him as He was here that we may know Him where He is in heaven. The one who is now in heaven has trodden this earth as the lowly Man” (Coates, p. 1).

He was seen and heard and served by a company of persons who became acquainted with Him.

“This Gospel is written that we might have the supreme favor from God of seeing and hearing in a spiritual way what those saw and heard who were eye-witnesses and attendants on the Word.

“We have the privilege of sharing with them what they saw and heard in that blessed One.

“No greater favor could be shown us, and if we do not know what it is to study Him in His course through this world we shall not know Him as He is now in heaven. Our knowledge of Him in heaven is dependent on what was disclosed in Him down here” (Coates, p. 1).

If we know nothing of Him in this life as our Prophet, our Priest, our King, our Mediator, Son of God, Son of Man, our peace, our hope, our love, our trespass offering, our sin offering, our burnt offering and meal offering (and the list could go on and on), how will we appreciate the enlargement of all this when we join Him in heaven?

If He is no more than a Fire Escape for

MEMORY (Luke 19:10): “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

us here, how can we expect to know Him in His fullness there?

PRIEST

The priest was “taken from among men” (Hebrews 5:1).

This gospel is the unfolding of the glory of Christ as Mediator. He presents Himself as the peace offering on the cross. He makes peace between God and man by the blood of His cross. It is the gospel of peace.

“Luke is the priestly Gospel: the key to its character hangs at the door, as it does generally in the books of the Bible. (Among) the first words are, ‘There was a certain priest.’

“In Luke the blessing is brought in in priestly grace for man, and in that way everything is secured for God.

“Luke begins with an empty temple and a dumb priest—a man silent to God, not able to speak His praise; but it ends with a company filled with such praise as makes the courts of the temple ring” (Coates, *Genesis*, p. 121).

This is the gospel of prayer. Seven prayers of the Lord Jesus are recorded by Luke. Each one shows Him praying before a crisis in His life. Luke also gives us two parables about prayer, exhortations to the disciples to pray, and a warning about the wrong kind of prayer.

Luke is the gospel of praise. It is the singing gospel. It records for us the first Christian hymns. It is filled with joy and laughter. Luke begins and ends with a note of rejoicing.

WHY FOUR GOSPELS?

Deuteronomy 19:15 says, “On the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.”

Matthew 18:16 says, “By the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed.”

God gives us in regard to His Son not just three witnesses, but four. The gospels are not chronological accounts. Each one presents Christ from a certain aspect. Matthew presents Him as King, Mark as Servant, Luke as Son of Man, John as Son of God.

The first three gospels are called “the synoptic gospels.” They follow a similar pattern: Christ’s ministry in Galilee, His journey to Jerusalem, His death and resurrection. The pattern of John is different; there we see Him making several trips to Jerusalem.

The faces of the cherubim of Ezekiel 1:4-11 are often taken as symbols of the four gospel themes:

In Matthew the kingly lion; in Mark the patient service of the ox; in Luke the face of a man; in John the eagle coming down from above.

Each gospel presentation of the death of Christ corresponds to one of the offerings of Leviticus: Matthew—the trespass offering, Mark—the sin offering, Luke—the peace offering, John—the burnt and meal offerings.

“Luke brings Him before us as our great peace-offering—Christ making peace between God and man by shedding His blood on the cross.

“The trespass-offering sets forth the death of Christ because of the sins actu-

MEMORY (Luke 19:10): “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

ally committed against God and man.

“The sin offering speaks of Christ dying for what we are, not only for what we have done.

“The burnt offering speaks of Christ dying to glorify God.” (Ironside, p. 14).

The word “gospel” means “good news” or “glad tidings.” Each gospel brings good news to man about the person and work of Christ on our behalf.

THE WRITING OF LUKE

The Scriptures are “God breathed:”

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The writer Luke was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write the gospel.

“We must carefully remember that the difference between an inspired writing and any other is not that the other is necessarily false, and that the inspired one is simply true. . . .

“Inspiration excludes mistake, no doubt, but it does much more than that. It includes a Divine object for the instruction of the faithful in the display of God’s glory in Christ” (Kelly, p. 14).

LUKE HIMSELF

A historical note in the anti-Marcionite Prologue to the Third Gospel (A.D. 160-80) reads:

“Luke was an Antiochian of Syria, a physician by profession. He was a disciple of the apostles and later accompanied Paul until the latter’s martyrdom. He served the Lord without distraction, having neither wife nor children, and at the age of eighty-four fell asleep in Boeotia, full of the Holy Spirit. While there were already Gospels previously in existence—that according to Matthew written in Judaea and that according to Mark in Italy—Luke, moved by the Holy Spirit, composed the whole of this Gospel in the parts about Achaia. . . . And afterwards the same Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles.”

As we know, Luke dedicated both the Gospel and the Book of Acts to a gentleman named Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1). It is from the “we” passages of Acts that we determine that Luke wrote Acts, the similarity of language, style, vocabulary attesting to that fact.

We know he was a Gentile because Colossians 4:10-14 distinguishes Luke and others from three “who are from the circumcision” (v. 11). Thus about one-fourth of the New Testament was written by a Gentile for Gentiles.

The “we” passages of Acts (16:10-17; 20:5-16; 27:2-28:16) as well as Colossians 4:14 show that Luke, “the beloved physician,” was a close friend and traveling companion of Paul on part of his second missionary journey, on the last part of his third missionary journey, in Jerusalem, and both on his voyage to Rome and during his imprisonment in Rome.

In three epistles Paul referred to Luke by name, in Colossians 4:14 calling him

MEMORY (Luke 19:10): “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

“Luke, the beloved physician;” in Philemon 24 he writes about “*Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers;*” and in 2 Timothy 4:11 he writes “*Only Luke is with me.*”

We have here “**spiritual intimation that Luke’s service was closely associated with Paul’s. Luke’s writings present things which are essential to the understanding of Paul**” (Coates, p. 1).

His writing shows that he was a literary artist. Geldenhuys says the gospel stands as a work of very high quality “**from a literary point of view in the original Greek**” (p. 36). The fact that he was a physician explains his use of medical terms and careful case reports.

“**Two elements merged in him, which are very rarely found in one person.**”

“**He was a man of scientific mind. He claims that. This was a scientific treatise, the result of scientific examination of the personality of Jesus.**”

“**But he is also an artist.**”

“**There is an old legend of the church that a painting of the virgin mother was found in Jerusalem from the brush of Luke.**”

“**The early church writers all spoke of him as an artist. Somebody has said that he was a poet, too, and gives as a proof, that he caught and preserved for us the great songs that burst upon the world with the coming of Jesus into it.**”

“**Here, then, is a remarkable man, artistic in temperament and scientific in mentality**” (Morgan, p. 11).

DATE OF WRITING

The Tyndale New Testament Commentary on Luke contains a thorough discussion of this and other critical questions.

Arguments for the early date are convincing.

The date is bound up with that of Acts, for Luke must be earlier than its sequel. In Acts no event after A.D. 62 is mentioned. The Gospel must have been written in A.D. 57-59. This would be within thirty years of the death and resurrection of Christ.

II. LUKE'S METHOD OF PRESENTING THE SAVIOR

PREFACE TO GOSPEL

(Luke 1:1-4)

“**A preface is always written to introduce the reader to the book; and the writer always writes it last.**”

“**There is no question that the first four verses in this Gospel were written last by Luke; the tenses he used prove this. He referred to the writing as completed.**”

“**There are four things Luke tells us in this preface.**”

“**He names his subject; gives the sources of his information; describes the method of his work; and reveals the purpose of his writing**” (Morgan, p. 12).

LUKE'S SUBJECT

“*The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when He was taken up. . . .*” (Acts 1:1-2a).

MEMORY (Luke 19:10): “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

The Word (Luke 1:2)

“Dr. (A. T.) Robertson says concerning this book: ‘The humanity of Jesus in Luke is not the deity of humanity so much as the humanity of deity.’ It is the human we see, but He is here, God manifest in the flesh.

“When Luke writes, it is the story of the perfect Man, but when the story is finished, he does not talk about Jesus; when he speaks of Him, he calls Him ‘the Word’” (Morgan, p. 2).

“Luke had, as the work assigned to him of the Holy Ghost, to delineate our Lord as a man, both in body and soul. This he does, not only as to facts which are related about Him, but in all His course and teaching in His life, death, resurrection, and Ascension.

It is emphatically a man we see and hear, a Divine Person, no doubt, but at the same time a real, proper man Who walks in perfect dependence and absolute obedience, honoring God and honored of Him in all things” (Kelly, pp. 12-13).

Luke’s Sources

From Luke 1:1-3 we learn that Luke had read and heard the accounts of “eyewitnesses” and “servants of the Word.” He had “investigated everything carefully from the beginning.”

He had undoubtedly visited the various localities where the Lord Jesus had lived and ministered.

Luke certainly had interviewed Mary, the mother of the Lord “and from her had the matchless story that he could

have gained from none other” (Morgan, p. 13).

Luke “claims an accurate and thorough acquaintance of all things from the very first. He does not explain his sources any more than other inspired men, but he does contrast the character of what he knew and had to say with those who merely drew up a report from the earliest and best tradition. This is of high importance and has been often overlooked” (Kelly, p. 15).

Luke’s Method

Luke investigated the records and reports of eyewitnesses and servants of the Lord Jesus. Under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he was enabled to select from this data and to write a narrative about all that Jesus began to do and teach until His ascension (Acts 1:1-2). Luke did this “carefully,” tracing back to “the beginning” and writing it down “in consecutive order” (Luke 1:3). By the expression “in consecutive order,” Luke does not mean chronological order. He uses here a Greek word, the word of the artist, to indicate that he wrote to form a connected narrative.

“He claims that having obtained his material, and sifted and examined it, and put it in proper relationship, he wrote it in artistic order” (Morgan, p. 13).

CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS ORDER

1. Historical perspective. Many names, dates, places are given in order to place the Gospel narrative in historical perspec-

MEMORY (Luke 19:10): “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

tive. For example, in placing the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptist, Luke refers to six contemporary datings (Luke 3:1-2).

2. Information not found in other gospels.

“It is he alone who relates the stories of the visits of the angel Gabriel to Zacharias and to Mary. No one else tells us of the song of Mary, and the prophecy of Zacharias. The birth of Christ in a stable is recorded only here, as also the angel’s announcement to the shepherds. The presentation of the Child Jesus in the temple at Jerusalem, and the welcome given by Anna and Simeon, also are mentioned only here.

“The first meeting in Nazareth, as recorded in chapter four; the great draught of fishes; the interview with the woman of the city in the house of Simon the Pharisee, as found in chapter seven; the beautiful incident of Mary at the feet of Jesus; the mission of the seventy (ch. 10) are found only here. Much of the material of chapters eleven to eighteen inclusive is told only by Luke, as also the story of Zaccheus.

“It is he alone who mentions the coming of the angel to our Savior to strengthen Him in His Gethsemane agony. Had it not been for Luke, we would never have known of the penitent thief, nor of the visit of our risen Lord with the two disciples on the way to and in their home at Emmaus.

“Then when we think of the parables,

it is striking to note how many are only related in this Gospel. The story of the Good Samaritan, the rich fool, the barren fig-tree, the great supper (not to be confounded with the marriage of the king’s son as given in Matthew), the lost coin, the prodigal son, the unjust steward, the story of Dives and Lazarus, the unjust judge and the widow, the Pharisee and the publican, and the parable of the pounds, are all given by Luke. . . .

“How much then we would be bereaved of, if Luke had not been moved by the Spirit of God to search out so many things that no other inspired writer has recorded” (Ironsides, pp. 12-13).

3. Emphasis on the work of Christ in redemption. See: Luke 9:22, 31, 51; 12:50; 13:32-33; 17:25; 18:31ff; 20:17; 22:37; 24:26ff, 44, 46. The cross is the dominant theme of the Gospel.

4. A universal offer of salvation. Because of the redemptive work of Christ, salvation can be offered to all mankind: Samaritans, Gentiles, the poor, outcasts, sinners. All four Gospels quote from Isaiah 40 in presenting the words of the forerunner, *“Make ready the way of the Lord.”* But only Luke gives the final line of triumph: *“And all flesh shall see the salvation of God!”* (Luke 3:4-6).

5. Interest in individuals. We have in this Gospel God’s concern for people. His great plan of redemption is for humble men and women. The little people are important to God. Luke has much to say about individuals not mentioned anywhere

MEMORY (Luke 19:10): “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

else in Scripture: Zacharias and Elizabeth, Zacchaeus, Cleopas, the woman who anointed Christ's feet in the house of Simon the Pharisee, and many others.

These are unimportant people in the eyes of the world. This gospel has been called the Gospel of the Underdog.

6. *Emphasis upon Christ's dealing with women.* Luke presents the Lord's special concern for women: his mother, Elisabeth, Anna, Mary and Martha, Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Susanna, the widow of Nain, a woman who anointed His feet, the little bent-over woman, the widow who gave her all, the daughters of Jerusalem, women in the parables of the lost coin and the unjust judge.

7. *The Lord Jesus as a guest in homes.* **"In this Gospel we also see frequently the Lord Jesus Christ as a guest in the homes of various people. He sat with them and ate with them, and talked over their problems. No other Gospel presents Christ going out to dinner so often as Luke does"** (Ironsides, p. 10).

8. *See also pages of this lesson: "How Christ is Presented in Luke?"* What Luke's method is can be learned only from studying the Gospel itself.

So **"it will be proved, as we proceed, that Luke's is essentially a moral order, and that he classifies the facts, conversations, questions, replies, and discourses of our Lord according to their inward connection, and not the mere outward succession of events, which is in truth the rudest and most infantile**

form of record.

"But to group events together with their causes and consequences, in their moral order, is a far more difficult task for the historian, as distinguished from the mere chronicler. God can cause Luke to do it perfectly" (Kelly, p. 16).

PURPOSE OF LUKE

He writes to help his Excellency, Theophilus, that he might truly know the certainty of those things in which he had been instructed: ". . . *that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught*" (Luke 1:4). "Taught" is the translation of the Greek signifying oral instruction.

"Oral teaching is never safe for finality. I may tell you the story. You repeat it. By the time this process has gone far enough, the story may not be the same at all" (Morgan, p. 13).

Geldenhuys writes that "*exact truth*" means that the truthfulness of the history of the Lord Jesus is absolutely certain, not merely an intellectual conviction but something very secure and stable (p. 57).

God **"takes care of those who know Him though it may be imperfectly, and He would lead them more deeply into the understanding and enjoyment of what He is now communicating to man by His grace. To him that hath it shall be given"** (Kelly, p. 16).

Luke was writing to a Gentile, whose name means "Lover of God."

MEMORY (Luke 19:10): "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

“That this wonderful Gospel should be written to one individual shows the delight that God has in making Himself known to one man. Each individual reader can take it all to himself” (Coates, p. 3).

Luke purposed that Theophilus might know the certainty, “the exact truth about the things you have been taught.”

“The gospel rests upon these divinely accredited certainties. It is not an imaginary system based upon weird and unproved legends, but a substantial and logical message resting upon an assured foundation of facts.

“The Gospels are true histories. Therefore the incidents they record ac-

tually occurred. We need not fear to rest our faith upon this definite testimony which God has preserved for our instruction” (Ironsides, p. 18).

OUR GOALS IN THIS STUDY OF LUKE:

To see Christ and be made like Him (2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Corinthians 3:18).

**Turn your eyes upon Jesus;
Look full in His wonderful face;
And the things of earth will grow
strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.”**

--Helen Howarth Lemmel, 1922

MEMORY (Luke 19:10): "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

II. RESPONSES

Questions on Luke 1:5-56

FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

REVIEW: Lesson 1 Notes. What in the last lesson stood out to you? Be ready to share.

MEMORY: (Optional) Memorize the key verse, Luke 24:19: And He said to them, “What things?” And they said to Him, “The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people.”

READ: Luke 1:5-56

DO QUESTIONS: 1-4

1. What is the significance of the fact that Herod was king of Judah at this time and why did that humiliate the Jews? (See 2 Samuel 8:14; Psalm 137:7; Ezekiel 25:14 and the book of Obadiah.)

2 Samuel 8:14—And he put garrisons in Edom. In all Edom he put garrisons, and all the Edomites became servants to David. And the LORD helped David wherever he went.

Psalm 137:7—Remember, O LORD, against the sons of Edom the day of Jerusalem, who said, “Raze it, raze it, to its very foundation.”

Ezekiel 25:14—And I will lay My vengeance on Edom by the hand of My people Israel. Therefore, they will act in Edom according to my anger and according to My wrath; thus they will know My vengeance,” declares the Lord God.

2. What are the main events in this section?

3. This lesson is called “Responses.” How does each person in this section (Luke 1:5-56) respond to the good news?

4. What can we learn from their responses?

“HOW CAN I BE SURE OF THIS?”

READ: Luke 1:5-25

DO QUESTIONS: 5-12

READ: Pages 20-25

5. What is the altar of incense and what was Zacharias doing there (Luke 1:8-9; Ex. 30:1-8)?

Luke 1:8-9—Now it came about, while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division,

MEMORY (Luke 19:10): “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

Exodus 30:1-8—Moreover, you shall make an altar as a place for burning incense; you shall make it of acacia wood. Its length shall be a cubit, and its width a cubit, it shall be square, and its height shall be two cubits; its horns shall be of one piece with it. And you shall overlay it with pure gold, its top and its sides all around, and its horns; and you shall make a gold molding all around for it.

And you shall make two gold rings for it under its molding; you shall make them on its two sides—on opposite sides—and they shall be holders for poles with which to carry it. And you shall make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. And you shall put this altar in front of the veil that is near the ark of the testimony, in front of the mercy seat that is over the ark of the testimony, where I will meet with you.

And Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it; he shall burn it every morning when he trims the lamps. And when Aaron trims the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense. There shall be perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations.

6. What is the significance of incense in Luke 1:10? (See Psalm 141:2 and Revelation 5:8.)

Psalm 141:2—May my prayer be counted as incense before Thee; the lifting up of my hands as the evening offering.

Revelation 5:8—And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the

twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

7. Why is prayer meeting the least attended of all church meetings—if it is even held at all?

8. What was Zacharias's response to the angel's message? Why did it anger God? What happened to him as a result?

9. We are often struck dumb when we have an opportunity to witness to family members and strangers. Why? Could there be a parallel to Zacharias's experience? If so, what can we do about it

10. What are the meanings of the names Zacharias, Elizabeth and John? Why are their names significant? What tribe were they from? Why is this significant for us in matters of marriage?

11. List the things that are said about John in Luke 1:15-17. Do any of these things seem especially significant to you?

Luke 1:15-17—For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and he will drink no wine or liquor; and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his mother's womb. And he will turn back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

MEMORY (Luke 24:19): And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people."

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12. In Israel, every male direct descendant of Aaron was a priest. Is this true of us in God's family today? Why? Why not? (See Revelation 1:6; 5:10.) How can we serve Him as priests?

Rev. 1:6—And He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Rev. 5:10—And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.

“HOW SHALL THIS BE?”

READ: Luke 1:26-53 and Philippians 2:1-11

DO QUESTIONS: 13-19

READ: Pages 25-32

13. How did John turn many to the Lord? John 1:23, 35-37; 10:41-42

John 1:23, 35-37—He said, “I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.

And the next day John was standing, and two of his disciples; and he looked upon Jesus as He walked, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!”

John 10:41-42—And many came to Him; and they were saying, “While John performed no sign, yet everything John said about this man was true.” And many believed in Him there.

14. Why was it accurate for Elizabeth to say that Mary was the mother of her Lord (Luke 1:43) but it would have been totally wrong to say that Mary is the “mother of

God”? Think about Gen. 1:1; John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16.

Gen. 1:1—In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

John 1:1-3—In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him; and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

Col. 1:16—For in Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.

15. What is said about Christ—His Person and work—in Luke 1:31-35? Why did the angel not include Gentiles along with “the house of Jacob” in verse 33?

16. According to the angel who confirmed the message to Joseph, why was the Baby to be called “Jesus” (Matt. 1:21)?

Matt. 1:21—“And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.”

17. Meditate upon Mary's response to the angel's message and how it might speak to your heart today. What was Mary's attitude? What followed this in her life through the years? See Psa. 123:2; Luke 1:47,49; John 2:5.

Psalms 123:2—Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mis-

MEMORY (Luke 24:19): And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people.

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gress; so our eyes look to the LORD our God, until He shall be gracious to us.

Luke 1:47, 49—And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For the Mighty One has done great things for me; and holy is His name.

John 2:5—His mother said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it.”

(Personal): Would we have responded as Mary did? Why or why not? If you have that kind of response today, can you expect anything in your life to change? What?

18. What evidence is there in Mary’s response (Luke 1:46-56) that she knew the Old Testament? See the following verses and relate each to phrases in Luke 1:46-56:

Psalm 34:3—O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt His name together.

Phrase:

Isaiah 43:11— I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no savior.

Phrase:

Isaiah 60:16—You will also suck the milk of nations, and will suck the breast of kings; then you will know that I, the Wes: this goes under Isaiah 60:16 LORD, am your Savior, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

Phrase:

Psalm 111:9—He has sent redemption to his people. He has ordained His covenant forever; holy and awesome is His name. on the third and fourth generation of those who hate me.

Phrase:

Psalm 107:9—For He has satisfied the thirsty soul, and the hungry soul He has filled with what is good.

Phrase:

Genesis 17:7—And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you.

Phrase:

Psalm 103:17—But the loving kindness of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His Righteousness to children’s children.

Phrase:

Psalm 1:2—But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night

Phrase:

Exodus 20:5-6—You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your

MEMORY (Luke 24:19): And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people.

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God, am a jealous God visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,

But showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

Phrase:

19. How does this response of Mary's speak to your heart about your own Bible study? (See Psalm 1:2; Colossians 3:16a.)

Psalm 1:2—But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night.

Col. 3:16a—Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you

(Personal): Would we respond as she did if He asked us to suffer? To give more? To entertain more? To serve Him more? To witness more?

“WHY AM I SO FAVORED?”

READ: Luke 1:39-45

DO QUESTIONS: 20-24

READ: Page 32

20. What pronouns are prominent in verses 46-49 and 50-56? In what ways can her song be our song?

21. Mary herself said, “All generations shall call me blessed.” (Luke 1:48) Does this mean that Mary was sinless and had an exalted place before God and man?

Explain your answer. See the following verses:

Luke 1:46-48—And Mary said, “My soul exalts the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has had regard for the humble state of His bonds slave; for behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed.”

Luke 11:27-28—And it came about while He said these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice, and said to Him, “Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts at which You nursed.” But He said, “On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God, and observe it.”

John 2:1-5—And on the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there; and Jesus also was invited, and His disciples, to the wedding. And when the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, “They have no wine.” And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what do I have to do with you? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it.”

John 19:26-27—When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” Then He said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her into his own household.

Acts 1:12-14—Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where

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they were staying; that is, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

1 Timothy 2:5—For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

22. Elizabeth said of Mary, “Blessed art

thou among women.” What does her response to Mary’s arrival tell us about Elizabeth (verses 39-45)?

23. In your spiritual history, has there been a time when you responded to God as Zacharias did? As Mary did? As Elizabeth did? Share if you wish.

24. How is Isaac Watt’s hymn, “Join All the Glorious Names,” (page 20) a summary of Luke 1:5-56?

MEMORY (Luke 24:19): And He said to them, “What things?” And they said to Him, “The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people.

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II. RESPONSES

Luke 1:5-56

**Join all the glorious names,
Of wisdom, love, and power,
That ever mortals knew,
That angels ever bore;
All are too mean to speak His worth,
Too mean to set my Savior forth.**

**Great Prophet of my God,
My tongue would bless Thy Name;
By Thee the joyful news
Of our salvation came:
The joyful news of sins forgiven,
Of hell subdued, and peace with
heaven.**

**My Savior and my Lord,
My Conqueror and my King,
Thy scepter and Thy sword,
Thy reigning grace I sing:
Thine is the power: Behold, I sit
In willing bonds beneath Thy feet.**

Glad tidings! How do we respond to the Word of God? Let us look at chapter one of Luke and see three reactions (Mary, Elizabeth and Zacharias) to the message of the Lord:

“HOW CAN I BE SURE OF THIS?”

The passage is the first part of chapter one. **Preparation** has been made, and the time is right. The **persons** involved are Zacharias and Elizabeth. The **place** is Herod’s Temple. The **promise** is the son who will be the forerunner of Christ.

(Luke 1:5-56 Preparation)

But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son (Galatians 4:4).

In the days of Herod, King of Judea (Luke 1:5).

So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress (Daniel 9:25).

The time was drawing near. Godly men and women of Israel were expecting their Prince.

In his book *The Coming Prince* (pp. 127-28), Sir Robert Anderson shows that Christ’s triumphant entry into Jerusalem on the Sunday before His crucifixion occurred in exactly the right year and the crucifixion occurred on exactly the right day.

As also predicted, these intervening centuries had been troublesome times for Israel. Armies had swept over the land in successive waves of fury.

And now the Jews under a puppet king, Herod the Great, bore the iron yoke of Rome.

Thus the phrase “in the days of Herod” describes a dark and calamitous period in the Israel of Roman occupation. Herod’s

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strings were pulled by Augustus Caesar, and the puppet danced to the Roman tune.

Appointed by Caesar in 40 B.C., he governed for 36 years, a tenure marked by showy accomplishments and bloody horrors. He began a successful building program—the rebuilding of the Jewish temple, the erection of bridges, aqueducts, stadiums in the Roman fashion, and even the planning of cities. But he polluted the land with pagan temples.

Personally vindictive, he retaliated with cruelty toward any sign of opposition. He even murdered members of his own family.

A hated foreigner, descendant of Esau, Herod professed conversion to Judaism to try to win over the Jews.

While Jewish leaders accommodated to him, nevertheless he was despised by Jew and Gentile alike.

In 4 B.C. he died unmourned. “In the days of Herod” recalls an era of tyranny written in blood. Against this black background, Luke paints the dawning of a new day.

PERSONS

1:5. In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.

The names are significant as we ponder the brightening hope of Israel. Zacharias means “Jehovah remembers: God remembers His covenant.” Elizabeth means “God is an oath: He is the absolutely faithful One; He keeps His promises.” Godly

parents in naming their children had expressed confidence in God. Jehovah will remember His oath through sending the Kinsman-Redeemer. This is the subject of the Gospel of Luke. How full of meaning that both parents came from the tribe of Levi. How suitable that they who would sire the messenger were priestly.

1:6. and they were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord.

The only people who could observe the law blamelessly were those who looked beyond the law to Christ. Those who merely rested in the law broke it, though the law might be their boast. Paul shows this in the epistle of Romans.

So, today, I must have faith in God’s purposes, revealed in His Word, in order to fulfill God’s will. In proportion as my mind is occupied with Christ, I will be able to glorify God in my life.

1:7. And they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years.

Childlessness was the tragedy of this home. We have to know something about the Jewish hopes and feelings in order to appreciate the sorrow here. For a godly couple of this time, in light of Daniel’s prophecy, childlessness meant double disappointment. Not only would there be no heir, but they were ruled out as prospective parents of Messiah.

Now Zacharias and Elisabeth were much too old to have a child, and they had

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long ago given up that hope. They were not embittered, however, and continued to love and serve the Lord and to look for the coming Prince. They were walking in the light that God had given them.

This couple is a picture of the nation. Israel was barren, unable naturally through the law to inherit the promises, needing the supernatural hand of God (Romans 2-3), who remembers His oath. These two were upright and blameless under the law, but there was no fruit for God. Typically under the law, there was only barren ritual.

There is also a lesson here for us. In ourselves, we fail. If we are going to bear fruit, the power of God must operate.

PLACE

1:8. Now it came about, while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division,

9. according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

10. And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering.

In Israel, every male direct descendant of Aaron was a priest.

(1 Chronicles 24:1-6): When these priests became so numerous that they could not all minister at one time, David divided them into 24 divisions or "courses."

Now the divisions of the descendants of Aaron were these. The sons of Aaron were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

But Nadab and Abihu died before their father and had no sons. So Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests.

And David, with Zadok of the sons of Eleazar and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, divided them according to their offices for their ministry.

Since more chief men were found from the descendants of Eleazar than the descendants of Ithamar, they divided them thus: there were sixteen heads of fathers' households of the descendants of Eleazar, and eight of the descendants of Ithamar according to their fathers' households.

Thus they were divided by lot, the one as the other; for they were officers of the sanctuary and officers of God, both from the descendants of Eleazar and the descendants of Ithamar.

And Shemaiah, the son of Nethanel the scribe, from the Levites, recorded them in the presence of the king, the princes, Zadok the priest, Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, and the heads of the fathers' households of the priests and of the Levites; one fathers' household taken for Eleazar and one taken for Ithamar.

They served on a roster during the year, except during the three major feasts. Each year each division served two periods of one week each. Zacharias belonged to the eighth division, that of Abijah.

When it became his turn to serve his week in the temple, Zacharias came up to Jerusalem from his village in the southern hill country of Judea. Each day of service, the duties of the priests were determined by lot. The burning of the incense was the highest honor. Because there were so

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many priests, it is quite likely that some would never receive this privilege, and those who did could perform this office only once. This day, when the lot fell upon Zacharias, would have been the greatest day in his life.

All of the temple service was established to symbolize the meeting of God with man. "Tabernacle" means "meeting" place. Sacrifices for sin made this meeting possible. The priest was the one who offered the sacrifice and thus brought the people near to God. "Priest" means "mediator." The sacrifices themselves did not signify prayer; they were the preparation for prayer. The symbol for prayer was the burning of the incense (Psalm 141:2; Revelation 5:8), pointing to communion of man with God.

May my prayer be counted as incense before thee; the lifting up of my hands as the evening offering (Psalm 141:2).

And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints (Revelation 5:8).

As incensing priest, Zacharias with his assisting priests slowly ascended the steps to the Holy Place and approached the golden altar of incense. The altar was placed in front of the veil which separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy, into which only the High Priest could enter and that only once a year. One of the assistants reverently spread the coals on the golden

altar; the other arranged the incense. The two assistants, worshipping, withdrew, walking backwards from the Holy Place. The incensing priest was left alone to await the signal for the burning of the incense. In the outer courts were the priests, the Levites and the crowds of worshipers who daily filled the temple for the morning and evening services.

The word of command was given, signaling that "the time of incense" had come.

At this moment **"the whole multitude of people fell down before the Lord in silent prayer. It is this most solemn period, when throughout the vast Temple buildings deep silence rested on the worshipping multitude, that within the sanctuary itself the priest laid the incense on the golden altar and the cloud of odours rose up before the Lord"** (Edersheim, Book I, pp. 137-38).

At this moment, the angel Gabriel suddenly appeared to Zacharias on the right side of the golden altar.

PROMISE

1:11. And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense.

12. and Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear gripped him.

13. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John.

MEMORY (Luke 24:19): And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people.

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14. "And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.

15. "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and he will drink no wine or liquor; and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his mother's womb.

16. "And he will turn back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God.

17. "And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah ... to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Prayer was the first preparation for the coming of the forerunner. Prayer that is like incense is prayer that is in accord with the mind of God. For many years Zacharias had prayed for a son and then long since had given up hope.

As the pious old man laid the incense on the golden altar, his heart must have gone up to God in petition for the coming of Messiah the Prince. But it was many years before that he had prayed for a son. He seems to have lost sight of this prayer, but God had not.

He would have a son, and his name would be John, "the gracious gift of God"—the favor of God to men. The son was named from heaven. There would be great rejoicing at his birth because he would be great in the sight of the Lord (v. 15).

The angel said nothing about the sight of men. It is what we are in the sight of God that counts; that is what we really are. John would not require the stimulation of wine, the joys of earth, for he would be filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb; God Himself would be the Source of his joy and strength.

The result of John's ministry would be the turning of the people's hearts back to God. Zacharias had evidently longed that the people would be turned back to the Lord. His prayers had risen to God like incense, and now he was to receive the answer.

Two striking things are said in this promise spoken by the angel Gabriel.

(1) John would go before the Lord to prepare the people for His coming, i.e. the coming of Jehovah. This is a plain statement of who Jesus Christ really is: He is Jehovah.

(2) John would come in the power and spirit of Elijah to bring reconciliation to hearts that were broken and separated from God as the result of sin.

The angel quotes from the last words of the last prophet four hundred years before at the end of the Old Testament (Malachi 4:5-6), but he does not quote the last phrase

Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.

And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse (Malachi 4:5-6).

Then he interprets it: John will come in the spirit and power of Elijah. Elijah had zeal for God; he called the people of Israel back to the Lord in days of apostasy. He had the spirit of courage. He called sin, sin. He had the spirit of faith; he trusted God for food. He had the spirit of power.

He called down fire.

MEMORY (Luke 24:19): And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people.

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People of that day hated him.

If one speaks out against apostasy, he is branded as a troublemaker. There is in Luke's gospel a contrast between this world and that. John would prepare the hearts of people set upon this world and turn them toward the Kingdom of God.

So often we are not equal to our prayers, but God moves on in grace despite our unbelief. Zacharias responded to the promise in unbelief.

"How shall I know this for certain? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." God is displeased with unbelief, and He chastened Zacharias. This chastening was at once a rebuke and a sign.

The incensing priest must come out of the Holy Place and take his stand on the top of the steps that led down from the Court of the Priests and there repeat, followed by the other priests, the blessing in Numbers 6:24-26:

The LORD bless you, and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace.

To this the people responded, "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting."

Now we can understand the wonder of the people as Zacharias came out of the temple and stood there speechless, while they waited for his benediction.

In contrast to Zacharias, we have the faith of Mary:

1:45. "Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord."

Mary's heart was prepared to receive the favor of God.

What the ministry of John the Baptist was to accomplish in the people of Israel was already seen in the life of Mary.

The forerunner's message was to prepare hearts to receive favor from heaven. Mary's heart was ready.

We can learn from Mary. We need heart preparation just as much as those in Israel needed it in that day.

If we would appreciate what God would say to us in His Son, we want prepared hearts. Mary can teach us what this means. We look at this woman in her humble surroundings. We hear with her the angel's message. And we consider her response of faith.

Mary's life can be an encouragement to us today.

"Here we see her, a maiden of the royal line, the blood of David coursing in her veins, in the town, but held from all impurity, endued with grace; living in the fellowship of the God of her fathers, living in quietness and in peace and in purity" (Morgan, p. 21).

"HOW SHALL THIS BE?"

(Luke 1:26-53

Philippians 2:1-11)

Mary's Surroundings

1:26. Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee, called Nazareth,

1:27. to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

MEMORY (Luke 24:19): And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people."

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God watches over those whose hearts are open toward Him.

When He sends His heavenly messenger with glad tidings, He passes up Jerusalem and the temple and those in prominent places. He goes to Galilee which was held in contempt by proper Jews (Isaiah 9:1). He passes by Jerusalem and goes to Nazareth.

But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles (Isaiah 9:1).

“This town was situated about seventy miles northeast from Jerusalem. . . .

“We know now that Nazareth then had at least fifteen thousand in population, possibly more. It was one of the cities of Galilee; and being where it was geographically, it was the place where Roman soldiers often tarried overnight, and Greek merchantmen put up in the caravansaries. Nazareth was a hotbed of corruption. . . . When Nathaniel said, ‘Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?’ he spoke as one familiar with the place” (Morgan, p. 19).

Then the angel entered an obscure home in this city. God knows the obscure, and He comes to the heart there which is open to receive Him.

Mary was betrothed to a man named Joseph, about whom we learn more in Matthew 1:18; 13:55.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18).

Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? (Matthew 13:55).

He was a righteous man, a carpenter by trade, a descendant of David. In those days betrothal lasted one year and was held as binding as the marriage vow.

The Angel’s Message

1:30. And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.

31. “And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.”

32. “He will be great, and will be called the Son of the most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;

33. and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end.”

34. And Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?”

35. And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.”

At last, we have the fulfillment of prophecies given so long ago:

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And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel (Genesis 3:15).

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14)

In his salutation the angel calls Mary highly favored. This means that she has received favor. In Mary, we see God's favor magnified more than in any other. There could be no closer identification of God with humanity than to be born of a woman.

His coming to her is not presented as the result of her own heart seeking, "but as the unsought and blessed outflow of the favor of heaven. That is the character of Luke's gospel—heaven breaking forth into this world so as to bring divine joy to the children of men.

"It is not divine favor known providentially or in changed circumstances for men, but God Himself coming in a grace that surpasses everything, in grace that was as high above the thoughts of men as heaven is above the earth. . . .

"The birth of the Holy Child Jesus as conceived and born of a woman is the supreme expression of the favor of God" (Coates, pp. 8- 9).

The names given to the Child express this favor of God:

Immanuel—Isaiah 7:14—"God with us," God manifest in the flesh

Jesus—Luke 1:31—Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua—"Jehovah is Salvation"

Son of the Highest—Luke 1:32—the absolute and unique character of His Sonship

Son of God—Luke 1:35

God in grace becomes man in order to be our Kinsman-Redeemer. See Hebrews 2:14-17.

Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil;

And might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the seed of Abraham.

Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people (Hebrews 2:14-17).

This Savior is also King.

"Even in the lowest domain, how far is His Kingdom from being a mere human dominion" (Kelly, p. 26).

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

"Jacob needed lifelong discipline; he had to be corrected and adjusted, but God had taken him up in grace and faithfulness, and He did not finish with

MEMORY (Luke 24:19): And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people.

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him until He had brought about what He intended. He said to him, ‘I will not leave thee until I have done what I have spoken to thee of.’ Jesus reigns over the house of Jacob” (Coates, p. 11).

This is the fulfillment of Old Testament promises of the Messiah-King of the lineage of David (2 Samuel 7:14; Psalm 2:7).

I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me (2 Samuel 7:14a).

I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, “Thou art my Son, today I have begotten Thee” (Psalm 2:7).

“His sovereignty will, however, not be a passing, earthly sovereignty, but a spiritual and everlasting one” (Geldenhuis, p. 76).

Mary is puzzled, but not disbelieving. She believes that what the angel has declared is going to happen. But she does not understand how this is to come about, so she asks in faith. She does not, like Zacharias, ask for a sign to prove it. She asks for more information.

“When there is any difficulty as to divine things and we ask for explanation, we always get an enlargement of what has been spoken of. When the Lord explained His parables He always added their import. When Mary asked Gabriel how this was to be, she got great enlargements” (Coates, pp. 11-12).

In verse 35, we have the truth of the incarnation in very few words:

1:35. And the angel answered and said to her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.

Jesus **“was to be actually of the virgin’s substance as to His humanity, with which His true deity was to be united in such a way as to make one person with two natures—the human and the divine. . . .**

“Unbelievers have said it is impossible to accept the Bible teaching of the virgin birth because it involves a biological miracle. What it really involves is the omnipotent power of God, and the reverent believer can accept this without hesitation” (Ironsides, pp. 37-38).

The power of the Most High was to overshadow her just as the cloud overshadowed the Tabernacle (Exodus 40:34; Numbers 9:15).

“The angel answered the biological question, saying: The thing shall be done by the direct act of God, the power of the Most High, the Holy Spirit, wrapping thee round, overshadowing thee, producing in thy womb the Man-child; and also, by that same act, by that same energy, by that same force, the Holy Spirit overshadowing, that which is begotten shall be held from contamination with the sin of thy nature, and in human nature. It shall be holy. It shall have “being” (quotes added) in thy womb by the act of God; and it shall be held from contamination with the sinfulness of thy nature, by the same act of God” (Morgan, p. 24).

MEMORY (Luke 24:19): And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people."

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Gabriel emphasizes that two requirements will be fulfilled in His conception. The Redeemer must be “born of a woman” (Galatians 4:4) so that He will share the same nature as the ones He comes to redeem.

But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law (Galatians 4:4).

The Redeemer shall also be holy because no sinful human being can become the propitiation for the sins of others.

It is important to note His title, “Son of God.” The angel does not say that through His birth He will become the Son of God. Indeed, as a result of this supernatural conception, He will be the God-man and will be acknowledged as such. Although Luke presents Christ as Son of Man, He is not merely Son of Man.

“This is exceedingly important. ‘Son of God’ is a title that belongs to our Lord both in His Divine glory before He became a man and here; for, in this place when He became a man, He did not cease to be Son of God. As incarnate He was still the Son of God. So, again, when He rose from the dead, the same thing was true; He was the Son of God as risen again. It is plain therefore that it is a title that appertains to Him in the three conditions in which Scripture represents our Lord” (Kelly, p26).

He was Son of God eternally as the second member of the trinity; **Son of God** when He became man; **Son of God** when He rose from the dead and ascended into

glory (Hebrews 1:1-14; Galatians 4:4; Psalm 45:6-7; Romans 1:4).

He is the eternal Son of God.

Hebrews 1:1-14 (which see).

Galatians 4:4 (above)

Psalm 45:6-7 (Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness; therefore God, Thy God, has anointed thee with the oil of joy above Thy fellows.)

Romans 1:4 (Who was declared with power to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead, according to the spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord.)

God’s word is self-fulfilling:

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11).

The angel summarizes it all for Mary’s heart of faith:

1:37. For nothing will be impossible with God.

Mary’s Response

1:38. Behold, the bondslave of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word.

“Handmaid” is really “bondslave.” In Philippians 2, Paul exhorts us to let this mind be in us.

MEMORY (Luke 24:19): And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people.

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Mary speaks words of surrender and devotion to God.

Then the angel left her. And the Holy Spirit, always the Gentleman, lets the details of the actual conception remain vague. A veil falls over the miraculous. The emphasis remains on the faith and submission of Mary.

“She submitted herself to be the vessel of these wondrous thoughts of favor. God is looking that we should submit ourselves to His thoughts of favor in regard to us, and His thoughts for His own delight” (Coates, p. 13).

The word “handmaid” (*doule* in the Greek) means “slave-girl,” one who in complete obedience would do the will of the family who owned her. Mary reinforces that this is her mindset when she says, “Let it be to me according to your word.”

It’s easy for the casual reader to think that this would be a natural thing for a girl living in that age to say. We forget that she knew she was of the royal line of David. Every Jewess knew her family history. Also, such a response reflects Mary’s quiet heroism. She was not yet married to Joseph. One might well think that his reaction to her pregnancy might be explosive and the death penalty, while not often carried out, was still a possibility (Deuteronomy 22:23ff).

Mary could not be sure that she would not have to suffer, that she might even have to die.

But she recognized the will of God and accepted it, always conscious that she was the bondslave of the Lord—“His forever. Only His.”

Evidently Mary had not heard of Elizabeth’s pregnancy. The angel informs her of this supernatural fact, no doubt to encourage her and as a hint that she should visit her kinswoman, now in the sixth month of her pregnancy.

She goes in haste to the village of Zacharias and Elizabeth in the hill country south of Jerusalem. This home was the Lord’s own provision for her. Here she received compassion, encouragement, and time to think.

It is significant that she goes to the home of Zacharias because, as an officiating priest in the temple, he must judge cases of alleged adultery. That he takes no action against her proves he was convinced she was a pure woman. The same angel had appeared to him six months earlier.

After a journey of four to five days, Mary enters Elizabeth’s house unexpected, surprising Elizabeth when she speaks. At that moment, Elizabeth says in song, “The baby leaped in my womb for joy!” (v. 44).

Filled with the Holy Spirit and illumined by Him, she knew that “Mary was God’s tabernacle, and that dwelling within her was the Lord of life and the Lord of Mary. . . .

“Luke is the only one who has recorded for us the outburst of poetry and music in connection with the Incarnation. . . . Luke is the instrument, and the right instrument, to give us those early poems and songs. From him we have gained the Beatitude of Elizabeth, the Magnificat of Mary, the Benedictus of Zacharias, and the Nunc Dimittis of

MEMORY (Luke 24:19): And He said to them, “What things?” And they said to Him, “The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people.”

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Simeon; the Evangel sung by the angel of the Lord over the plains, and the Gloria of the angelic host. Those who love the modes of music will surely linger over these chapters. Luke, the artist, has gathered and collected, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, the stories which reveal the fact that when Jesus came into the world, poetry expressed itself, and music was reborn” (Morgan, p. 27).

Mary’s song of praise comes not in response to Gabriel’s wonderful announcement, but when Elizabeth calls her “mother of my Lord.” Her song is called the “Magnificat,” because that is its first word in Latin.

Mary’s song of praise shows her knowledge of the Word of God. It is composed almost wholly of Old Testament quotations. It is closely related to Hannah’s song after the birth of Samuel (1 Samuel 2:1-10 - which see). To the Old Testament quotations, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Mary gives a deeper application. In contrast to Hannah, who expresses personal triumph over enemies, Mary sings of personal joy and praises the character of God. It is a beautiful lyric poem, infused with the Word of God.

The song divides into two parts: (1) Her personal joy (vv. 46-49) and (2) The praiseworthy character of God (vv. 50-56).

(1) Mary’s personal joy: She rejoices in “God my Savior” (v. 47), showing that she recognizes her own need of the Savior.

(2) Celebration of God Himself: She

praises Him for His power, His holiness, His mercy, and His care for His people.

In verse 53, Mary expresses a divine principle which is true of God’s dealings with man down through the ages:

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

“Just as men recognize their need; as soon as they begin to hunger and thirst after righteousness; as soon as they recognize their spiritual poverty—as soon as they realize all this, they find in God One who meets every need” (Ironside, p. 45).

The keynote of this song is mercy.

“The question was asked John Nelson Darby in the closing days of his life: What is the difference between mercy and grace? His answer was, ‘Mercy is great in the greatness of the need, grace in the thought of the one who exercises it.’ That sentence is well worth weighing. Take an illustration. The king might be pleased to bestow upon me some mark of his favor; that would be purely a question of what was in his own heart. Grace is great in the thought of the one who exercises it. But suppose I were a convicted criminal in Exeter jail, mercy would be requisite, and the king could only show me his favor in the way of mercy; so mercy is great in the greatness of the need. . . . Mercy supposes conditions that are contrary to God, but in presence of them He shows mercy. . . . He reviewed all our history

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before He began with us; He knew all we should be as sinners, and as failing believers; He began with us in mercy, and it will be mercy from first to last” (Coates, pp. 19-20).

This is what Mary celebrates in her song.

“WHY AM I SO FAVORED?”

Now we look at the third response to good news, that of Elizabeth.

We are told to “rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.” It is sometimes easier to do the latter than the first. It is especially hard to rejoice when others receive more honor than we do. We think we deserve the honor more.

Through the revelation of the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth recognizes that the highest honor has been conferred upon her younger kinswoman. Joyfully she acknowledges that “the mother of my Lord” has come to her. It is incomprehensible to her that the Lord would give her such a favor as to receive the mother of the Savior. There is no sign of jealousy in Eliza-

beth. She and her own baby rejoice together in the coming of the great Redeemer.

Jealousy would have spoiled the blessing for Elizabeth. Her humble response opened the way for God’s joy to fill her heart. Thus she could appreciate Christ. She could recognize Him for who He really was—my Lord—the Lord from Heaven.

Psalm 110:1 – “The LORD says to my Lord: ‘Sit at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet’”.

She was able to respond in a way that brought glory to God. How do we respond to the Word of God? Like Zacharias in unbelief? Or like Mary and Elizabeth in submission and humility and acceptance, bringing glory to God?

As the hymn writer, Isaac Watts, wrote:

**“Behold, I sit—
In willing bonds beneath Thy feet.”**

MEMORY (Luke 24:19): And He said to them, “What things?” And they said to Him, “The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people.

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III. PREPARE HIM ROOM

Questions on Luke 1:57-2:20

REVIEW: Lesson 2 notes and read Luke 1:5-56

What special lesson(s) did the Lord drive home to your heart from the notes on Luke 1:5-56?

From Luke 1:5-56, list the things we are told about the following:

The forerunner of Christ

Christ: His Person and Work

OPTIONAL MEMORY: Review the key verse—Luke 19:10—and learn Luke 1:37: “For nothing will be impossible with God.”

I. PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE LORD

READ: Luke 1:57-2:20

DO: Questions 1-7

READ: Pages 37-41

1. Read Luke 1:57-2:20 and the notes on Lesson 3. List the main events in this section giving verse references.

2. Zacharias was disciplined for 9 months, but when he could speak he was full of praise—not bitterness (Hebrews 12:11—“All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those

who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness”). Have you had an experience like this? When Zacharias did speak, what did he say about the following (Luke 1:68-79)?

- A. Need for salvation:
- B. Results of deliverance:
- C. God’s purposes for John:

3. For deeper study, trace the Old Testament quotations to which Zacharias refers and state what they tell you about Zacharias and his study of the Scriptures. (See the marginal cross-references in your Bible)

Gen. 22:15-18—Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, “By Myself I have sworn,” declares the LORD, “because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son, indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.”

2 Sam. 22:2-4—And he (David) said, “The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; my savior, Thou dost save me from violence. “I call upon the LORD,

MEMORY (Luke 1:37): “For nothing will be impossible with God.”

who is worthy to be praised; and I am saved from my enemies.”

Psalm 106:10—So He saved them from the hand of the one who hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.

Micah 7:20—Thou wilt give truth to Jacob and unchanging love to Abraham, which Thou didst swear to our forefathers from the days of old.

Psalm 105:8—He has remembered his covenant forever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations.

Isa. 9:2—The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them.

Isa. 60:1—Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

Mal. 4:2—But for you who fear My name the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall.

Jer. 31:34—“And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

Psalm 18:2—The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

4. What spiritual lessons can we learn from the lives of Elizabeth and Zacharias?

Which lesson speaks specially to you, and is there anything in this lesson that should affect your life or attitudes this week?

5. What is a Nazarite? Read the essay on the Nazarite’s vow (pp. 47-51). How is Colossians 3:1-4 a synopsis of all you read on the Nazarite’s Vow? How should this affect us?

Col. 3:1-4—If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

6. The text (p. 39) says “God’s plan of redemption involves deliverance from spiritual bondage to sin and a glad turning to Him in loving service.” What is spiritual bondage to sin? How does it manifest itself? Why is deliverance not enough and a glad turning is essential?

II. LET EARTH RECEIVE HER KING

READ: Luke 2:1-7

DO QUESTIONS: 8-15

READ: Pages 41-43

7. C. A. Coates writes (p. 39), “**I suppose none of us really apprehends the immense divine power that is available to us in Him.**” What does that mean?

8. C. A. Coates also writes (p. 39), “**The**

MEMORY (Luke 1:37): “For nothing will be impossible with God.”

great evidence of mercy is that God has brought in a power adequate to set us perfectly free so that we may not do anything from morning to night every day of our lives but serve God, and find our happiness in doing so.” Is this true? How can we come into the truth of this in our life?

9. The text on pp. 39-40 says, “No matter what the task, we are to do it to His glory. Deliverance is needed for this. The power is readily available to us. It belongs to the Lord Jesus. The pre-requisite is self-judgment. This is where the ministry of John the Baptist fits in.” Explain what this means. See also 1 Cor. 11:31.

1 Cor. 11:31—But if we judged ourselves rightly, we should not be judged.

10. On page 40, col. 1, the text quotes verse 77, He comes “to give to His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins” and then states that this requires judgment upon the flesh and repentance. Are self-judgment and repentance necessary before there can be salvation? Have you found this was the road to your being saved? Explain.

11. Note the historical setting of Luke 2. What historical facts are given?

12. Where did Mary and Joseph live?

13. Do you think Mary and Joseph would have been familiar with Micah 5:2 (“But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for me to be ruler in Israel. His

goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity”)? Why or why not?

How did God use history to accomplish the fulfillment of Micah 5:2?

14. What are the earthly conditions of Christ’s birth?

III. LET EVERY HEART PREPARE HIM ROOM

READ: Luke 2:8-20

DO QUESTIONS: 15-19

READ: Pages 43-51

(Personal): Ponder the expression in verse 7 “no room”. It was not a matter of open hostility but simply—no room. In what areas in your life are you saying, “no room”?

What does it mean to give the Lord Jesus “room”?

15. What were the heavenly activities connected with His birth? (see also Philipians 2:1-11)

16. In what ways should our response be like that of the shepherds? See:

1 Kings 10:6-7—Then she said to the king, “It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. Nevertheless I did not believe the reports, until I came and my eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. You exceed in wisdom and prosperity the report which I heard.”

MEMORY (Luke 1:37): “For nothing will be impossible with God.”

Job 42:5—"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees Thee."

Psalms 119:18—Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Thy law.

Acts 17:3—Explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ."

2 Cor. 3:18—But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

17. What does Luke 2:14 mean to you? "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased" (NASV). (See also Psa. 16:3; Col. 1:10.)

Psa. 16:3—As for the saints who are in the earth, they are the majestic ones in whom is all my delight.

Col. 1:10—So that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all

respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

18. Someone has said, "Never think of yourself apart from Christ." How can this change my attitude when I'm thinking "poor me." God said that He was well pleased with His beloved Son (Matthew 3:17), but how can He be pleased with sinful man—with me? Galatians 2:20: John 14:20: Colossians 3:1-4:

Gal. 2:20—I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

John 14:20—In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

Col. 3:1-4—See question #6.

19. What impressed you in the poems at chapter's end? Explain each sonnet in John Donne's "La Carona" and discuss the heart and significance of the other poems.

III. PREPARE HIM ROOM

Luke 1:57-2:20

**“Shepherds, in the field abiding,
Watching o’er your flocks by night;
God with man is now residing,
Yonder shines the infant-light:
Come and worship, come and wor-
ship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King.**

**“Saints before the altar bending,
Watching long in hope and fear,
Suddenly the Lord, descending,
In His temple shall appear:
Come and worship, come and wor-
ship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King.”**

—James Montgomery, 1771-1854
“Angels From the Realms of Glory”

**“Joy to the world!
The Lord is come.
Let earth receive her King.
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing!”**

—Isaac Watts, 1719
“Joy to the World”

**“Room for pleasure, room for busi-
ness—
But, for Christ the Crucified,
Not a place that He can enter
In the heart for which He died?”**

—Source unknown.
Adapted by Daniel W. Whittle
“Have You Any Room for Jesus”

**“Thou didst leave Thy throne and Thy
kingly crown**

**When Thou camest to earth for me;
But in Bethlehem’s home was there
found no room
For Thy holy nativity:
O come to MY heart, Lord Jesus!
There is room in MY heart for Thee.”**
“Heaven’s arches rang when the angels
sang,
Proclaiming Thy royal degree;

**But in lowly birth didst Thou come to
earth,
And in great humility.
O come to MY heart, Lord Jesus,
There is room in MY heart for Thee.”**

—Emily E. S. Elliott, 1864
“Room for Thee”

The inns of this earth have no room for Him. Man’s world has no place for the Savior. But long ago, when He came to earth, a few hearts were prepared by God to receive Him.

Let us look at those few: the family of His forerunner, His home people, a company of shepherds on the hillside. The lives of those humble folk will encourage us today—in *this* day of His rejection by man’s world—to give Him throne room in our heart.

The coming of the Savior was celebrated in song.

In this lesson, we will look at the inspired poetry recorded by Luke.

Included at the end of this lesson are

MEMORY (Luke 1:37): “For nothing will be impossible with God.”

poems written by believers down through the centuries to celebrate the nativity of Christ, our Savior.

I. PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE LORD!

Luke 1:57-80

The family of His Forerunner

In a small village in the hill country of South Judea, there is great rejoicing. God, who remembers His covenant, has sent the promised forerunner of the Messiah. Friends and neighbors have gathered to praise Him for supernatural intervention in giving a son to Elizabeth and Zacharias in their old age. The angel has promised that this son will be a joy and delight to them.

1:14 And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.

He will be great in the sight of the Lord, filled with the Holy Spirit, a Nazarite, turning the hearts of many to the Lord. His birth is a cause for praise to God for His mercy. The clan gathers to welcome the new baby Zacharias and to share his parents' wonder and pleasure.

"His name is John"—which means "God's gracious gift." At the circumcision and naming of the child, Elizabeth insists on the name given by heaven. Zacharias concurs by faith in writing on his tablet, "His name is John." Immediately the sign of his unbelief is removed. His tongue is loosed to praise God for His gift of grace to a childless family. Out of barrenness has come fruit for God.

All of these things are marveled at and much talked about among the hill people

of Judea. Thus the Lord God is beginning to prepare their hearts for the coming of His Son.

Now Zacharias is filled with the Holy Spirit, and he sings the Benedictus. The theme of his song centers in the name of his son—the gracious gift of God. The song celebrates the God of grace and mercy, the God who plans salvation for His people. His salvation is in the Son, our Kinsman-Redeemer.

This song divides itself into three parts—the first (vv. 68-75), speaking of the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ; the second (vv. 76-77), turning to the mission of the forerunner; the third (vv. 78-79), focusing again upon the Redeemer. Thus, under inspiration, Zacharias sings his hymn of benediction to the glory of God.

We consider the three sections of Zacharias's hymn:

1:68. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people,

69. And has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant—

70. As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old—

71. Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us;

72. To show mercy toward our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant,

73. The oath which He swore to Abraham our father,

74. To grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear,

MEMORY (Luke 1:37): "For nothing will be impossible with God."

75. *In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.*

“There was faith here. During the season of his dumbness Zacharias has pondered the ways of the Lord; and the Holy Ghost, as He had filled Elisabeth, as He had filled the babe from his mother’s womb, so now filled Zacharias, who prophesies the end of these wonders. It is remarkable the grace that does not so much look at his own house as at the house of God’s servant David. It is important to observe how thoroughly this savors of Old Testament hopes” (Kelly, p. 29).

God has raised up a horn of salvation. Just as the strength of the animal is concentrated in the horns, so the power of God in salvation is found in the sent Redeemer. More than 400 Old Testament prophecies refer to His coming; indeed the whole Old Testament points to him.

And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures (Luke 24:27).

Zacharias has embraced these promises, and he sings for joy.

It is plain that Zacharias is not saying that deliverance is primarily materialistic. God’s plan of redemption involves deliverance from spiritual bondage to sin and a glad turning to Him in loving service.

Granted, there may be some sense of political liberation implied here; but the point of the passage reveals the total freedom from all the bonds that the curse, sin,

guilt, punishment, destruction and Satan have wrapped around mankind. This is because God is love, and all His grace and mercy flow from that; He tenderly yearns over man. He sees him in terrible darkness, surrounded by the enemy, and He sends the bright Light to lead him out.

How can we experience deliverance? By laying hold of the “accomplished redemption” (v. 68). Then we turn our feet onto the path of glad service (v. 74). God has created us for His pleasure, and this is the way to personal fulfillment and joy. If we serve ourselves, if we are occupied with a comfortable life in this world, we find only bondage and increasing dissatisfaction. The greatest possible happiness is in serving and appreciating Christ. Like Paul, we may refer to the One “whose I am and whom I serve” (Acts 27:23). We can have liberty only in serving God.

“God does not grant deliverance as a thing; what He has provided is deliverance in a Person. . .

“I suppose none of us really apprehends the immense divine power that is available for us in Him. Satan always works to get us to serve some other than God; he is always saying, Serve yourselves, or Serve the world, or Serve your circumstances.

“But happiness lies in serving God, and the great evidence of mercy is that God has brought in a power adequate to set us perfectly free so that we may not ever do anything from morning to night every day of our lives but serve God, and find our happiness in doing so” (Coates, p. 22).

No matter what the task, we are to do

MEMORY (Luke 1:37): “For nothing will be impossible with God.”

it to His glory. Deliverance is needed for this. The power is readily available for us. It belongs to the Lord Jesus.

The pre-requisite is self-judgment. This is where the ministry of John the Baptist fits in.

We have this in the next two verses.

1:76. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the LORD to prepare His ways;

77. to give to His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins.”

One might have thought that the whole text of Zacharias's song would be all about his little boy. Surprisingly, He begins with the Messiah, God's gracious Gift who is about to come. Then, in this part of his song, we see how very pleased he was that his child would be the prophet of the Most High, one who would "prepare His ways."

What ways they are, the ways of the Highest!

“As we move through the gospel let us never forget that we are observing the ways of the Highest. Every self-judged soul gets the benefit of them” (Coates, p. 23).

He comes to give the knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. This requires judgment upon the flesh and repentance.

If we are self-sufficient and proud, we cannot know the deliverance of Christ.

If we confess our sins and turn to Him, we can enter into salvation. As a Nazarite and as the prophet of the Highest, John the

Baptist is to bring the people to this heart attitude, to the place of repentance.

He is to prepare their hearts to welcome the Savior.

1:78. Because of the tender mercy of our God, with which the Sunrise from on high shall visit us,

79. to shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Zacharias finishes his song with a refrain about the Dayspring from on high which has visited us (see Isaiah 9:2; 60:1; Malachi 4:2; 2 Peter 1:19; Revelation 22:16):

The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them (Isaiah 9:2).

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you (Isaiah 60:1).

But for you who fear My name the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall (Malachi 4:2).

And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts (2 Peter 1:19).

I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star (Revelation 22:16).

MEMORY (Luke 1:37): "For nothing will be impossible with God."

The light from heaven shines upon us as we sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. Geldenhuys, (p. 95) delves into the original metaphor referred to here.

He presents a band of travelers who have lost their way in a forest known for its treachery from bandits and beasts. Pitch black night comes on, and they expect each moment that they will be fallen upon and killed.

Suddenly, a bright light appears to show them the way to their destination and to protection and security.

For believers this speaks of the royal road that leads to reconciliation and security through the atonement secured by our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. LET EARTH RECEIVE HER KING

(Luke 2:1-7Bethlehem)

2:1. Now it came about in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth.

2. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

3. And all were proceeding to register for the census, everyone to his own city.

4. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David,

5. In order to register, along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child.

6. And it came about that while they were

there, the days were completed for her to give birth.

7. And she gave birth to her first-born son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Without Bethlehem there would be no Calvary. Without the incarnation there could be no reconciliation. He came to die. He entered our humanity, apart from sin, in order to pay our penalty for sin. In order to die the death we deserved, He had to be made like us.

Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Hebrews 2:14-15).

At Bethlehem we see the Savior—

Jesus, made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. . . . that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man (Hebrews 2:9).

Now let us consider the historical situation which brought Mary to Bethlehem. Caesar Augustus had issued a decree. A census was to be taken for tax purposes. Everyone was ordered to return to his hometown for enrollment. Never mind the inconvenience of it all. Rome speaks; the emperor Caesar Augustus decides what his subjects must do. Or does he decide?

MEMORY (Luke 1:37): "For nothing will be impossible with God."

“That edict of Caesar Augustus rippled across the world, touching everyone. Even Joseph and Mary must go. But in my Bible I find a prophecy written at least six hundred and fifty years before this thing happened:

‘But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting’ (Micah 5:2).

“When I read that, uttered six hundred and fifty years before these events, I see that the really insignificant person in the drama is the little puppet in the city on the seven hills, called Caesar Augustus; and the significant personalities are the woman in whose womb tabernacles the Son of God, and the man who is guarding her (Morgan, p. 35).

This is heaven’s view of history.

But in the eyes of men all of this is very little. All of heaven’s attention was given to the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger. To heaven this was the great sign of God’s grace. But in man’s view it was the place of the outsider, the place of reproach. Angels looked with wondering eyes, and it was all insignificant in the eyes of men. The prophet had said of Bethlehem that it was “little among the thousands of Judah.” When He came among us, He “made himself of no reputation” (Philippians 2:7).

To appreciate His coming in grace we need to see with the eyes of heaven. For the coming of this One all the rooms of all the inns of Bethlehem should have been vacated. Thus should earth receive her King. All should prostrate themselves be-

fore Him, bowing low at His feet. All should make room for the King.

But there was no room for them in the inn. There was not even a guest room for them in the homes of their many relatives and friends in their hometown. To the innkeepers they were of no account. To their acquaintances and families they were a disgrace. No room in any hotel. No room in any home. No room in any heart. There was no room at all anywhere in Bethlehem.

That is how earth received her King.

In the inns of this world the best rooms go to the rich, the ordinary rooms to the poor. Hotels and clubs are man’s measuring places. Mary and Joseph were measured and not found acceptable by any standard.

Luke is very specific about the birth. There was no help for Mary at that hour. When she brought forth her Son, she with her own hands wrapped Him in the swaddling clothes and laid Him in the manger.

“In the supreme hour which permits of no delay, they had to find some outhouse for a dwelling; and there the Baby was born, and the mother laid It in a manger. No palace, no dwelling-place, no caravansary, no room even in the cattle enclosure. He was born outside everything, even the place where cattle might be sheltered through the night.

“He was born and laid in a manger in some bleak outhouse, outside some dwelling.

“So He came. The glory of it, the wonder of it. When He came He passed the court, and passed the palace, and passed the dwelling-place, and passed the inn, and passed the cattle enclosure; and was born into this world so low

MEMORY (Luke 1:37): “For nothing will be impossible with God.”

down that no baby can ever be born lower. . . .

“She with her own hands wrapped the Baby round with those swaddling clothes, and laid Him in the manger. There was no one to do it for her. Again I say, the pity of it, and yet the glory of it to the heart of Mary” (Morgan, p. 36).

There is nothing more dependent than a little baby. That is how our Lord came, taking the place of absolute dependence. There is no room in man’s world for dependence upon God

III. LET EVERY HEART PREPARE HIM ROOM Luke 2:8-20

Prepared Hearts

2:8. *And in the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields, and keeping watch over their flock by night.*

9. *And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened.*

10. *And the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people;*

11. *For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*

12. *“And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger.”*

13. *And suddenly there appeared with the*

angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14. *“Glory to God in the highest,*

And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”

15. *And it came about when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds began saying to one another, “Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.”*

16. *And they came in haste and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger.*

17. *And when they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child.*

18. *And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds.*

19. *But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.*

20. *And the shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.*

“The grace that was coming in was not to be great and honored in the world; it was to have the lowest place in the estimation of men. But what we want is the mind of heaven. Joseph and Mary were in on the secret. They knew the greatness and the glory of the Child who was just about to be born when they went into that city, but they accepted the manger as God’s provision. . . . The inn represented man’s provision for himself and his fellows, and there was no room in it for Jesus, but there were shepherds abid-

MEMORY (Luke 1:37): “For nothing will be impossible with God.”

ing without who were sympathetic with heaven” (Coates, p. 27).

Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds—there were a few hearts who were prepared to receive the Savior.

Consider the heart of a shepherd. God called shepherds like Moses and David because they had learned to care for the sheep at cost to themselves. That is like God’s heart. So it is to shepherds that God announces the glad tidings. Shepherds are taken into heaven’s confidence. The heart of the shepherd appreciates the gift of God’s grace. We need that kind of heart to appreciate Him, too.

To shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night the angel of the Lord appeared with the message from heaven.

There was not only the angel, but the glory of the Lord shone round about them. Jehovah Himself came down in the glory of grace to be near the shepherds. The Shekinah glory shone in that place. Not only did God send the messenger, but He came Himself to illumine their prepared hearts and to fill them with great joy.

“It is true that the shepherds ‘feared with great fear,’ but this was because they did not understand the nature of the glory. The angel told them not to fear, because the glory was shining in perfect grace; it was shining to fill men’s hearts with great joy. It is a beautiful scene; one prays for ability to take it in” (Coates 28-9).

The shepherds hasten to Bethlehem to see for themselves, and then they become the first men to proclaim the glad tidings to others. In contrast, Mary treasured all

these things in her heart. If we could only get a sense of the immeasurable favor of God to us, it would break our hearts. It is the grace of God that leads to repentance.

In His grace, He stands at the door of man’s heart, knocking. He does not force His way in, such is His grace. The handle is on the inside. “If any man open the door . . .” (Revelation 3:20) He will come into that life as Lord. It remains for us to give Him the place of the throne.

Let every heart prepare Him room—the throne room.

AND HEAVEN AND NATURE SING

(Songs of His Nativity)

BENJAMIN R. HANBY:

**“Who is He in yonder stall,
At whose feet the shepherds fall?
‘Tis the Lord! O wondrous story!
‘Tis the Lord! The King of glory!
At His feet we humbly fall,
Crown Him! Crown Him, Lord of
all!”**

JOHN DONNE:

*From his sonnet sequence “La Corona”
Annunciation*

**Salvation to all that will is nigh;
That All, which always is All every-
where,
Which cannot sin, and yet all sins must
bear,
Which cannot die, yet cannot choose
but die,**

MEMORY (Luke 1:37): “For nothing will be impossible with God.”

Lo, faithful virgin, yields himself to lie
In prison, in thy womb; and though he
there
Can take no sin, now thou give, yet he
will wear
Taken from thence, flesh, which death's
force may try.
Ere by the spheres time was created,
thou
Wast in his mind, who is thy Son, and
Brother;
Whom thou conceiv'st, conceiv'd; yea
thou art now
Thy Maker's maker, and thy Father's
mother'
Thou hast light in dark; and shutest in
little room,
Immensity cloistered in thy dear womb.

Nativity

Immensity cloistered in thy dear womb,
Now leaves his wellbeloved imprison-
ment,
There he hath made himself to his in-
tent
Weak enough, now into our world to
come;
But oh, for thee, for him, hath the inn
no room?
Yet lay him in this stall, and from the
Orient,
Stars, and wise men will travel to pre-
vent
The effect of Herod's jealous general
doom.
Seest thou, my Soul, with thy faith's
eyes how he
Which fills all place, yet none holds

him, doth lie?
Was not his pity towards thee wondrous
high,
That would have need to be pitied by
thee?
Kiss him, and with him into Egypt go,
With his kind mother, who partakes thy
woe.

JOHN MILTON

From On the Morning of Christ's Nativity

This is the month, and this the happy
morn,
Wherein the Son of Heaven's eternal
King,
Of wedded maid, and virgin mother
born,
Our great redemption from above did
bring,
For so the holy sages once did sing,
That he our deadly forfeit should re-
lease,
And with his Father work us a per-
petual peace.

REGINALD HEBER:

Brightest and best of the sons of the
morning,
Dawn on our darkness, and lend us
thine aid!
Star of the east, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is
laid!
Cold on His cradle the dewdrops are
shining;
Low lies His head with the beasts of the
stall;

MEMORY (Luke 1:37): "For nothing will be impossible with God."

Angels adore Him in slumber reclining,
Maker and Monarch and Savior of all.
Say, shall we yield Him, in costly devo-
tion,
Odors of Edom and offerings divine,
Gems of the mountain and pearls of the
ocean
Myrrh from the forest, or gold from the
mine?
Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
Vainly with gifts would His favor se-
cure;
Richer by far is the heart's adoration,
Dearer to God are the prayers of the
poor.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI:

A Christmas Carol

In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him,
Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty
Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him whom cherubim
Worship night and day,
A breastful of milk

And a mangerful of hay;
Enough for Him whom angels
Fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel
Which adore.

Angels and archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the air,
But only His mother
In her maiden bliss
Worshipped the Beloved
With a kiss.

What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd,
I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man,
I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him—
Give my heart.

PATRICIA TILDEN DAVIES

How shall my wrappings cover Thee,
Lord of the Nativity?
Reincarnate You now dwell
In my heart—a stable fell,
A manger bare, a lowly place—
Now a throne room by Your grace.
I saw one day a diamond fair,
Apron-clad, and knew You there.
And once again a rose in bloom
Declared You risen from the tomb.
A prince in overalls passed by
And left Your fragrance lingering
nigh.
So let my covering be sheer—
Drab or beautiful—but clear
As water shining after rain,

MEMORY (Luke 1:37): "For nothing will be impossible with God."

**Refreshing all the land again,
That You within me, all may see,
Lord of my nativity.**

God gave His all at Christmastime.

**His newborn Son meant heaven
above:
And this I'd like to give to you,
His grace, His peace, His love.
And then, because He gave once
more—
A dying Son for all of man,
His three-fold gift I'd multiply,
And give, as He, again, again!**

What do you see, Mary?

**What do you see, Mary, in Him you
hold?
Earth's dust embodying heaven's gold;
Infinity the finite filling;
Emmanuel in manhood dwelling
And all God's grace, retold.**

**What do you see, Simeon, in Him you
hold**

**Salvation coming as foretold:
Illumination dark dispelling;
Unity discordant quelling;
And all, God's grace enfolds.**

**What do you see, Anna, in Him you
hold?**

**Jerusalem's new surpasses old;
Love is the enemy repelling;
Salem's springs are welling;
And all God's grace extolled.**

God ordained that the forerunner of
Christ should be a Nazarite (not Nazarene)

from birth. A person who wanted to live totally for God would take the vows spelled out in Numbers 6. All Israel would recognize that he was set apart to live a life of total submission to Jehovah.

In order to understand what was involved in the Nazarite's vow and to see the relevance to life today, the following essay by C. A. Coates has been added to this study.

THE NAZARITE'S VOW Numbers 6

The Believer Established
By C. A. Coates

Before entering upon the subject of the Nazarite's Vow, I should like to say very plainly that the salvation of a sinner depends *altogether* upon Christ and His perfect work on the cross, and it is received *only by faith*.

The prayers, works, self-denial, and devotedness of the believer add nothing whatever to his salvation. To suppose that our salvation depends in any way upon ourselves is to be "fallen from grace" and to be in darkness and uncertainty as to the whole matter.

But when we see that CHRIST is the Alpha and Omega of our salvation, that His atoning work has settled every question that sin had raised between God and our souls, that His blood cleanseth us from *all sin*, and that we are on the shoulders of the Good Shepherd who has pledged His word that we "*shall never perish*," we find ourselves upon solid ground; and divine assurance takes the place of alternating hope and fear.

Surely none of us could be content to

MEMORY (Luke 1:37): "For nothing will be impossible with God."

quietly assume that because our sins are forgiven we need not concern ourselves as to whether we are devoted to Christ or not!

Let us not forget the judgment seat! Let us remember that there is such a thing as being “saved, yet so as by fire!”

No one was compelled to be a Nazarite. The Lord wants a willing people now. Your present happiness and your future place in the kingdom of glory depend on your loyalty to Christ here on earth. May God touch us with a little of the fire that burned in the soul of a true Nazarite.

The Nazarite was one who voluntarily devoted himself to the Lord—not of necessity but of a willing mind. *Grace* worked in his heart the desire to be wholly for the Lord, and then grace provided a way in which that devotedness could be expressed.

The great need of the church of God today is more Nazarites — more devoted men and women. . . . Are you prepared to be true Nazarites! Does the Person of the Lord and His love so command you, that the deepest and most cherished desire of your heart is to be devoted entirely to Him?

There were three things the Nazarite was *not* to do; these three negatives being simply the fruit and the expression of the positive fact that he was a man devoted UNTO THE LORD.

1. He was not to eat or drink any part, or product, of the vine.
2. He was not to cut his hair.
3. He was not to come in contact with a dead body.

1. The Nazarite willingly devoted himself to a life of self-denial, and for the Lord’s sake he abstained from that which would have been naturally pleasant to him.

The testimony of Scripture is that “wine maketh merry” (Eccles.10:19) and “maketh glad the heart of man” (Psa. 104:15), and hence wine becomes the type of those earthly and worldly things that elevate and give pleasure to the heart and mind of man.

Alas! My friends, there are thousands in spiritual Israel today who are not Nazarites; professing Christians today are ready to drink every drop of the wine of earthly pleasure that they can get. . . . The straight-laced legality of Puritan times has given place to a corrupt taste for pleasure and amusement, which is being gratified to the full by an unfaithful church, so that there is hardly any form of earthly or worldly pleasure which is not indulged in by professed people of God. . . .

There are many things which could not be pronounced *sinful* . . . (that displace) the Lord from His true place as our heart’s absorbing object, and the Nazarite is defiled.

Have you not had seasons of joy in the Lord which have infinitely surpassed everything that the vines of earth can afford? . . .

He would *make Himself our bread and our wine*, and, instead of being worse off, we should be infinitely better off, like Daniel’s band, who were “fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king’s meat.”

MEMORY (Luke 1:37): “For nothing will be impossible with God.”

2. I think we may find a key to the significance of the unshorn locks of the Nazarite in a sentence from the apostle Paul—"Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, *it is a shame unto him,*" 1 Cor. 11:14.

The Nazarite was found in a condition which, according to the thoughts of nature, was one of reproach and shame. . . .

Do we really look upon the sneers and scorn of the world as our greatest treasure upon earth?

(The Nazarite) will be roundly abused by many; Pharisee and Bigot will be the names hurled at him by some; while others will say that he is Peculiar, Narrow-minded, and, a man of very extreme views.

A devoted Christian must be a fool in the eyes of the world and of carnal believers. He is impelled by unknown motives; he suffers loss with no visible compensation in any form; he goes calmly and steadily in the opposite direction to everybody else; he despises the advantages which all others are eager to pursue; he spends his time, his talents, and his means in the service and for the glory of One who is only a myth to men of the world. In a word, he lives "UNTO THE LORD," and he is glad to be a "fool for Christ's sake."

3. Finally, the Nazarite was not under any circumstances to touch a dead body. In connection with this let us read Romans 8:12,13: "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Nothing could be more

solemn. It is impossible to live to God as men in the flesh.

The lesson learned by the painful exercises of Romans 7 is that "in me (that is, in my flesh) *dwelleth no good thing,*" and the soul cries bitterly, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from *this body of death?*"

(The picture in Paul's mind) was that of the dreadful punishment of lashing a criminal to a dead body in such a way that it was impossible for him to free himself, and then leaving him to die. What was the dead body from which Paul had sought to be delivered?

Was it not *himself*, and all that he was as a man in the flesh? Nor did he look for deliverance in vain! Having given himself up—as a man in the flesh—as being a "body of death," he looked outside himself for deliverance, and could immediately exclaim, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

He saw that the judgment of death had passed upon him at the cross, and that grace now gave him a perfect title to take the new ground that he was "IN CHRIST JESUS."

A door of life and liberty was thus opened to him—for "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are IN CHRIST JESUS,"—and, along with this, *power* by the Holy Spirit, so that he could say, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

Do not run away with the idea that I mean anything mystical or visionary when I say that the true Nazarite must live morally apart from himself as a man in the flesh.

In saying this, I am speaking the so-

MEMORY (Luke 1:37): "For nothing will be impossible with God."

ber and practical truth of the Scriptures, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." "He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption," Gal. 6:8. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts," Gal. 5:4. . . .

Let us not forget that the flesh has a moral and religious side which is equally defiling to the true Nazarite (as it glories in the furniture of religion—the great buildings, stained-glass windows, flowing robes, starched purity, cold formality, elegant recitations, moral codes). . . .

Then by what power can the spiritual Nazarite hold himself aloof from the "dead body" of his former self as a man in the flesh?

Only by the Spirit of God. . . .

The spiritual Nazarite has no power to hold himself aloof from the "dead body," save as he walks in the Spirit. . . .

May God keep us clear alike of the self-indulgence, the wisdom, and the religiousness of the flesh! May He keep us by His Spirit morally apart from that defiling "dead body"!

But what if the Nazarite be defiled? I think everyone will be profoundly thankful to know that grace has anticipated the possibility of defilement, and has made provision for it.

Yet let none of us overlook, or think lightly of, the solemnity of such a thing. Indeed this scripture is one of peculiar impressiveness, in the solemn light which it throws upon the consequences of defilement.

The defiled Nazarite has, so to speak, to begin again. He shaves his head, and he brings a sin offering, a burnt offer-

ing, and a trespass offering to the Lord. When we defile the head of our consecration there is no restoration until God brings us back morally to the basis of all our blessing.

The only ground, whether of our clearance from sin and judgment, or of our acceptance with God, is the death of Christ, and our hearts have to return to a sense of the infinite cost at which our clearance and acceptance have been secured.

While this is in one way deeply blessed, and calls forth the full praise and worship of our hearts, it must, on the other hand, inevitably lead to the most profound self-judgment, as we are brought to see in God's presence that we have allowed that which Christ died to remove, and from the judgment of which nothing but His death could save us.

Do you think it is a light matter to discover that we have allowed the very thing which cost the Son of God His life?

But there is another thing! "The days that were before *shall be lost*, because his separation was defiled." Is not this very solemn?

The longer a Nazarite maintained his consecration, the more serious it was for him if he suffered himself to be defiled.

I believe the longer we go on right, the more serious it is for us if we turn aside. We have to make it up *in moral time*, which is not reckoned in days, and months, and years, but the *exercise of soul*.

I trust that the Lord will set our hearts very distinctly for Himself, and that He will use what has come before us to warn us against the things that would defile the head of our consecration!

It is worth our while to be out and out

MEMORY (Luke 1:37): "For nothing will be impossible with God."

for Christ. There is not only “the recompense of the reward” by and by, but an immense return in spiritual blessing even now.

It is at the end of this chapter (Numbers 6)—descriptive of a devoted man—that we find one of the most glorious benedictions that the Old Testament affords.

“The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.”

A devoted man is always a prosperous and happy man—of course, I mean spiritually.

He honors the Lord with his substance, and with the first-fruits of all his increase, and the result is that his barns are filled with plenty, and his presses burst out with new wine.

Your melancholy and long-faced Christians are not the out-and-out, but the half-and-half men—those who wanted to fear the Lord but serve their own graven images.

They have never learned in their soul’s experience the truth of Luther’s definition of a Christian—that he is “a new man in a new world.”

At any rate, they are not practically owning that new man and living in that new world.

Numbers 5 tells us about the bitter water of jealousy and it ends with a curse upon the *unfaithful* one; but Numbers 6 describes one who is loyal to the core, and it ends with a blessing.

It is even so with us (Galatians 5:6-8).

We are reaping governmentally day by day either the blessing or the curse (C. A. Coates).

In summary, then, the Nazarite stood out from his society as one who had no other motive in life than to express his devotion to the Lord God, publicly and privately. It is reasonable to believe there was not one Nazarite in Israel during the 400 silent years since Micah 5:2. The appearance of a Nazarite must have astonished the nation. As people thronged to see him, he had a platform from which he could preach repentance and announce the coming of Messiah.

A Nazarite was a servant of Jehovah. He lived for God, not himself. He laid aside whatever goals he had for himself to be somebody, to have, to do. His whole thought was to live a life pleasing to God even though it meant he would live an austere life that cut across his whole culture.

He could not drink wine or eat raisins or grapes in a society where wine was the water of the day. He could not touch a dead body even though family responsibilities required him to bury relatives who had died.

He could not cut his hair or shave his head in a society where good grooming and cleanliness were next to godliness. He died to himself and lived to God. John as a Nazarite presents believers today with a model of the devoted servant who lives for God.

IV. ABOUT THE FATHER'S BUSINESS

Questions on Luke 2:21-52

"I tell you that One greater than the temple is here" (Matthew 12:6)

God's Word of truth and grace
Made flesh with us to dwell;
The brightness of the Father's face,
The child Emmanuel.

--Unknown

REVIEW: Lesson 3 Notes, studying the Scripture references. Read Luke 1:57-2:20 again. Be prepared to share a new thought, blessing, or personal application from Lesson 3.

MEMORY: (Optional)

REVIEW: *Luke 1:4: "So that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught."*

Luke 19:10: "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Luke 24:19: "And He said to them, 'What things?' And they said to Him, 'The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people.'"

LEARN: *Luke 2:49: "And He said to them, 'Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business—KJV)?"*

READ: Luke 2:21-52 and tell what are the main events in this section.

I. BIRTH RITES

READ: Luke 2:21-24

DO QUESTIONS: 1-6

READ: Pages 56-67

1. What incidents in this section does Luke tell us that the other gospel writers omit? (Look at the list in the introduction to this book.)

2. From these verses (Luke 2:21-24; Exodus 13:2, 12; Lev. 12:1-8; Psalm 51:5; Galatians 4:4-5), what insight can you gain about the first-born son, about the reason for the offering and about the financial state of Mary and Joseph.

Luke 2:21-24—And when eight days were completed before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "EVERY firstborn MALE THAT

MEMORY (Luke 1:37): "For nothing will be impossible with God."

OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD”) and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, “A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES, OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS.”

Exo. 13:2, 12—“Sanctify to Me every first-born, the first offspring of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and beast; it belongs to Me. . . . that you shall devote to the LORD the first offspring of every womb, and the first offspring of every beast that you own; the males belong to the LORD.

Lev. 12:1-8—

Psalms 51:5—Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.

Gal.4:4-5—But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

From these verses, what insight can you gain about:

A.) The firstborn son:

B.) The reason for the offering:

C.) The financial state of Mary and Joseph:

3. What meanings are bound up in circumcision as seen in the following passages:

Gen. 17:11-14—And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be the sign of the covenant between

Me and you. And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants. A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.

Deut. 10:16; 30:6—Circumcise then your heart, and stiffen your neck no more. Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live.

Rom. 2:28-29—For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

Phil. 3:3—For we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.

Gal. 6:15—For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

Col. 2:11-14—And in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business - KJV)?"

made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

4. Why did the Lord Jesus undergo the rite of circumcision? See the following:

Jer. 9:25-26—“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD, “that I will punish all who are circumcised and yet uncircumcised—Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the sons of Ammon, and Moab, and all those inhabiting the desert who clip the hair on their temples; for all the nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised of heart.”

Deut. 10:16—“Circumcise then your heart, and stiffen your neck no more.”

Phil 3:3—For we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.

1 Cor. 7:19—Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God.

Gal. 4:4-5; 5:6; 6:15—But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the

Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. . . . For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love. . . . For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

5. What does circumcision of the heart mean to you? How could it affect your life THIS week? See Romans 6:1-14; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 2:6-3:4.

6. Explain what this means from the Notes (Page 60, column 1): “His circumcision is the sign of all that is bound up in His atoning death and our redemption.”

II. THE TWO WITNESSES

READ: Luke 2:25-38

DO QUESTIONS: 7-11

READ: Pages 67-69

Think about Simeon’s words.

7. What specific things does he prophesy?

8. Why is Simeon’s testimony about the Lord’s Christ important?

9. Simeon means “one who hears.” How did Simeon live up to his name?

10. What in Anna’s godly life will help us in our walk with the Savior?

(Personal): Write down some ways of doing these things. Be very specific

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, “Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father’s house (about my Father’s business - KJV)?”

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11. What incidents so far in Luke have taken place in the temple? Draw a personal application from one of these temple incidents.

III. THE YEARS IN NAZARETH

READ: Luke 2:39-50

DO QUESTIONS: 12-19

READ: Pages 69-77

12. What do Dr. Luke's comments about Jesus's growth and development reveal to us about our Savior?

13. What was the Passover and why is it significant? See the following:

Exo. 12:1-28—which see.

John 1:29—The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, “behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

1 Cor. 5:6-7—Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? Clean out the old leaven, that you maybe a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.

1 Pet. 1:18-19—Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

14. Meditate on the phrase, “I must be about my Father's business” (KJV). How

old was the Lord Jesus when He said this? What did He mean by this?

(Personal): What will this mean in my life THIS week as I am about my Father's business?

15. Characterize the attitudes of the Lord Jesus and Mary. See Luke 2:39-52. Write down how the Lord might teach you from these attitudes. (Be specific.)

16. Think about Christ in His temple (Luke 2:21-52) and your body as the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). What should take place in your life that took place then in the temple?

1 Cor 6:19-20—Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

17. What is the commandment of 1 Corinthians 6:20?

18. How did the following glorify God in the temple in Jerusalem?

A. Simeon

B. Anna

C. The Lord Jesus

19. From the essay (pp, 73-77), how might you glorify God in the temple of your body TODAY?

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, “Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business - KJV)?”

IV. ABOUT THE FATHER'S BUSINESS

Luke 2:21-52

Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

**Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.**

**Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love;
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.**

**Take my voice, and let me sing
Always, only, for my King;
Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.**

**Take my silver and my gold:
Not a mite would I withhold;
Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.**

**Take my will, and make it Thine;
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne.**

**Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.**

—Frances Ridley Havergal, 1874
“Take My Life and Let It Be”

2:49. Did you not know that I had to be about my Father's business?

Again we go with Luke into the temple.

Taking our place there with those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, we observe the Son coming into His Father's house. Held in loving arms as a babe, sitting with learned scholars as a boy—He dominates every sanctuary scene. We take a long look, and the scenes pass before us. He is presented to the Father and then received by two elderly seeking hearts, always occupied with the Father's things. Now we hear Him speak. We sense the yearning of His heart in these first words of His, “I must be about my Father's business (KJV).” Such words. They echo through the temple, and we ponder their meaning.

What does it mean to be governed by the interests of heaven? Plainly the Father's interests governed *Him* and marked out His life's course on earth. His Father's will was His whole delight. Can this be *my* delight as well? Can my life be governed by the interests of heaven? What difference would that make?

With Luke we stand in those temple corridors and courts. We draw near to the One at the center of each scene. Here is

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, “Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business - KJV)?”

our Answer, for the fulness of the time has come.

When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the Law. . . . (Galatians 4:4).

When He comes into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering Thou hast not desired, but a body Thou hast prepared Me" (Hebrews 10:5).

Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart (Psalm 40:7-8).

BIRTH RITES

PRESENTED

Luke 2:21-24

2:21. And when eight days were completed before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

22. And when the days for her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord

23. (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "EVERY firstborn MALE THAT OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD"),

24. and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, 'A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES, OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS.'

God has sent forth His Son—born of a woman.

We have seen the sign recorded by Luke—the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes (long, narrow bands of cloth wrapped around and around—as grave clothes are wound) lying in Bethlehem's manger. Virgin born, God has entered our humanity.

This is what Luke has shown us so far. But that is not all.

God has sent forth His Son—born under the Law. The promise is that He is to belong to the royal line of a particular people. This is what Luke now brings before us. In this section of the Gospel we see Him brought officially into the nation of Israel.

Again the timing is perfect. God's timing is always right. On the eighth day the child is circumcised and named. Then forty days after his birth, He is taken up to the temple for the presentation of the firstborn. Here also his mother undergoes the rite of purification, and the two sacrifices are offered—a pair of turtledoves, one for a sin offering and one for a burnt offering. In God's perfect timing, all the rites and ceremonies are properly carried out for this Son, born under the law.

And in carrying out the ceremonies, they are foreshadowing the work He comes to do. The wonder of it all! He comes into the temple to take part in the very rituals which point to His death for our sin.

In the fullness of time, God sends forth His Son, born under the old economy to bring in the new. Under the old covenant, He submits to the laws which He comes to fulfill in the new covenant.

These sanctuary scenes in Luke are

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business - KJV)?"

beautiful in their spiritual significance. Outshining them all is the glory of the Antitype (the one represented by an earlier type or word-picture).

In the section now before us, we take up these Mosaic ceremonies and consider their meaning:

(1) The Circumcision and Naming of Jesus on the eighth day (Luke 2:21);

(2) The Rite of the Firstborn on the fortieth day (Luke 2:22-23);

(3) Mary's purification also on the fortieth day (Luke 2:24).

HIS CIRCUMCISION

(2:21)

Circumcision is the sign of the covenant which God made with Abraham. God promised Abraham that he would be the father of the great nation through which would come the Messiah (Genesis 12:1-4; 15:1-21; 17:1-27; 18:9-14; 21:1-8; 22:1-19).

And you shall be circumcised . . . and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations (Genesis 17:11-12).

When God gave the promise to Abraham, Abraham "believed in the LORD, and He reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Genesis 15:6). He believed that his wife, Sarah, would bear him a son in her old age; later, God gave him the seal of circumcision; some years later, the son Isaac was born.

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be reckoned to them (Romans 4:11).

Many meanings are bound up in the sign of circumcision:

1. Circumcision is the badge of entrance into the Jewish nation and the Jewish family (Genesis 17:13-14).

A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.

But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised . . . that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant (Genesis 17:13-14).

2. It was to Abraham a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised (see Romans 4:11 above). (Then, as now, salvation was through faith, not ritual—faith in the death of a substitute.)

3. The sign of circumcision signified that the individual, as well as the nation, belonged to Another. It meant *belonging to God*.

4. It pointed to the *cross* (Colossians 2:11-14, see below), the substitutionary atonement.

5. It pointed to the believer's union with Christ in death, burial and resurrection (Col. 2:11-14). It meant *deliverance from the flesh*.

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business - KJV)?"

And in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;

Having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,

Having cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross (Colossians 2:11-14).

6. Circumcision of the heart is God's true goal for His people (Deuteronomy 30:6).

Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live (Deuteronomy 30:6).

7. It means the *heart of love for God* and the *life of obedience* which results (Jeremiah 9:25-26; Deuteronomy 10:16; Philippians 3:3; 1 Corinthians 7:19; Galatians 5:6; 6:15):

"Behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "that I will punish all who are circumcised and yet uncircumcised—

Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the sons of Ammon, and Moab, and all those inhabiting the desert who clip the hair of their temples; for all the nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised of heart" (Jeremiah 9:25-26).

Circumcise then your heart, and stiffen your neck no more (Deuteronomy 10:16).

For we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh (Philippians 3:3).

Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God (1 Corinthians 7:19).

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love. . . . For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation (Galatians 5:6 and 6:15).

Why did Christ undergo the rite of circumcision?

To fulfill the Law's requirement.

For the legal recognition as descendant of David and seed of Abraham, necessary to establish His claim as Messiah and Deliverer.

To be heard as a teacher in Israel.

To have a lawful place in any lawful Jewish assembly (e.g. synagogue, temple).

To have a lawful place at any Jewish feast (Ryle, pp. 61-2).

God sent forth His Son—*born under the law* (Galatians 4:4-5):

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business - KJV)?"

But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons (Galatians 4:4-5).

Our Lord thus voluntarily placed Himself under the law's holy and just demands. As the Last and Perfect Adam, He perfectly fulfilled the law. This law, God's measuring stick of holiness, was perfectly kept—morally and ceremonially—by Christ. Finally, He met the law's demand of atonement for sin by becoming the perfect sacrifice. As a result, His righteousness is imputed to believers, all of whom have failed to measure up to the law. Christ voluntarily became a son of the law in order to redeem those who were condemned by the law and thus to fulfill all righteousness (Matthew 3:15):

But Jesus answering said to him (John), "Permit it (baptism) at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him (Matthew 3:15).

His circumcision is the sign of all that is bound up in His atoning death and our redemption.

Geldenhuis relates the circumcision and purification customs to the state of sin each individual inherits at birth—a state of sin requiring purification by the sprinkling of blood and sacrifice. When the Child Jesus, holy, sin-free, submitted to these rites, it was not because He had need Himself for such purification. It was an indication that He was submitting Himself voluntar-

ily to the Law so that He, as a representative of the people, could meet their obligations to the law and procure their redemption. In childhood He undergoes circumcision; in adulthood, the baptism of John—as He takes upon Himself the sin and guilt of His people (p. 117).

“Circumcision was an ordinance that signified the death of the flesh. ‘For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.’ And that is the whole thing. You and I through the cross have passed out of the old creation, if saved, and are now in the new creation of which Christ is the glorified Head. See to it that in your associations, in your pleasure, in your amusement, in your religious life, you keep in that sphere where Christ is owned as Head and Lord.

“Paul quickly establishes that Christian liberty is not freedom to indulge the flesh (Galatians 5:13). By the ‘flesh’ he does not mean the physical body. Rather he means the fallen human nature, the twisted self that is prone to sin. We were not set free in Christ to do whatever our fallen nature would want; Christian liberty is the freedom to stop being self-centered” (Ironside, Galatians, pp. 232-33).

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another (Galatians 5:13).

Luke, however, does not dwell upon the circumcision. His emphasis is upon the

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business - KJV)?"

angel-given name, which He receives at His circumcision (Luke 2:21):

On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived (*NIV*).

We can imagine ourselves in Bethlehem. By this time, eight days have passed, and it is the day to circumcise the baby and pronounce His angel-given name. Perhaps by this time Joseph and Mary have found a room or even a house in which to stay, as travelers are leaving the town. We can only guess, for Luke gives no details.

The solemn and joyous Jewish rite of circumcision and naming must take place in the baby's home. Neighbors and friends would gather early in the morning for the benediction said before circumcision. The ceremony would close with grace said over the cup of wine. Then the child would be named.

HIS NAMING (2:21)

In the Jewish rite, the young child would receive his name in prayer, "Our God, and the God of our fathers, raise up this child to his father and mother, and let his name be called in Israel . . ."

. . . and let His name be called in Israel Jesus!

Luke draws our attention to the fact that this name was chosen not by Mary and not by His adoptive father Joseph, but by heaven. For his Gentile readers, he does not emphasize what to the Jews was

obvious, the significance of the name. So it is Matthew, not Luke, who writes, concerning His naming, the instruction to Joseph:

You shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21).

The name reflects the meaning of His coming. "Jesus" is from the Greek form of a popular Hebrew name, "Joshua." Joshua means "Jehovah-salvation." In coming down to us, He passed by many other names of might and power. He came from heaven to be Prophet, Priest, King, Law-giver, Judge, as well as Savior. But He chose to be called "Savior." This name alone speaks of mercy, grace, deliverance, and help in time of need.

"So He entered the nation, by the rite of circumcision, and received the heaven-chosen name, which indicated at once the fact of His Being, and the purpose of His coming in that progressive economy of God—Jehovah-salvation" (Morgan, p. 40).

The circumcision rite signifies the setting aside of the flesh. It is the figure of the Savior's death, so that the body of sin is put off. For one who trusts in the death of Christ for his salvation, self-confidence and pride can be put away; and he can begin to live wholly for God.

Christ's circumcision on the eighth day is the foreshadowing of all that would be accomplished in His death.

Just as we willingly submit to circumcision of the heart, by refusing to live for

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business - KJV)?"

self and by walking in newness of life, we can prove what God delights to be for us (Romans 6:1-14; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 2:6-3:4).

All of this is patterned in the Lord Jesus.

HIS DEDICATION

(2:22-23)

When God took Israel out of Egypt, He introduced another precious thought—to have the firstborn son for Himself (Exo. 12).

2:22. And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord.

23. (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “EVERY firstborn MALE THAT OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD”).

More than a month has passed since the Baby’s circumcision and joining to the Law. It is time for Mary to take part in the women’s purification rite, set for the fortieth day after the baby’s birth. But more importantly, Mary’s firstborn son must be redeemed at the temple with five shekels of silver. He must be brought up to His Father’s house in Jerusalem and there presented as firstborn son to God.

Ever since the historical passing over by the death angel that night in Egypt, God has His claim upon all Jewish firstborn children:

Sanctify to Me every first-born, the first offspring of every womb among the sons of Is-

rael, both of man and beast; it belongs to Me. . . . Devote to the LORD the first offspring of every womb, and the first offspring of every beast that you own; the males belong to the Lord (Exodus 13:2, 12).

If we read this carefully, **“we see that the divine intention was that in that nation the firstborn male in every family should enter the priesthood”** (Morgan, p. 41).

But when we turn to Numbers 3:11-13, we find a change in the divine arrangement.

Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Now, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the sons of Israel instead of every first-born, the first issue of the womb among the sons of Israel. So the Levites shall be Mine.

“For all the first-born are Mine; on the day that I struck down all the first-born in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the first-born in Israel, from man to beast. They shall be Mine; I am the LORD” (Numbers 3:11-13).

Here, because of unwillingness and hardness of His people’s hearts toward Him, He allowed them to provide substitutes. The tribe of Levi was set apart for this because Levi (Exodus 32:26) was the one tribe that responded when Moses, at the foot of Sinai with the two tables of the law shattered at his feet, said, “Whoever is for the LORD, come to me!”

Building on that, God set the Levites apart as priests specifically to serve Him;

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business - KJV)?"

“and a male from the tribe of Levi stood in the place of each firstborn in the families of Israel. The first ideal of God, then, was that the firstborn son should be a priest.

“One of the most interesting, arresting, and remarkable things in the study of Biblical history is that of God’s accommodations to human weakness.

“Again and again when men could not rise to the heights of His ideals He came down, never in righteousness, but in ritual, and in ceremony, to their level.

“God’s ideal for the whole nation was that it should be a Kingdom of priests.

“When they were unable to rise to that height, He gave them Aaron as a representative priest. Aaron was an accommodation.

“God’s ideal for them was that they should be a theocracy, having no king but Himself; but when they clamoured for a king, He accommodated Himself to them, and gave them a king.

“We find the same thing here. The divine ideal was that every firstborn son should be in the priesthood; and the Levitical order, the tribe of Levi, was at last appointed to function—every Levite to represent a firstborn son.

“Because they were not able to rise to the height of the ideal, the Levites were appointed.

“When Jesus was taken to the temple by Mary, it was in fulfillment of the first ideal and purpose of God. He, the firstborn Son, the One that opened the womb, was dedicated to God” (Morgan, p. 41).

Here the firstborn is presented as holy

to Jehovah. There had never been a truly holy firstborn Son before.

1:35. And for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.

Thus we find that “What had been typified in the firstborn was realized now in Jesus. . . .

“We see in Scripture generally that nature’s firstborn has to be superseded. Nature’s firstborn is typified by the firstborn of Egypt, and the judgment has to come on that.

“But then, God has His own thought of firstborn, and He realized it in Jesus.

“God has the assembly of firstborn ones now, all having firstborn character.

“Such a thing could not be known in a natural family. In God’s family, all are firstborn ones, because all partake of the dignity and excellence of Christ” (Coates, p. 35).

God said this typically when He claimed the firstborn; in this He was claiming that the whole family was His.

When we see the Babe being presented to God, we know that He is entering the family priesthood of God. He entered the nation by the rite of circumcision. Now He enters the priesthood by means of Presentation.

This is not the Levitical priesthood. It is the family priesthood of God. As priest, He is to offer the perfect sacrifice of Himself. How the Father’s heart must have been at last satisfied—to see His own dear Son presented to Him for this work. He qualified as High Priest over “a realm of

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, “Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father’s house (about my Father’s business - KJV)?”

priests” unto God (Revelation 1:5-6 Moffatt).

Why is this so significant that He qualified as a priest?

Through His offering of Himself, He now brings believers into the presence of God with Him, that we might be priests to our God, offering up prayers, the sacrifice of praise, our lives, our good works (Hebrews 13:15-16; Romans 12:1-2; Revelation 5:10):

Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased (Hebrews 13:15-16).

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect (Romans 12:1-2).

And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth (Revelation 5:10).

His rank as Firstborn makes Him one with us and at the same time places Him far above us.

“In Hebrews, in which He is distinctly called ‘the Firstborn’ (1:6), occurs the passage in which is affirmed at the same time His kinship with and His great diversity from, those whom, because they

are all of one with Him, He is not ashamed to call His brethren (2:11).

“Yet He is the Sanctifier, they are the sanctified; and forasmuch as they are partakers of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise took part in the same (v. 14); for in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people (v. 17)” (Grant, p. 356).

As Firstborn, His rank is above and over His people. The firstborn had higher authority in Jewish homes, second only to the father. He had more rights. He had twice as much inheritance as other sons in the family; and in the case of royalty, to him belonged the kingly succession. He succeeded the father in rule.

Thus the title “firstborn” means the place of authority. The Lord Jesus as Firstborn has rank and authority lawfully over all believers (Rom. 8:29):

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren (Romans 8:29).

He is also Firstborn in relation to creation; He has authority over all creation, and in relation to resurrection—He is Firstborn from the dead (Colossians 1:15, 18):

And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.

He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business - KJV)?"

from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything (Colossians 1:15,18).

“We see, then, what this relationship as Firstborn involves for Him. He is taking up a path peculiar to Himself.

“He is acknowledging the claim of God upon that family with which He is in true and abiding relationship, and who are in Him presented to God.

“But these are sinners: they are those who are to be ‘sanctified’ by Him—‘sanctified’ as the epistle itself explains it ‘by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ’ (Hebrews 10:10).

“His priestly work is the offering of Himself (7:27) (Grant, p. 356).

By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Hebrews 10:10).

Who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself (Hebrews 7:27).

“Immediately here, therefore, the shadow of this falls over His path: Mary, His mother, must bring her offering for purification” (Grant, p. 356).

MARY’S PURIFICATION (Luke 2:22, 24)

2:22. And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord . . .

24. and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, “A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES, OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS.”

When Mary went up to the temple, she had to take with her the offerings prescribed in Leviticus 12:6,8:

And when the days of her purification are completed, for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the doorway of the tent of meeting, a one year old lamb for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering. . . .

But if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, the one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean.

The offering of the two pigeons instead of the lamb and the pigeon was called The Offering of the Poor. This is the offering that Mary brought. One old writer says that the Magi had not yet visited her, and she had not gold to buy a lamb!

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9).

“So, as when He was born He passed all palaces and courts and houses, and came to the level of the lowest child, being born in a manger; so when He was dedicated in

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business - KJV)?"

the temple to priesthood after the first divine ideal of dedicated priesthood, the offering of His mother was the offering of the poor” (Morgan, p. 42).

Now let's make the trip to Jerusalem and the temple, only a few miles to the north of Bethlehem. Here the family enters the gate at the end of the Royal Porch. They pass along the columned nave of the porch, out into the Court of the Gentiles, through the low barrier, with its signs cautioning non-Jews to go no farther on pain of death. They walk through to the side of the Women's Court, up the steps and through the double gate into the Women's Court.

The morning service is ending. The fragrance of incense clings to the air. Behind Mary is the Court of the Women. Mary herself and the other offering women are now summoned by the rise of the organ. They step up the fifteen stairs of the Levites and stand at the top, in waiting at the Gate of Nicanor. They have just deposited the prices for their sacrifices in Trumpet No. 3, the offering box which is close to the raised dais where the women worship. Now they stand before the altar.

“It was, as if they were to be brought nearest to the Sanctuary; as if theirs were to be specially the ‘prayers’ that rose in the cloud of incense from the Golden Altar; as if for them specially the sacrifices were laid on the Altar of Burnt Offering; as if theirs was a larger share of the benediction which, spoken by the lips of the priests, seemed like Jehovah's answer to the prayers of the people. . . .

“From where they stood they could see it all, share in it, rejoice in it. And now the general service was over, and only those remained who brought special sacrifices, or who lingered near them that had such, or whose loved abode was ever in the Temple.

“The purification service, with such unspoken prayer and praise as would be the outcome of a grateful heart, was soon ended, and they who had shared in it were Levitically clean. Now all stain was removed, and, as the Law put it, they might again partake of sacred offerings” (Edersheim, p. 197).

Mary's Firstborn is next redeemed at the hand of the priest with five shekels of silver, **“two benedictions being at the same time pronounced, one for the happy event which had enriched the family with a firstborn, the other for the law of redemption”** (Edersheim, The Temple, p. 345).

They have fulfilled all the necessary laws. Now the Law *“to fulfill all righteousness” is to be established in the mouth of two witnesses* (Matthew 18:16): *But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.*

Prompted by the Holy Spirit, two devoted servants of Jehovah come to bear witness to the Lord's Christ and to have the longings of their own seeking hearts satisfied.

In her book, *Called to be Saints*, Chris-

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business - KJV)?"

tina Rossetti (p. 133) expresses the glory of these scenes in the fulfillment of Old Testament types:

“On this day the mother of the great King brought the burnt offering of the poor, the virgin mother of the sinless Firstborn submitted to ceremonial purification.

“On this day, for a few shekels, He was redeemed Whose lifeblood paid our costlier ransom; and embraced in aged arms, Who made the round world and them that dwell therein; and recognized by Simeon, whom He would shortly comfort in the valley of the shadow of death; and hailed by Anna, whose fastings and prayers He that instant paid and overpaid.

“On this day the Second Adam did homage, the Better Abel cried from the ground on behalf of His brother, the True Isaac was pledged to be sacrificed and not spared, the Avenger of Blood gained on him who was a murderer from the beginning, the Swifter David hastened and ran to meet the Philistine, the Greater Solomon chose for His portion the good of His people, the Lamb of God drew nigh to the altar.”

II. THE TWO WITNESSES

*Received By Simeon
(Luke 2:25-35)*

2:25. And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

26. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

27. And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law,

28. then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,

29. “Now Lord, Thou dost let Thy bond-servant depart in peace, according to Thy word;

30. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

31. Which Thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples,

32. A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, and the glory of Thy people Israel.”

33. And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him.

34. And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed –

35. And a sword will pierce even your own soul – to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

In comes this aged servant of God, with a look of holy joy on his face. He comes to Mary and takes the Baby into his own arms. He had been ready when the Holy Spirit brought him up to the temple this day and up to this very special baby. This is the moment he has been waiting for—the consolation of Israel. He has heard (his name means “hearing”) that he will not die before

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business - KJV)?"

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seeing the Lord's Christ. Now he sees, hears, and embraces the Savior. No wonder he is filled with peace.

“Luke describes him as ‘righteous and devout’—one word describing the relationship he bore to his fellowmen, and the other, his relation to God” (Morgan, p. 42).

Now he embraces the One for whom he has waited with an expectant hope. That hope of seeing the Lord's Christ has buoyed him up in his latter days and kept his heart close to his God, his footsteps close to the temple.

So Simeon holds the Child in his arms and sings the beautiful hymn, which has come to be known by the church as the *Nunc Dimmittis*. It is the equal of any Old Testament psalm of joy. He begins with his personal feelings of rejoicing. Then he sings of God's salvation for all peoples.

“Could it be less in God's desire than worldwide, with the same need on all sides calling for it?” (Grant, p. 357).

Then Simeon turns to Mary and says, “Yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed” (KJV). Did she remember these words as she stood at the foot of the cross?

We cannot see Him and remain neutral. Our attitude toward Him will determine what we ultimately become. Those who reject will fall. Those who receive Him will rise with Him. And the thoughts of many will be revealed.

“Many of us have truths and doctrines pretty clearly. If anybody says what is wrong, we can spot it in a minute. But heaven is interested in our embracing Jesus in our affections, so that we have precious thoughts of Jesus that can be revealed. If our hearts could be turned inside out, what would be revealed? For nineteen centuries the saints have been speaking of Jesus, and preaching about Him, and praising Him.

“They have been writing hymns, and singing hymns; they have been conversing about Him, to say nothing about all the unspoken and unwritten thoughts! When those thoughts are all revealed, there will be a wonderful library for heaven to read” (Coates, p. 40).

*Recognized By Anna
(Luke 2:36-38)*

2:36. And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with a husband seven years after her marriage,

37. And then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. And she never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers.

38. And at that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Here is another one who is in the right place at the right time. Her name Anna means “grace.” God's perfect timing

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business - KJV)?"

has kept this elderly servant of His from leaving the Court of the Women this morning of Jesus's presentation. She is a devout woman, who is recognized as "a widow indeed." It is possible that she occupied a chamber very close to the temple since she "served God night and day."

Anna was at an age which for many is a time of weariness, listlessness, and having a lack of purpose. But not so for Anna. God had gifted her with an unusual gift. She was a prophetess. The word from Greek means "a woman who interprets oracles." She had special perception in the Word of God. Though old enough to think of retiring from service, "she departed not from the temple"—or she kept on not leaving. Perhaps it was in her mind sometime to leave, but God kept her there for further use. He had a special blessing in mind for her after these many years of service—the service of fastings and prayer.

She burst in upon the scene of Simeon's prophesying and is impelled as he to recognize this One as the Lord's Christ. No doubt her heart, through fastings and prayers, is fully prepared to be controlled by the Spirit of God.

And she, a woman, and elderly at that, becomes God's instrument for proclamation of the Savior to other Jerusalemites with seeking hearts.

Occupied

2:39. When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth.

40. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him (Luke 2:39-40 NIV).

The verse shows the common humanity of the true human Child as he grows intellectually, physically and spiritually. In every way, he had a normal childhood except for the fact that sin and any shortcomings were not a part. He was not only truly Man but perfect Man developing perfectly. He experienced no genetic defects from His heredity.

"Jesus has gone through every experience that could be the part of humanity in the path of faith from childhood up to manhood. There is not a stage of human life in which God has not been perfectly glorified.

"He is qualified to build the temple, and to reign, and to exercise priesthood. He is qualified for all that by growing up from His own place" (Coates, p. 44).

"This is a beautiful, perfectly normal Child growing up in a lowly home where God is revered, and feeding upon the Word of God until the hour when He was to go forth on His great mission to redeem the world.

"Those hidden years were the suitable preparation for His future ministry" (Ironside, p. 78).

III. THE YEARS IN NAZARETH

The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary; he awakeneth morning by morning; he waketh mine ear to hear like the learned (Isaiah 50:4).

We cannot understand the mystery of the incarnation.

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business - KJV)?"

“As God, of course, He knew all things, and yet as Man He chose to grow in wisdom as He grew in stature. It is a mystery. We cannot understand how He, who was the Eternal Wisdom, could yet learn from the Word of God. . .

“Our Lord Jesus, as a little child, grew and studied the Word of God. Later He fed on the Word of God. It was His constant delight and joy. All these different circumstances must have spoken to His heart as He knew He was the One who had come to fulfill every one of the types and shadows of the Law” (Ironsides, pp. 81-82).

There were three Jewish feasts that boys from ages ten to thirteen (when they came to age legally) attended—the feasts of Pentecost, Tabernacles, and Passover.

God the Father had wisely selected earthly parents for His Son. Mary and Joseph were truly a devoted pair, who evidently loved to come up to Jerusalem for this feast that speaks of national deliverance, the feast of Passover.

They came every year. These were joyous occasions. Only the men needed to come, but the women enjoyed it—and Mary came.

Now Mary had carefully trained her Son in the Scriptures, as most Jewish mothers did until the fifth year. Though in poor circumstances, the home simply furnished, they probably possessed one item that the boy Jesus noticed from the time He first toddled after Mary around that home.

I am speaking of a small parchment roll, tied to the door, on which was printed the name of God. The members of the

family would touch this, both on their way in, and again, on their way out.

When the child’s hands would curiously contact the parchment, the Jewish mother would carefully remove them, and give them a kiss.

Her little son would soon learn to link love with the name of God. It is likely that the small scroll contained some of the words of Psalm 121:8:

The LORD will preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forever.

Around age six, Jewish boys went to synagogue schools, where they were further instructed in the Law of God until they passed their examinations around the age of thirteen, when they became known as Sons of the Law.

But during the two years prior to this, they were encouraged to come to the feasts, to sit at the feet of the rabbi in the synagogues, and to ask questions that would prepare them for their Bar Mitzvah.

So the Boy grew, and He was filled with wisdom. He was filled with the Word of God.

All of His **“thoughts were formed by the Scriptures. His whole interest was in them, (and) so . . . those who taught the Scriptures were more interesting to Him than anything else. . . . It was His Father’s business, and He was occupied in it”** (Coates, p. 47).

Jeremiah 15:16 would always apply to the Father’s Son during His earthly sojourn:

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business - KJV)?"

Thy words were found and I ate them, and Thy words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart.

THE CHILD IN THE TEMPLE (Luke 2:41-50)

2:41. And His parents used to go to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover.

42. And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast;

43. and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. And His parents were unaware of it,

44. but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances.

45. And when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, looking for Him.

46. And it came about that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them, and asking them questions.

47. And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.

48. And when they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You."

49. And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?"

50. And they did not understand the statement which He had made to them.

When the Boy went up to the temple at the age of twelve, He went in and sat as a disciple at the feet of the rabbis. He voluntarily ranked himself as a learner. Here His perfect humanity is seen through His propriety. In keeping with His age, He submitted to the customs. As God, He had the perfect right to teach the teachers and doctors of the law, but He voluntarily took the place of a learner.

At this time the symbolical and typical elements of temple worship had lost their spiritual meaning for the majority of that generation. This was replaced by so-called teaching and outward performances, worship after the letter, rather than the spirit. And Israel was preparing, even then, to reject Christ for Pharisaism.

His presence in the midst of the temple must have delighted the Father's heart. There He was sitting with the doctors of the Law, probably along one of the porches in the Court of the Women, where the Sanhedrin met to decide judicial cases among the people. How it must have pleased the Father to have His own Son, whose words were true and righteous altogether, there in the midst.

"He . . . sat down as a Disciple at the feet of the rabbis. . . . They talked to Him, and taught Him, and asked Him questions. He answered them, and they listened in amazement. Then He did what every disciple had the right to do—asked them questions, questions arising out of the religious training He had received at home; and still they

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business - KJV)?"

were amazed. The thing that amazed the teachers was that this Boy, simple, artless, the grace of God resting upon Him, revealed in the answers He gave and the questions He asked, such clarity of apprehension, and insight of mind. They had never had a Boy like that before” (Morgan, p. 45).

After the feast days were over, Mary and Joseph left Jerusalem and traveled in caravan northward. It was the practice that women and small children went ahead each day because they traveled more slowly; the men and boys followed later, and they all met in the evening at an agreed upon campsite. Mary and Joseph may each have thought that Jesus was with the other and not have discovered that He was missing until the first evening.

They turned back toward Jerusalem with great consternation to search for Him.

**“With his kind mother who partakes
thy woe,
Joseph turn back; see where your child
doth sit,
Blowing, yea blowing out those sparks
of wit,
Which himself on the doctors did be-
stow:
The Word but lately could not speak,
and lo
It suddenly speaks wonders; whence
comes it,
That all which was, and all which
should be writ,
A shallow seeming child, should deeply
know?”**

**His Godhead was not soul to his man-
hood,
Nor had time mellowed him to this ripe-
ness,
But as for one which hath a long task,
tis good,
With the Sun to begin his business,
He in his age’s morning thus began
By miracles exceeding power of man.”**

--John Donne

Their uneasiness and concern reveals that they did not yet comprehend that He was the Christ of God. As that, as the God-Man, He could not be harmed nor lost. What need they to be alarmed about His whereabouts? They knew (Luke 1 and 2) that He was the Messiah. Probably, not until after the resurrection and Pentecost did Mary fully comprehend who He was. Then, all that she had lived through would fall into place.

2:49. And He said unto them, “Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father’s house (about My Father’s business-KJV)?”

“It is strange indeed that any should think that this was His own waking up to such a thought. For in this case how could He speak of it as a strange thing that they should not before have had this thought? On the contrary, it is plain they ought to have understood it from all that they had ever seen of Him. This absolute devotedness had been His ‘wisdom’ ever, only manifested more as His childhood expanded into youth and manhood” (Grant, p. 359).

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business - KJV)?"

This incident is recorded to show us what governed the heart of our Lord even when He was a Boy. He was occupied with the things of God. We can be so occupied, too.

Now the veil is dropped and He returns in the ordering of the Father to Nazareth, His appointed place.

“He accepted the ordering of God for Him at the time, and that ordering was for Him to be in subjection to those who were in the place of parents to Him. He

went down to Nazareth with them and was in subjection to them. How perfect He was in all things! And there He advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. Everything was so morally beautiful that men were constrained to accord Him their favor. The time had not yet come for His testimony to touch their consciences, and bring out the enmity of their hearts”
(Coates, p. 47)

A great Bible teacher, R. Paxson, has written a testimony in the book *Life on the Highest Plane*, (pages 327-32) that enlarges on the statement, “I must be about My Father’s business”:

Becoming a Christian in my youth, I experienced deep and real joy in the consciousness of forgiveness of sins and in the fellowship of Christ. I truly loved my Lord and longed to live so that others, especially members of my family, would see that He was indeed my Saviour.

Though born again, I knew nothing of a yielded life and consequently some of the old sins continued to manifest themselves in the same old way. One of the most outstanding was temper. Over and over again it was lost and hasty, unkind words said even to those nearest and dearest. Having what often accompanies a quick temper, a sensitive, affectionate heart, I would go apart after an outburst and mourn as though my heart would break.

Times without number the resolve was made never to lose my temper

again and the attempt was made to conquer it by willpower, but all to no avail; and I continued in a life of constant defeat and miserable failure. Conscious of the evident hypocrisy in such a life, all the joy experienced in conversion left me. Truly loving the Lord, I hated myself for the caricature of Him I was giving to others.

One day, thoroughly discouraged and disheartened by an overwhelming sense of defeat, I sought the quiet of my own room and shut myself in with the Lord, determined to stay until something happened.

I told the Lord that either He must show me *what* a truly Christian life was and *how* to live it or I would renounce my profession of Christ and ask to have my name taken from the church roll. I was desperately in earnest and God always meets one who truly seeks Him.

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business - KJV)?"

He graciously met me that day and answered both my questions.

Two verses from His Word He used to flood my soul with light. My prayer is that again He may use them to bring similar joy and peace to others discouraged and defeated.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20: "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

Through three unforgettable invincible statements of truth God has unveiled the essence of a yielded life and has revealed its basic motive.

"What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" No, until that day I did not know that my body had any relationship whatsoever to my conversion; neither did I know that the Holy Spirit had taken it to be His temple. That God laid claim to my body for His habitation and that the Holy Spirit *had already* made it His home was to me a startling revelation.

Think for a moment what that means—God, the Holy One actually dwelling in your human body! Suppose some earthly king would send word that he wanted to spend just one day in your home. What a housecleaning would take place! How all the best and loveliest things would be taken out to use! What preparation would be made that everything would be exactly fitting and worthy of such an honored guest!

But oh! What an unclean, unfit, unworthy place we often ask the King of

kings and Lord of lords to live in, not for a day but for a lifetime! What an unholy, desecrated temple we offer to the Holy Spirit!

But I have given the Lord my soul, what need hath He of my body? Was the question that came into my mind. I saw faintly that day but with growing clearness every day since why God asks for our bodies.

Dare we say it—it is His need of a channel through which He may give to a world that knows Him not a revelation of who He is and of His yearning love for men. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" and men saw and knew who the Father was by the presence of the Son on earth. Christ is now in heaven.

But oh! Is His presence not needed here on earth? Is He not needed in your city? In your church? In your school? In your office? In your social circle? In your home? And how is the glorified Christ to presence Himself here on earth? In what way will He reveal Himself to men now?

Christ has just two ways of making Himself known; one is through His Word. But countless thousands do not even possess a Bible, and countless millions could not read it if they did. The other way is through us in whom He dwells as the Life of our life.

Oh! Do you not see how He needs your body to be wholly His? Today He needs eyes, ears, lips, hands, feet, minds, hearts, wills and all that makes up a human personality for the manifestation of Himself on earth as truly as these things were needed when He

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business - KJV)?"

dwelt as the incarnate Son in a human body. When Christ was upon earth, it was not merely His teaching and preaching that won men to Him. It was His life, His personal presence, Himself.

So today, men need to see Christ, to feel His presence, to be brought face to face with Him. The Lord Jesus showed me that day that He wanted and needed my body with my entire human personality to indwell and to use as a means of revealing Himself to others.

There was something wondrously beautiful in the thought that the Lord of glory could ever have need of me. I knew only too well how desperately I needed Him. Moment by moment I needed to draw all my life from Him as the branch lives in the life of the vine. But to think that He needed me!

That there was fruit to be borne that could only be borne on a branch! That some life somewhere would need to see Christ in me! It was a marvelously convincing appeal, yet I am ashamed to record it even now so many years afterward, I hesitated to yield.

Was my life not my own? Was it not asking a great deal to turn it over to the absolute sovereignty of another? Should I relinquish *all* right to its possession and control? Was it safe to do so? Was it reasonable? Was it needful? Oh! The feasible, plausible arguments that self advanced to retain the kingship over my life!

All this reluctance was anticipated by the Lord and He was prepared to meet it. *"What? Know ye that ye are not your own?"* Like a sharp two-edged sword these words penetrated to my innermost being and lodged there. How they cut into

shreds every argument advanced against such a wholesale yielding of myself to God! *"Know ye that ye are not your own?"*

How they brought to light the hitherto disguised hypocrisy of my profession as a Christian in saying that I belonged to Jesus Christ yet all the while retaining in my own hands the reins of government! *"Know ye that ye are not your own?"*

How these words went straight to the very heart of the issue like an axe laid at the root of the tree—the enthronement of Jesus Christ as Lord over my life or the continued reign of self!

A flood of light entered my soul through that simple but imperative question of the Lord. I was convinced of the rightfulness of God's claim upon me but I was not yet constrained to yield to it.

Oh! The incredible, unthinkable stubbornness to resist and refuse in the light of such clear conviction! Oh! The infinite, unwearying patience of the divine heart to continue to woo and to work in the face of such willfulness!

I was not only stubborn but fearful. If I let go and put myself wholly and unconditionally in His possession and control what might He not take from me? What might He not ask of me? I was in the same state of mind as was the college girl who said she would like to yield herself wholly to God but she was afraid He would take advantage of her.

To put the truth very bluntly, I would have been glad to have turned over to the Lord for His possession and control all the unpleasant, unmanageable, uncontrollable part of myself if He would have left the rest to me!

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business - KJV)?"

But God dealt very gently and tenderly with me, drawing me closer and closer to Himself by the cords of love.

To master my will, He had to melt my heart. "What? Know ye that ye are not your own *for ye are bought with a price?*" Bought! *Not my own because bought.* Here again was something new. I had been thinking that by yielding to Christ I would be conferring the ownership of my life upon Him, that I would be making an outright gift to Him.

But God showed me that day that *I already belonged to Christ* by the right of purchase and that Christ's claim to the undivided possession and control of my life was an absolutely legitimate one. Who could deny one the right to that which He had purchased?

I was convinced again and still not constrained to yield. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought *with a price?*"

Oh! *That price!* "Redeemed not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

The precious blood of Christ the price paid for me! The life of the spotless, stainless, sinless Son of God laid down for my paltry, insignificant, sinful, selfish life! A Life given for a life!

2 Corinthians 5:15: "And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

I had been saying "Must I give myself to Him?" But on that day kneeling in spirit at the foot of the cross of Christ I said from the depths of my heart "May I yield all that I am and have—for time

and for eternity—to Him who gave all for me?"

And what was the basic motive in the yielding? It was the joyous response of love to love following the spiritual apprehension of the reasonableness and rightfulness of Christ's claim upon my life and the use He desired to make of it.

Then let us define yielding. Yielding is the definite, deliberate, voluntary transference of the undivided possession, control and use of the whole being, spirit, soul and body from self to Christ, to whom it rightfully belongs by creation and by purchase. In yielding to Christ we crown Him Lord of all in our lives.

"Consecration does not confer ownership, it presumes it. It is not *in order to be His*, but *because we are His*, that we yield up our lives. It is *purchase* that gives *title*; *delivery* simply gives *possession*.

The question is not, 'Do I belong to God?' but 'Have I yielded to God that which already belongs to Him?'" (J. H. McConkey, *The Surrendered Life*, p. 17).

In a city in north China there was a girls' school. The students grew in numbers which necessitated more buildings. Adjoining the school were just the buildings needed, the property of a Chinese family. After much bargaining, a sale was effected. The papers were drawn up and the purchase price paid. In the autumn the school fully expected to open work in the new buildings. But they were unable to do so.

Why not? *The Chinese family had not moved out.* Purchase gives title but only delivery gives possession.

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business - KJV)?"

Christ has the title deed to your life. The price was paid nearly two thousand years ago. It is His by the right of purchase. Have you moved out that He may move in and occupy what He already possesses?

Christ has the right to exempt you from His property; He *is* Lord and He has the right to command you to yield. But Christ's way is to constrain by love rather than to conquer by force. So He beseeches us by the innumerable mercies of God of which we are daily the recipients to yield ourselves to Him.

Romans 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

Yielding is the glad, joyous, willing response of love to love. "We love Him because He first loved us." Bought with a price, "therefore" we gladly glorify Him in our body and spirit, which are His. "I beseech you"—I have given My life in death for you, will you not give yours in life for Me?

True yielding is the utter abandonment of love. It is the call of the Bridegroom, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away," to which the Bride joyfully responds, "I am my beloved's and his desire is toward me."

Oh! My friend, does this not take the

"must" out of surrender for you? Does it not answer the question "Is it safe?" Have you only thought of yielding in the light of what you would have to give up? To yield does involve a giving up but it means giving up what really is not yours; it means giving up something only to get something of infinitely greater worth; yes, it means giving up something that He needs for His use to the One we love best; more than all it means giving up something to the One who loves us with a love so great that He died for us and now waits to bestow upon us all the exhaustless treasures that are ours in Him. Can we not trust the Man who died for us?

Romans 8:32, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, *how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"*

1 Corinthians 3:21-23, "Therefore let no man glory in men. *For all things are yours; whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.*"

Surrender taken alone is a plunge into a cold void. When it is a surrender to the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me, it is the bright homecoming of the soul to the seat and sphere of life and power.

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business - KJV)?"

V. HE MUST INCREASE

Questions on Luke 3:1-38

REVIEW: Lesson 4. Read Luke 2:21-52 once more. What in lesson 4 blessed your heart and life.

READ: Luke 3:1-38 and the notes on Lesson 5.

MEMORY: Review Luke 1:4; 19:10; 24:13; 1:37; 2:49. Learn Luke 3:21-22.

I. INCREASE GIVEN BY GOD

READ: Luke 1:13-17 and 76-80; 3:1-20; John 1:15-34; 3:22-30; Isaiah 40:1-5; 55:6-11; Malachi 4:5-6; 1 Corinthians 3:5-7

DO QUESTIONS: 1-8

READ: Pages 81-90

1. What are the main sections of this chapter?

2. Luke gives six contemporary datings in Luke 3:1-2 to fix the commencement of John's ministry. What are these historical references?

Luke 3:1-2—Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness.

3. Just why is it significant that these contemporary datings were included and why were the religious leaders not mentioned first?

4. Consider the following about John's ministry and message and make as many personal applications as you can:

A. About how old was he and how did his ministry begin?

Isaiah 40: 3-5—A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our god. Let every valley be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; and let the rough ground become a plain, and the rugged terrain a broad valley; then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Luke 1:80—And the child continued to grow, and to become strong in spirit, and he lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

Luke 3:2-6—In the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness. And he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins; as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS

MEMORY (Luke 2:49): And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (about my Father's business - KJV)?"

STRAIGHT. EVERY RAVINE SHALL BE FILLED UP, AND EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL SHALL BE BROUGHT LOW; AND THE CROOKED SHALL BECOME STRAIGHT, AND THE ROUGH ROADS SMOOTH; AND ALL FLESH SHALL SEE THE SALVATION OF GOD."

John 1:6-8—There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. He came for a witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light.

Eph. 2:10—For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

B. Where did John prepare? What spiritual lesson(s) have you learned in a similar place?

5. What does Isa. 40:3-5 have to do with John's message?

6. What is the burden of John's message? Why repentance? Why baptism?

7. From Luke 3:1-22; Mark 1:1-11; John 1:19-37; 3:22-36, tell what kind of person John was.

Why did the people throng to him?

8. What in John's life should also be true of me? (Personal: Is it?) Consider Romans 15:1-3; Colossians 1:27; Hebrews 13:20-21 and Philippians 2:13. How would our life change if we were more like John? What would be his assessment of us?

(Personal): Have you experienced real repentance? How do you know?

II. INCREASE IN FAVOR WITH GOD AND MAN

READ: Luke 2:52; 3:15-17 and 21-23A and 9:35; Matthew 3:13-17 and 17:6; Mark 1:9-11 and 9:7; John 1:31-34 and 12:28; Isaiah 64:1 (see notes).

DO QUESTIONS: 9-16

READ: Pages 90-93

9. Why did the people ask John, "What shall we do?" What answers did John give?

10. Are we to take John's answers literally today as applying also to us? Why? How?

Matt. 5:16—"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

Eph. 2:10—For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

James 2:18—But someone may well say, "You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."

11. What in John's life encourages those of us who want to prepare the way for others to receive the Lord?

12. What did John's baptism signify?

13. Why then was Jesus baptized?

MEMORY (Luke 3:21-22): Now it came about when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also was baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased."

14. Comment about the details that Matthew (3:13-15), Mark (1:9), and John (1:32-34) give that Luke omits.

Matt. 3:13-15—Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” But Jesus answering said to him, “Permit it at this time, for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he permitted Him.

Mark 1:9—And it came about in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

John 1:32-34—And John bore witness saying, “I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and He remained upon Him. And I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”

15. What is the significance of God’s pronouncement of delight upon the first 30 years of Jesus’ life? See also:

John 8:29—“And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.”

Rom. 15:3—For even as Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED THEE FELL UPON ME.”

16. What lessons can I learn from this?

Before answering, consider:

John 3:30—“He must increase, but I must decrease.”

Rom. 15:1-3—Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED THEE FELL UPON ME.”

Phil. 2:13—For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Col. 1:27—To whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Heb. 13:20-21—Now the god of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

III. INCREASE OF HIS GOVERNMENT

READ: Pages 93-96

17. Compare the two genealogies in Matt. 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38. What are the similarities? The differences? What lessons may be drawn from them?

MEMORY (Luke 3:21-22): Now it came about when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also was baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, “Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased.”

V. HE MUST INCREASE

Luke 3:1-38

"He must increase, but I must decrease!"

**Not I, but Christ, be honored, loved, exalted,
Not I, but Christ, be seen, be known, be heard;
Not I, but Christ, in every look and action,
Not I, but Christ, in every thought and word."**

—Ada A. Whiddington, c. 1880

Not I But Christ

*"Of the increase of His government and peace
there shall be no end" (Isaiah 9:7)*

God's thought for us is the increase of Christ. What does this mean? It implies giving up self-interest and a life of independence. It results in becoming a person after God's own heart.

An illustration is the life of John the Baptist backed up by his words, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

Christ must have first place in our affections. He must govern every area of our lives, for "of the increase of His government there shall be no end." He will increase, but only as I decrease. God's thought, again, is the increase of Christ in my life.

The increase of Christ is the message of the chapter before us. Here Christ comes forth after years of obscurity to begin His public ministry. In this chapter we have the public presentation of the Son of

Man. First, we see the preparing of people's hearts by God's forerunner (vv. 1-20). Then, in the central portion Christ comes forward, and we witness His anointing for public service. We hear the proclamation from heaven, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased" (vv. 21-23a).

Finally, we trace His godly lineage, the credentials of the Man from heaven (vv. 23b-38). Running through the chapter is the theme of His increase.

We are going to study the chapter, having in mind the thought of His increase in our lives. We shall concentrate on the three sections of the chapter, under the following headings:

I. INCREASE GIVEN BY GOD (vv. 1-20)

MEMORY (Luke 3:21-22): Now it came about when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also was baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased."

II. INCREASE IN FAVOR WITH GOD AND MAN (vv. 21-23a)

III. INCREASE OF HIS GOVERNMENT (vv. 23b-38)

Our purpose is to see Christ coming into our everyday lives in all of His fullness.

**Christ, only Christ, my every wish fulfilling,
Christ, only Christ, my all in all to be.**

--Ada A. Whiddington

I. INCREASE GIVEN BY GOD

READ: Luke 1:13-17 and 76-80 (see below); 3:1-20; John 1:15-34; 3:22-30; Isaiah 40:1-5; 55:6-11; Malachi 4:5-6 (see below); I Corinthians 3:5-7.

“Neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase” (1 Corinthians 3:7)

“For thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways” (Luke 1:76).

“To prepare His ways”—what a privilege! John the Baptist was given the high honor of going before the Lord to prepare His ways. Since we too are sometimes given the honor of preparing men’s hearts to receive Christ, we want to study the testimony of John. We shall look at the messenger, his message, and the effect of his message upon the people. The life of John the Baptist is an encouragement to any today who find themselves called to be preparers of the Lord’s ways.

THE MESSENGER

At age 20, John, a Levite, could have gone to Jerusalem to serve an apprenticeship as a priest. Instead God sent him to the desert. God passed up the religious and cultural centers and dispatched John to the wilderness. Past Jerusalem, which was spiritually barren, and the temple with its empty ritual—God consigned His servant to a physically barren training ground. In the place of no natural resources, John could learn God’s ability to meet all his needs.

“Many of God’s servants had graduated from the university of the wilderness. Moses was given a post-graduate course there for forty years. Much of David’s training was given him in the wilderness. Take Elijah the Prophet—what lessons he had to learn out in the desert! And our blessed Savior Himself spent forty days in the wilderness” (Ironside, p. 93).

Paul had his undergraduate training there.

Consider more closely the preparation of this man and note the significance for us. John’s birth was miraculous; any messenger of Christ must have had a new birth. He was a Nazarite, voluntarily giving up the pleasures of this world (Numbers 6:1-21; Luke 1:15). He “grew strong in spirit and was filled with the Spirit” (1:15, 80); so must we have constant and continuous spiritual growth, being filled with the Spirit.

He had “the spirit and the power of Elijah” (1:17)—the spirit of one who took

MEMORY (Luke 3:21-22): Now it came about when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also was baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, “Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased.”

a stern stand for the things of God in a day of hypocrisy. Today we can use some of the lessons of John the Baptist. Now look at the humble character of this man who could have been received as Messiah by the people.

3:15. The people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he might be the Christ.

Who was he? He was a voice:

And this is the witness of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" And he confessed, and did not deny, and he confessed, "I am not the Christ."

And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?"

And he said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

And he answered, "No."

They said then to him, "Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?"

He said, "I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD,' as Isaiah the prophet said" (John 1:19-23).

He did not get in the way of his message.

God called John a great man:

For he will be great in the sight of the

Lord, and he will drink no wine or liquor; and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his mother's womb (Luke 1:15).

I say to you, among those born of women, there is no one greater than John (Luke 7:28).

Yet about himself John said he was unworthy to untie one thong of the Lord's sandals:

3:16. John answered and said to them all, "As for me, I baptize you with water; but He who is mightier than I is coming, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He himself will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire."

John pointed his own disciples to the Lamb of God and gladly saw them leave him to follow Christ:

Again the next day John was standing, and two of his disciples; and he looked upon Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus (John 1:35-37).

John always gave place to Christ. This is what true humility is and greatness in the sight of the Lord. In John was no shadow of jealousy to cloud his message. When the Lord came forth, John rejoiced to see Him and to fade into the background. The humble mind, which gives place to Christ, is true greatness in the

MEMORY (Luke 3:21-22): Now it came about when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also was baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased."

eyes of God. In whose eyes do we want to be great?

We have glimpsed the man. Now let us consider his message.

THE MESSAGE

Luke 3:1-2: At the beginning of chapter three, Luke lists six ruling men to show the date, conditions, and world significance of John's message.

Luke uses one emperor, one Roman procurator, three tetrarchs, and the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas to mark the commencement of John's ministry between the years A.D. 26 and 29. Most likely, the exact year was A.D. 27.

These names underline moral and political conditions in the land. The reign of Tiberius Caesar was marked by inhumanity and harshness. Israel was being crushed under the cruelty of Rome.

All power of life and death was in the hands of the Roman tyrant. The three under-rulers—tetrarchs—and the high priests were mere puppets of Rome. Not God's original purpose for His people, pagan foreigners held insolent control over the nation.

The religious situation reflected the moral depravity of the times. Those two men who held the priesthood were the very ones responsible for plotting and directing the crucifixion of their Messiah. Annas and Caiaphas were Sadducees:

But the high priest rose up, along with all his associates (that is, the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with jealousy (Acts 5:17).

They were materialists, those who denied the supernatural. They rejected the One who was the Shekinah glory of the temple. Such was the darkness of the priesthood.

Now a stupendous thing happened at this time, but for a moment it caused scarcely a ripple on the surface of world affairs. The Word of God came upon a man.

“Where did it alight? Not in Rome, sitting in her proud insolence upon her seven hills; not in Jerusalem, sitting amid the spiritual and moral ruin that characterized the age, the appalling disaster of the rebellious people of God. The Word of God passed the emperor, passed the governor, passed the tetrarchs, passed the priests, and lighted upon a man, a man prepared of God—lighted upon him in the wilderness . . . symbol of the world's spiritual and moral condition at that time” (Morgan, pp. 48-49).

Now, two thousand years later, we know what a momentous event occurred. The Word of God pressed down upon John from above (v. 2), and he came out of the wilderness, compelled to proclaim that Word. He was morally outside the world system when he received his commission to preach God's way of salvation for the world. He came in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (Luke 3:4-6):

3:4. As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness,

‘MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE

MEMORY (Luke 3:21-22): Now it came about when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also was baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased."

LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.

5. EVERY RAVINE SHALL BE FILLED UP, AND EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL SHALL BE BROUGHT LOW; AND THE CROOKED SHALL BECOME STRAIGHT, AND THE ROUGH ROADS SMOOTH;

6. AND ALL FLESH SHALL SEE THE SALVATION OF GOD.”

This quotation from Isaiah 40:3-5 points to John the Baptist. We see here the character of John’s message.

The voice cries in the wilderness. However man may have failed, God always reserves the right to speak: “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.”

That is how the Word comes. Everything may have broken down all around, but God’s Word comes in comforting grace to those who listen:

“Comfort, O comfort My people,” says your God. “Speak kindly to Jerusalem; and call out to her, that her warfare has ended, that her iniquity has been removed, that she has received of the LORD’s hand double for all her sins” (Isaiah 40:1-2).

“All flesh is grass and withereth away,” but God’s Word is life giving and refreshing. It is the “incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth forever;” it is by this seed that we are born again (1 Peter 1:23-25).

All the obstacles and difficulties which stand in God’s way in men’s hearts are to be removed. The way is to be cleared before Him—made straight. Every gorge will be filled up.

“The gorges represent what does not come up to the proper level. There is deficiency. This is illustrated in the crowds, who were lacking in gracious consideration for others and who said, What should we do?” (Coates, p. 49).

And on the other side, every mountain and hill shall be brought low.

“They represent such as the Pharisees boasting that they had Abraham for their father. All that sort of thing has to come down” (Coates, p. 49); and it did come down as we see later in Acts (6:7).

Then the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough ways smooth.

“The crooked places have their counterpart in such as the tax gatherers who made people pay too much; the soldiers, oppressing and falsely accusing, would answer to the ‘rough places’” (Coates, p. 49).

This is what happens when the glory of the Lord is to be revealed—the outshining of God’s character reveals the things that are wrong in man’s heart. When these obstacles go, then all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Then the grace of God can come in.

Thus has the prophet Isaiah described the ministry of John the Baptist.

Luke now gives us just a sampling of the thrust of the message (3:18), but first he has summarized the content (v. 3): John “went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” After citing

MEMORY (Luke 3:21-22): Now it came about when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also was baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, “Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased.”

the prophetic note from Isaiah, Luke records some of John's words of exhortation and his dialogue with the people:

3:7. He therefore began saying to the multitudes who were going out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

8. "Therefore bring forth fruits in keeping with your repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I say to you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.

9. "And also the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

In Matthew's Gospel the words spoken to the Pharisees and Sadducees as Jewish leaders here in Luke are addressed to the people at large.

"It was to the men who supremely felt that they needed no repentance, that he addressed the stinging, biting, sarcastic words that called them an offspring of vipers" (Morgan, p. 49).

He drew attention with his jolting, outrageous words to the fact that they were objects of the derision of God Almighty, not only because of their sin and self-satisfaction but also because of their abject indifference to His claims upon their heart and life. They had come to be baptized as an outward formality. True repentance was the last thing they had in

mind. They were trusting in their racial tie to Abraham. But they could not have faith in the natural nor plead the privileges of Abraham, whom they completely misunderstood (Romans 4).

The axe is at the root of the trees. Judgment is at the door, and John warns them to flee from the wrath to come. There is no fruit for God along natural lines, only bad fruit. Trees producing this kind of fruit are already being cut down. All flesh shall be on one level before God, and all are sinners. These trees are to be cast into the fire.

John calls them to repent. Repentance does not mean reform or penance. It means self-judgment, a complete change of mind and attitude about oneself. Every person has this need—high or low, outwardly righteous or corrupt. John's message comes as a leveler, to bring all people to one plane, to make them recognize that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

Each one is to see this and turn right around—to turn from faith in oneself and to cast one's faith upon Another. This is what he means by repentance.

There is a real danger in false repentance. An outstanding Old Testament example of this is Saul. He was sorry for the moment. He was really sorry for the consequences of sin, not the root of the thing, which is self will.

John calls them to a real repentance. He tells them not to boast of their spiritual descent when everything they do contradicts Abraham, who was a man of faith. The time has come to get to the root of the thing. The character of the fruit is deter-

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mined by the character of the tree, and man after the flesh can never bear fruit for God.

John calls them to have a real repentance.

Romans 15:1-3—Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good to his edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED THEE FELL UPON ME.”

Colossians 1:27—To whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Hebrews 13:20-21—Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Philippians 2:13—For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

The people are stirred by the Word of God, and they express their consternation.

THE EFFECT OF THE MESSAGE

3:10. And the multitudes were questioning him, saying, “Then what shall we do?”

11. And he would answer and say to them, “Let the man who has two tunics share with him who has none; and let him who has food do likewise.”

12. And some tax-gatherers also came to be baptized, and they said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?”

13. And he said to them, “Collect no more than what you have been ordered to.”

14. And some soldiers were questioning him, saying, “And what about us, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages.”

15. Now while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he might be the Christ,

16. John answered and said to them all, “As for me, I baptize you with water; but He who is mightier than I is coming, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He Himself will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire.

17. And His winnowing fork is in His hand to clean out His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

18. So with many other exhortations also he preached the gospel to the people.

19. But when Herod the tetrarch was reproved by him on account of Herodias, his brother’s wife, and on account of all the wicked things which Herod had done,

20. he added this also to them all, that he locked John up in prison.

MEMORY (Luke 3:21-22): Now it came about when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also was baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, “Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased.”

The people ask, "What shall we do?" Now Luke reports several of the conversations with people from different classes and occupations.

All the while, John is prescribing **"no asceticism, but practical righteousness and love"** and **"no claim upon God is allowed on this account. As the Lord says at an aftertime, no such claim is possible for a creature: 'when ye have done all say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which it was our duty to do'"** (Grant, p. 361).

John tells them that they are to demonstrate real repentance by their lives. Their activities are to be love-inspired.

"Give, is the word. If you have two coats, give one to the man who has none. If you have food, and another man is hungry, give him food. There, before the Sermon on the Mount, before the teaching of Jesus, before all the marvel of that teaching, revealing the fact that the height of morality is the love-mastered life, John said the same thing. He was the forerunner of the King. . . . Thus the law of love was enforced in every answer he gave to personal inquiry" (Morgan, pp. 49-50).

How does John's baptism differ from Christian baptism?

It is preparatory to the coming in of Christ. While we can look back to the death of Christ as our judgment, John's baptism looked ahead to the work of Christ. In our baptism today, after the

cross, we look back to His death and signify our union with Him in death, burial, and resurrection:

Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection,

Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin (Romans 6:3-6).

Of course, John's baptism foreshadowed the death of Christ for our sin, but John does not preach this. His emphasis is upon the change of heart necessary before the grace of God and forgiveness can come in. Then he could point them to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

The spiritual point today as then is do we really turn to God in order to see His grace and receive His salvation—to find in His provision all that we need for time and eternity? God is our Savior. Make way for Him. This is the Gospel which John was preaching. It is the same good news for men and women today.

The people are so moved by the message that they begin to wonder if John is

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the Messiah. Immediately, John puts himself into the background. He never gets in the way of his message. He always points to Christ as the Mightier One. Luke then takes John out of the way because his work was finished (vv. 19-20 see above).

To correct any false impression that he might be the Messiah, John declares his role as the forerunner of the Messiah, making way for the Greater One. Notice the difference here between the He and the I. John sums it all up later, "He must increase; I must decrease." I baptize with water, to signify a change of mind. But He will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Luke 3:16).

Baptism of the Spirit has to do with the incorporation of the believer into the body of Christ. This is what happened at Pentecost when the church began. The Lord is applying the words of John and pointing to their fulfillment in Acts 1:5, when He says after His resurrection, "For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." So we are told in 1 Corinthians 12:13 that "by one Spirit we all are baptized into one body." The church is Christ's body:

And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all (Ephesians 1:22-23).

"The great mark of having been baptized with the Holy Spirit would be that we should work together harmoniously as members of that body into which He has baptized us. The baptism of the

Spirit is not exactly an individual matter. It puts all the saints vitally together in a living organism, and the great evidence of the power of the Spirit is that we function properly as members of the body. To function properly as a member of the body of Christ is morally greater than to work a miracle or speak with tongues" (Coates, p. 53).

John goes on to speak of the service of Christ as a baptizing with fire and a winnowing of wheat. The fire purges and destroys, and the winnowing of wheat separates it from the chaff, which is of no value. In Malachi 3:3, the Lord says that "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and He will purify the children of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver." He searches out the heart of man and judges the inner feelings and motives:

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

For the believer this results in self-judgment and purification. For the unbeliever it works condemnation.

"The Spirit and fire would exercise a purifying influence to the very center of man's moral being so that there should not be anything in his secret thoughts, feelings, or desires that is contrary to God. Are we prepared to go in for that?" (Coates, pp. 52-53).

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Christ comes also as the purger of the threshing floor. After the threshing comes the winnowing.

The farm workers used to take the winnowing fan, which was a large, wide, flat wooden shovel, and with it toss the grain into the air. The heavier grain would fall to the ground, and the light chaff, or outer husk, would blow away in the wind.

The chaff, he says, He will burn with fire unquenchable. Thus will He sift and separate men. It is a solemn warning of judgment to come upon all unbelievers, Jew and Gentile alike.

Winnowing may also have an application to believers.

It might refer to the discipline of God which produces something for God. God is after wheat, fruit. Discipline is always intended by God to deliver us from the flesh, from self-centeredness.

Just as winnowing gets rid of the chaff, so the discipline of God delivers us from the flesh. The winnowing process would proceed faster if we would yield ourselves to God. Nothing finally will go into the barn but what is of Christ, because it is His barn. Men in the likeness of Christ are His wheat.

We see the effect of John's message. The importance is not in the messenger—as John is so quick to point out—but in the message. This word has power because it is the Word of God. It is the quickening Word, life-giving.

“For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not there, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give

seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so shall My Word be that goeth forth out of my mouth;’ it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Isaiah 55:10-11)

It is important that we be like John, and not get in the way of the message. The servant of the Lord is not the most important thing here. It is the seed of the Word and God Himself “who giveth the increase,” who makes it grow. Paul understood this principle. He writes to the Corinthians:

“Who, then, is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered, but GOD GIVETH THE INCREASE” (1 Corinthians 3:5-6).

II. INCREASE IN FAVOR WITH GOD AND MAN

(vv. 21-23a)

READ: Luke 2:52; 3:15-17, 21-22; Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; John 1:31-34; Isaiah 64:1; John 12:28; Matthew 17:6; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35 (for all, see below)

Luke 2:52: And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Luke 3:15-22: Now while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to

MEMORY (Luke 3:21-22): Now it came about when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also was baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased."

whether he might be the Christ, John answered and said to them all, "As for me, I baptize you with water; but He who is mightier than I is coming, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He Himself will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire. And His winnowing fork is in His hand to clean out His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Luke 3:21-22: Now it came about when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also was baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased."

Matthew 3:13-17: Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?"

But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him.

And after being baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

Mark 1:9-11: "It came about in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening,

and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; and a voice came out of the heavens: "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased."

John 1:31-34: "And I did not recognize Him, but in order that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water."

And John bore witness saying, "I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and He remained upon Him. And I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

Isaiah 64:1: O that Thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at Thy presence.

John 12:28: "Father, glorify Thy name." There came therefore a voice out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

Matthew 17:6: And when the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were much afraid.

Mark 9:7: Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!"

Luke 9:35: And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!"

Here Luke gives a summary of the eighteen years of the Lord's life before

MEMORY (Luke 3:21-22): Now it came about when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also was baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased."

His public appearance. It expresses His human development during the years that He lived in Nazareth.

As God-Man, even as a Child, He was perfect and sinless in every way. In each stage of physical development He was perfect for that age. But there would be a different age for a Child than for an Adult.

The Holy Spirit says He “increased in wisdom and stature.”

At all times in His development according to the laws of nature, He was in the full realization of the will of God. He was God’s ideal for man. He is what God had in mind when He first created Adam.

But with Adam and Eve, their perfection was couched in their innocence. For them to maintain that perfection, they had to choose to do the will of God; but they didn’t.

The Lord Jesus, on the contrary, chose to do the Father’s will and never departed from it. He never yielded to temptation. Because He was the ideal Man, the Father could publicly express His pleasure in the Son, His beloved.

Luke 3:21-22 (Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased).

In this section we have the baptism of Christ and His anointing by the Holy Spirit and the proclamation from heaven.

Why was Christ baptized? Ironside describes the scene and answers the question:

“Before John was put into prison something very important happened. When all the people were baptized, it

came to pass that Jesus also was baptized. He came to John, and He stepped down to the waters of Jordan. John drew back as he recognized Him, and said, as it were, ‘I cannot baptize you in repentance. You have nothing to repent of. I have need to be baptized by you.’

“But Jesus replied, in effect, ‘John, you baptize Me. I know that I am not a sinner, but I see these sinners being baptized, and I am going to take My place with them. I am here today to pledge Myself to fulfill every righteous demand of the throne of God on their behalf.’ It was His pledge to go to the cross and die for sinners. So John baptized Him.

“When I see my Lord going down into Jordan, I say, ‘There He is promising to go to the cross and die for me.’ He came forth from the waters, and the Spirit descended like a dove upon Him, and a voice was heard saying, ‘Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased.’

“At the very time when He had pledged Himself to fulfill all righteousness on behalf of sinners—which involved His being made sin for them—God the Father signified His delight in Him and declared Him to be the Holy One who glorified Him in all His ways” (Ironside, pp. 99-100).

Luke is the only Gospel writer to record that He was praying at His baptism. This is in accord with his purpose to present Him as perfect Man, the One who takes the place of entire dependence upon God. As He was praying, the heaven was opened.

MEMORY (Luke 3:21-22): Now it came about when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also was baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, “Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased.”

“There was a blessed Man here upon whom heaven could be opened; there was no longer any restraint on heaven, nothing to check its outflow.

“Heaven was opened because a Man was found in this world who was a suitable resting place for the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit as a dove speaks of the Holy Spirit as seeking a resting place. Noah’s dove sought a resting place, and the psalmist says, ‘O that I had wings as a dove; then would I fly away and be at rest.’

“The dove seeks rest, and the Spirit of God was seeking rest in man, and He found it at last in Jesus, the perfect Man—the One who would fully take the place of dependence on God” (Coates, p. 56).

Then the Voice spoke, *“Thou art My Beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased (I have found My delight!)”*

“That was heaven’s estimate of Him. Mark the value of that second word, ‘In Thee I am well pleased.’

“First of all it flashes light backwards upon the thirty years—God’s approval of the thirty years.

“Thirty years in which there had been no deflection from the straight path of obedience to the will of God.

“Thirty years.

“Nothing in the life, nothing in thought, nothing in speech, nothing in deed, nothing in work—nothing that had not filled the heart of God with satisfaction.

“In Thee I have found delight.’

“But there is something more. It was not only the approving of the thirty years now passed. It was also the accepting of the three and a half years to come, the direction and purpose of which had been indicated by the baptism of this Man in Jordan.

“‘Thou art the Son of Me, the Beloved; in Thee I have found My delight.’

“Thus has Luke set before us the Person of the Word made flesh. In that Person all human history is reborn. That is God’s new starting point for the human race. There we see the Second Man, as Paul says, or as Luke says, ‘Jesus Himself.’

“From this point on through the Gospel we shall see Him doing and teaching in the line of the Divine program” (Morgan, p. 56).

III. INCREASE OF HIS GOVERNMENT

Luke 3:23-38; Isaiah 9:7;
Matthew 1:1-17

Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever (Isaiah 9:7).

Luke 3:23: Luke, the physician, is the only Gospel historian to state the age at which Jesus begins His public ministry. He tells us that the Lord was about thirty years of age. Then Luke begins His genealogical table with the phrase, “being, as

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was supposed, the Son of Joseph.” The Jewish law recognized him as the legal son of Joseph, even though he was Joseph’s adopted son. Joseph’s marriage to Mary made Jesus his legal son.

The genealogy is presented in accord with Luke’s purpose to present Christ as Son of Man. Emphasizing His humanity, His line is traced all the way back to Adam.

“If He be man, must He not be Son of man—of Adam? True; and so, as has been said, the stream runs backward.

“The Son of man is also the Second Man; and each link in the chain at least suggests a link of salvation.

“Thus the genealogy is not put in connection with His birth, but with that coming forward to be baptized of John in Jordan, which was His entrance upon His ministry of salvation; and He is then thirty years of age, the time of the commencement of Levitical service.

“Son of man as He is generically, Christ is no less Seed of the woman; and it is doubtless Mary’s line that is given us here.

“Joseph is, as husband of Mary, the son of Heli. In the Gospel of the Manhood it is as naturally Mary who would be before us, as in the Gospel of the Kingship it would be Joseph; and the respective histories conform themselves to this” (Grant, p. 362).

The Gospels give us two genealogical tables for Christ. Matthew’s Gospel traces Joseph’s line back to David through Solomon. Luke’s Gospel gives the line to David through Nathan.

The majority of scholars think that Luke’s record gives Mary’s line, while Matthew’s table gives the lineage of Joseph. Mary’s name was not included in Luke’s record because women’s names rarely appeared in these chronologies.

Also, Matthew lists Joseph as having been begotten by Jacob. Luke does not say Jacob begat Joseph. He says Joseph was the son of Heli. The word “son” there can easily be translated “son-in-law.”

William MacDonald notes that in the Greek, the definite article “tou” in the genitive form—meaning “of the”—appears before every entry in the list but one—Joseph.

This indicates that Joseph’s marriage to Mary is the only reason for his appearance in Luke’s genealogy.

Since Matthew wrote especially for the Jews, the genealogy he gives traces Christ from Abraham down—from Abraham and Solomon to Joseph.

But it is significant to note that there is a flaw in the line of descent from Solomon to Joseph that prevents that line from ever seating a king upon the throne of Israel.

Though the legal tie to David comes through Solomon’s line to Joseph, the royal line from David comes down to Mary. Only the first-born Son of Mary is entitled to sit on David’s throne.

In the record given in Matthew, the text reads,

And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon: And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel (Matthew 1:11-12a).

MEMORY (Luke 3:21-22): Now it came about when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also was baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, “Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased.”

This is confirmed in 1 Chronicles 3:15-17:

And the sons of Josiah were, the firstborn Johanan, the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, the fourth Shallum. And the sons of Jehoiakim: Jeconiah his son, Zedekiah his son. And the sons of Jeconiah; Assir, Salathiel his son.

Jeremiah 22:24-30 certifies the argument.

3:24. As I live, saith the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence;

25. And I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand of them whose face thou fearest, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans.

26. And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die.

27. But to the land whereunto they desire to return, thither shall they not return.

28. Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? Is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? Wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not?

29. O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD.

30. Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed

shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.

Other explanations and other lessons may still be drawn from the two genealogies.

“Luke wrote for the Gentile world, and he is concerned not simply in proving that Jesus is the Son of David, nor yet that He is the Seed of Abraham, with all that implies, but He also undertakes to show that He has become, in grace, one with the entire human race.

“He is the Son of Man, and so the genealogy is traced back not to David or Abraham, but to Adam himself, and from Adam to God” (Ironsides, p. 110).

Luke traces the line back and back, and at last he says,

“Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.”

“As created originally, Adam was the son of God. God was his Father by creation, but sin came in and man became alienated from God.

“All men are now born in sin. There is a universal brotherhood of man, but it is a brotherhood of sinners. . . .

“But now Christ, the last Adam, has met all the claims that God had against sinful men by His sacrifice on Calvary.

“He has been raised in triumph from the dead, and He has become the head of a new race, a new creation” (Ironsides, p. 111).

Now think about the names in this genealogy. Each one suggests a link in salvation.

MEMORY (Luke 3:21-22): Now it came about when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also was baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, “Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased.”

“Pause here for a moment and observe the beacon lights of personality:

**“Adam;
Seth, not Cain;
Enoch, not Lamech;
Noah;
Shem, not Japheth or Ham.
Abraham;
Isaac, not Ishmael;
Jacob, not Esau;
David;
Nathan, not Solomon.**

“The divine procedure is seen overriding and setting aside things that man makes supreme. The old law of primogeniture is ruled out when God begins to deal with men. If the firstborn son fails, he is set aside, and another man is taken; but the line of Divine purpose continues” (Morgan, p. 53).

Here we have His governing hand, and
OF THE INCREASE OF HIS GOVERNMENT THERE SHALL BE NO END.

MEMORY (Luke 3:21-22): Now it came about when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also was baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased."

VI. TRIED, TRIUMPHANT, TOUCHED

Questions on Luke 4:1-44

1. Review Lesson 5. What did the Lord emphasize to your heart?
2. Read Luke 4:1-44 and the notes on Lesson 6 and tell what the main sections of this chapter are.

I. TRIUMPHANT IN TEMPTATION

READ: Luke 4:1-15

DO QUESTIONS: 1-15

READ: Pages 102-115

3A. How is the Old Testament Kinsman Redeemer a type of Christ? See notes, pp. 103-105

B. How does this presentation of our Savior as the "Last Adam" enhance our perception of who He is? See notes, p. 105.

C. Why is Christ's impeccability (He is flawless) important to us? (See also the following verses and the notes on pp. 106-108).

Heb. 2:18—For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

2 Cor. 5:21—He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

1 Pet. 2:21-22—For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered

for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH.

1 John 3:5—And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.

**“Oh, make me understand it,
Help me to take it in,
What it meant to Thee, the Holy One,
To bear away my sin.”**

By K.A.M. Kelly

4. Restate in your words what Westcott, Trench, Johnson, Ironside, Plummer, Edwards and Warfield (pp. 106-108) are saying regarding His temptation.

5. Discuss the significance (pp. 105-113) of Christ's being fully conscious of His deity and thus of His inability to sin.

6. Why did Satan want Christ to avoid the cross?

Gen. 3:4-5—And the serpent said to the woman, “You surely shall not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Gen. 3:15—And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”

MEMORY (Luke 3:21-22): Now it came about when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also was baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased."

1 John 3:12-13; 4:3,10,14; 5:5,19—Not as Cain, who was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous. . . . And every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. . . . In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. . . . And we have beheld and bear witness that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. . . . And who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? . . . We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

7. How does Trench's warning (p. 114, col. 1) define the rule: A text taken out of context is pretext? How can small Bible study groups guard themselves against heresies?

8A. In our Lord's life, what happened just before and just after His temptation (Luke 3:21-22; 4:1,14)?

B. Can you draw a parallel in your own life? When does temptation often come? (Consider Elijah in 1 Kings 18-19.)

9. What was the Lord's condition physically and spiritually as He faced temptation?

10. On another paper, make a chart of the three temptations. Give: 1) what each temptation was, 2) what the Lord's answer

was in each case, 3) how 1 John 2:16 might relate to each temptation.

11. How did Satan use lies, half truths and deceptions? Explain.

12. Study the Deuteronomy passages from which the Lord quotes in answer to Satan. Note and explain briefly the context of each of the Lord's quotations:

Luke 4:4— "Man shall not live by bread alone . . ."

Deut. 8:3— "And He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD."

John 6:48, 55-58— "I am the Bread of Life. . . . For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats my flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me. This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate, and died, he who eats this bread shall live forever."

B. Luke 4:8— "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God . . ." (Deut. 6:13; 10:20)

Deut. 6:13; 10:20— "You shall fear only the LORD your God; and you shall worship Him, and swear by His name. . . . You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him and cling to Him, and you shall swear by His name."

C. Luke 4:12— "Thou shalt not put the

MEMORY (Luke 4:4): And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

Lord thy God to the test.” (Deut. 6:16)

Deut. 6:16—“You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah.”

13. In studying how the Lord met temptation, what do you learn that can help you resist temptation?

14. How do these verses help you in time of temptation?

Heb. 2:18; 4:12-15—For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted. . . . For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

1 Cor. 10:13—No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.

15. Compare Eve’s temptation in Genesis

3 to the Lord’s temptation in Luke 4. What similarities and what differences do you see? See also Romans 5:12-21 and the quote from Coates on Genesis 3 at the end of the chapter.

II. TOUCHED BY OUR NEEDS

READ: Luke 4:16-32

DO QUESTIONS: 16-18

READ: Pages 115-118

16. What personal application can you draw from the fact that the Lord Jesus went regularly to the synagogue on the Sabbath? Why do we worship on Sunday rather than on Saturday? See also:

Matt. 28:1—Now late on the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave.

Acts 20:7—And on the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to depart the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.

Heb. 10:25—Not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.

17. Read Isa. 61:1-3. At what point does the Lord stop reading from Isaiah 61? Why do you think He stopped there? What is the reaction of the people at first (v. 22) and later (vv. 28-29)?

Isa. 61:1-3—The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He

MEMORY (Luke 4:4): And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and freedom to prisoners; to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.

18. Why do you think the Lord refers to the widow of Sidon (1 Kings 17:8-24) and to Naaman (2 Kings 5)? Why were their needs met? Compare Mark 6:5-6.

Mark 6:5-6—And He could do no miracle there except that He laid His hands upon a few sick people and healed them. And He wondered at their unbelief.

III. ABLE TO HELP

READ: Luke 4:33-44

DO QUESTIONS: 19-22

READ: Pages 118-121

19. List reasons why the people are attracted to the Lord and amazed (Luke 4:31-44).

Isa. 6:1-2—In the year of King Uzziah's death, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

20. Did the demons (Luke 4:34,41) speak

the truth about Christ? Why then did He rebuke them?

Compare Acts 16:16-19: *And it happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a certain slave girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortunetelling. Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, "These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation." And she continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!" And it came out at that very moment. But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the authorities.*

21. How does Luke 4:31-34 demonstrate Christ's word in 4:18-21?

22. Have you ever felt like the people in Isaiah 61:1-2? How does the Gospel meet each one of these needs? (See also these verses) Is there a word for yourself here today? Explain and share.

Rev. 3:17-18 "Because you say, 'I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,' and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eyesalve to anoint your eyes, that you may see."

2 Cor. 4:3-4—And even if our gospel is

MEMORY (Luke 4:4): And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, | *that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

MEMORY (Luke 4:4): And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

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VI. TRIED, TRIUMPHANT, TOUCHED

Luke 4:1-44

“For we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:15-16).

**With joy we meditate the grace
Of our High Priest above:
His heart is filled with tenderness—
His very name is Love!**

**But spotless, undefiled, and pure
Our great Redeemer stood:
No stain of sin did e’er defile
The holy Lamb of God.**

**Touched with a sympathy within,
He knows our feeble frame—
He knows what sorest trials mean,
For He has felt the same!**

**He, when He sojourned here below,
Poured out His cries and tears,
And now, ascended, feels afresh
What every member bears!**

**Then boldly let our faith address
The throne of grace and power:
We shall obtain delivering grace
Within every needy hour.**

—Isaac Watts, 1647-1748

“With Joy We Meditate the Grace”

For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted (Hebrews 2:18).

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way through so that you can stand up under it (1 Corinthians 10:13).

In the section before us, we are going to see the Son of Man, our Savior:

I. Triumphant in Temptation (4:1-15)

II. Touched by our Needs (4:16-32)

III. Able to Help (4:33-44)

We hear hell’s challenge to Heaven’s proclamation, “You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased!” We see the battle joined, and we rejoice in the outcome. We can feel the repercussion of that glorious victory reaching down through the ages and deep into our lives today.

MEMORY (Luke 4:4): And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

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I. TRIUMPHANT IN TEMPTATION (Luke 4:1-15)

This portion is divided into four areas for consideration:

- A. *Historical Perspectives,*
- B. *Doctrinal Statements,*
- C. *The Three Temptations,*
- D. *Results for us.*

What God has declared, Satan will challenge. The heavens have opened, and God has expressed His delight in His Son.

Now the forces of hell marshal themselves for attack. As in the garden with the first Adam, Satan will again raise doubt about what God has said.

But the Last Adam entertains no doubt.

He is God's final Word in answer from the wilderness. We view this conflict in its historical setting.

A. *Historical Perspectives*

As Kinsman-Redeemer

Christ comes to fulfill Old Testament promises of the goel, the Kinsman-Redeemer:

And the Redeemer ('goel') shall come to Zion, and unto those who turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 59:20).

The ministry of John the Baptist has turned men in Jacob from transgression. Now the Redeemer has come.

C. I. Scofield summarizes the Old Testament Kinsman-Redeemer as a beau-

tiful type of Christ:

1. The kinsman redemption was of persons and an inheritance (Leviticus 25:25, 47-49; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:7, 11, 14):

If a fellow-countryman of yours becomes so poor he has to sell part of his property, then his nearest kinsman is to come and buy back what his relative has sold.

If . . . a countryman of yours becomes so poor . . . as to sell himself to a stranger . . . then he shall have redemption right after he has been sold.

One of his brothers may redeem him . . . or one of his blood relatives (Leviticus 25:25, 47-49).

But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,

In order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons (Galatians 4:4-5).

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace. . . .

In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will. . . .

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory (Ephesians 1:7, 11, 14).

MEMORY (Luke 4:4): And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

2. The redeemer must be a kinsman (Lev.25:48-49; Ruth 3:12-13; Gal.4:4; Heb. 2:14-15).

Leviticus 25:48-49 (see above)

And now it is true I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I. Remain this night, and when morning comes, if he will redeem you, good; let him redeem you. But if he does not wish to redeem you, then I will redeem you, as the LORD lives (Ruth 3:12-13).

Galatians 4:4 (see above)

Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their live (Hebrews 2:14-15).

The redeemer must be able to redeem (Ruth 4:4-6; Jeremiah 50:34; John 10:11,18).

(Ruth 4:4-6). "So I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy it before those who are sitting here, and before the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if not, tell me that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am after you.'" And he said, "I will redeem it."

Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also acquire Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of the deceased, in order to raise

up the name of the deceased on his inheritance."

And the closest relative said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I jeopardize my own inheritance. Redeem it for yourself; you may have my right of redemption, for I cannot redeem it" (Ruth 4:4-6).

Their Redeemer is strong, the LORD of hosts is His name; He will vigorously plead their case, so that He may bring rest to the earth, but turmoil to the inhabitants of Babylon (Jeremiah 50:34).

"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. . . .

"For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father" (John 10:11, 17-18).

Redemption is effected by the goel's paying the just demand in full (Leviticus 25:26-27; Galatians 3:13; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

Or in case a man has no kinsman, but so recovers his means as to find sufficient for its redemption, then he shall calculate the years since its sale and refund the balance to the man to whom he sold it, and so return to his property (Leviticus 25:26-27).

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERY ONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE" (Galatians 3:13).

MEMORY (Luke 4:4): And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18-19).

To qualify, then, the redeemer must be near of kin, able to redeem. Furthermore, he must be willing to do so. Luke shows that Christ meets these qualifications.

He is near of kin. In order to save men, God must become a man. In the first three chapters, Luke has proved Christ's solidarity with the human race. He has identified with humanity, as this Gospel record shows, in His birth, in His baptism, and in His genealogy.

He must be able to redeem. In order to pay our redemption price for sin, He must have no sin of His own. The entire Gospel record shows that Christ meets this requirement.

Now this is to be demonstrated specifically in the wilderness temptation.

He must be willing to pay the price. Again we see His willingness to be our Redeemer in all of the Gospel account. This is to be pointed up by Luke in the incidents he records immediately after the temptation.

Christ fulfills the promise of the Old Testament type. He qualifies to be our Kinsman-Redeemer.

As the Last Adam

Now we widen the historical perspective and see Christ as the head of a new race. He is Head of the new race of the redeemed. He is the Last Adam.

Luke has traced His genealogy back to Adam, but Christ is ever in contrast to Adam the first. Nowhere is this more plain than in the temptations of the two Adams.

Both temptations were aimed at the three aspects of human nature—body, soul, and spirit—and both sought to elicit a threefold lust—of the flesh, of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). The first Adam was tempted in a lush garden

Where food was bountiful; the Last Adam in a desert—“*the great and terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground, where there was no water*” (Deuteronomy 8:15)—no water and no food.

The first Adam faced temptation in all the physical strength of one newly created by the hand of God; the Last Adam, having just fasted for forty days and nights, faced His enemy physically weakened and hungry. Adam was Satan's first seduction. Christ's temptation occurred after Satan had had 4,000 years of practice. Before the Satanic onslaught, Adam the first went down in sordid defeat. But the Last Adam emerged unscathed and triumphant.

Viewed historically, the temptation in the wilderness is a demonstration that Christ meets the qualification for Kinsman-Redeemer and that He takes His place as the Last Adam. (For further contrast of the two Adams, see Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:45-49.)

We now discuss three biblical doctrines having to do with the temptation of Christ.

MEMORY (Luke 4:4): And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

B. Doctrinal Statements

- a. Christ was not able to sin.
- b. The temptation was a real temptation.
- c. Christ was fully conscious of His deity and thus of His inability to sin.

Let us consider each of these statements.

a. Christ was not able to sin.

The statement does not say that He was able not to sin, but that He was unable to sin. He was “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15b). This phrase, “tempted . . . yet without sin,” describes the issue of the Lord’s temptation—no sin resulting. It also includes the limitation of His temptation—nothing in Him to respond to sin. He endured all without the least stain of sin resulting, for He could not be enticed by sin.

“He was tempted as we are, sharing our nature, yet with this exception, that there was no sin in Him to become the spring of trial” (Westcott, p. 107).

Christ’s inability to sin was guaranteed by the union of His eternal divine nature with His human nature, thus constituting the divine person.

“Christ was perfect man in the sense of having everything belonging to the completeness of the human nature; but there is not, and there never at any moment has been, any other

person but the Son of God. His human body and soul at the very moment of their union with one another were also united with the Eternal Word, so that there is not, nor ever has been any human person to contemplate” (Trench, p. 28).

“He is not a human person raised to the power of deity by virtue of the incarnation, because He existed before that incarnation (cf. Micah 5:2, John 1:1). He is a divine person who at a point in time took to Himself human nature as an additional nature. His impeccability is guaranteed by the union of the divine and human natures in one theanthropic person. As Shedd says, He is ‘as mighty to overcome Satan and sin, as His mightiest nature is” (Johnson, p. 114).

“We need to remember that the Lord Jesus was God and Man in one Person. He was not two persons in one body. It is unthinkable that He could sin so far as deity is concerned. God cannot be tempted with sin. Had He been only a man He might have been put on trial like Adam and failed. But because He was God and Man in one Person He could not sin” (Ironsides, p. 115).

“When it is asked, as it continually has been, Where is the worth of an obedience which could not have not been rendered? Where is the glory of not sinning on the part of One who could not sin?

“The question has its rise in the con-

MEMORY (Luke 4:4): And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

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fusion of a moral and a physical necessity. God cannot lie, God cannot do evil; but shall we therefore cease to praise and glorify Him for His holiness and truth?

“He cannot, because He will not” (Trench, p. 28).

“The answer is clearly this: He was not tempted to find out if He could sin, but to prove that He was the sinless One. It was like the acid test for gold, which demonstrates the purity of the metal” (Ironside, p. 115).

b. The temptation was a real temptation.

For in that He himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted (Hebrews 2:18).

“The power of sympathy lies not in the mere capacity for feeling, but in the lessons of experience. And again, sympathy with the sinner in his trial does not depend on the experience of sin but on the experience of the strength of the temptation to sin which only the sinless can know in its full intensity. He who falls yields before the last strain” (Westcott, p. 59).

“The force of a temptation depends, not upon the sin in what is proposed, but upon the advantage connected with it. And a righteous man whose will never falters for a moment may feel the attractiveness of the advantage more keenly than the weak man who succumbs; for the latter probably gave

way before he recognized the whole of the attractiveness; or his nature may be less capable of such recognition. In this way, the sinlessness of Jesus augments His capacity for sympathy, for in every case He felt the full force of temptation” (Plummer).

Against the One who stood firm, the whole conceivable power of temptation was exerted. He experienced it at all points. Only this One who never yielded has felt the full force of temptation.

“Far from lessening the force of the trial, His being Son of God rendered His humanity capable of being tempted to the very utmost limit of all temptation” (Edwards).

c. Christ was fully conscious of His deity and thus of His inability to sin.

“For the Christ of history was not unconscious, but continually conscious, of His deity, and of all that belongs to His deity. He knew Himself to be the Son of God in a unique sense—as such, superior to the very angels and gazing unbrokenly into the depths of the Divine Being, knowing the Father even as He was known of the Father. He felt within Him the power to make the stones that lay in His pathway bread for His strengthening, and the power (since He had come to save the lost) rather to bruise His feet upon them that He might give His life a ransom for many and afterward return on the clouds of heaven to judge the world. Of this Jesus, the only real Jesus, it

MEMORY (Luke 4:4): And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

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cannot be said that His consciousness was ‘entirely human’; and a Jesus of whom this can be said has nothing in common with the only historical Jesus, in whom His divine consciousness was as constant and vivid as His human” (B. B. Warfield, pp. 261-62).

C. The Three Temptations

4:1a. And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan. . .

The wilderness testing follows immediately upon the Lord’s baptism and Heaven’s testimony.

“This is the divine order: for it would have been dishonor to both if God has waited to see if His Son could stand all tests before approving Him. On the other hand that approval was a challenge to the accuser, the Spirit leading Christ in the wilderness forty days, while Satan was permitted to assail Him” (Grant, pp. 362-63).

God’s perfect man is “full of the Holy Spirit.” He moves in perfect dependence and obedience. His heart is in perfect accord with heaven. It is at this point that the Devil would assail Him. Satan aims to have Him move out of this place of communion with heaven and obedience to the will of God.

4:1b. . . . and was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness.”

Notice the two environments. “**He was in the Spirit, and that environment was closer to Him than the wil-**

derness and its desolation. It was the environment of the Holy Spirit” (Morgan, p. 57).

He was there led in the Spirit.

“**Here was a definite action of the Holy Ghost, calling Messiah to face the underworld of evil. . . .**

“**My philosophy of the universe does not conceive of the devil as a free agent, outside the government of God. Even though he is in revolt against God, he is still within the grasp of the Divine compulsion.**

“**This, then, was more than the temptation of an individual. An individual He surely was, but representative, the Messiah. In the wilderness He, compelled by the Spirit, forced the enemy into the open”** (Morgan, p. 58).

4:2a. Being forty days tested by the devil.

In Hebrews 4:15 it is stated that He “was in all points tempted like as we are.” The Lord Jesus did not endure temptation only during these forty days in the wilderness and the several instances expressly mentioned at other times in the Gospels.

He was tempted all the way through His human experience when He was a Child, a young Man and as a fully grown Man, just as every other common human being is—except for the temptations from within.

Still, the temptations in the wilderness were specially focused. They were not meant to tempt the Lord Jesus as Man. They were aimed to attack Him as Mes-

MEMORY (Luke 4:4): And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

siah.

He was being tempted constantly for forty days.

So fierce was the conflict that it was not until the end of the period that He felt hungry and wanted food. The final and greatest assault came at the time of His greatest physical weakness.

Will He be deflected from His purpose in coming into the world?

First Temptation—physical and personal

Place: the wilderness

4:3. And the devil said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

"The devil does often manage his temptations by urging of our necessities. . . . Necessity has a wonderful compulsion in it. . . . The devil will persuade us that there is a necessity of our doing what he does propound to us; then though the laws of God about us were so many walls of stone, yet we shall break through them all" (Cotton Mather).

Christ's Answer: Deuteronomy 8:3
"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (4:4).

These words were spoken originally by Moses in references to the manna. In the giving of the manna to the people in the wilderness, God did a new thing to sustain His own. He is not limited to ordinary means. "As then, so now," Christ is saying.

It is the creative Word which gives

nourishing life to bread. So now in the present need this Word will sustain apart from bread.

"I have food to eat that you know nothing about" (John. 4:32). He is saying, I am not pressed as you suggest and would have Me believe. I live upon God.

"God will certainly give us bread, and till He does we can live by the breath of His mouth, by the Word of God, by the light of His countenance, by the refreshment of His promises.

"If the fleshpots be removed, He can alter the appetite; and when our stock is spent, He can also lessen the necessity; or if that continues, He can drown the sense of it in a deluge of patience and resignation" (Jeremy Taylor).

Second Temptation—physical and social

Place: mountain top

(Luke reverses the order of the second and third temptations given by Matthew. The reason appears to be that Luke is giving the moral order, while Matthew presents the historical order.)

4:5. And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

In the light of eternity, that is all the time it takes to see all the kingdoms of this world—a moment of time. Just that fast, too, will they pass away. How the people of the world will mourn *their passing*: "Alas, alas . . . for in one hour so great riches are come to nothing. . . . Alas, alas, that great city . . . for in one

MEMORY (Luke 4:4): And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

hour is she made desolate" (Revelation 18:16-19). But from the heavenly perspective the word is "Rejoice!" Babylon is thrown down "and shall be found no more at all."

4:6. And the devil said to Him, "All this authority will I give thee, and the glory of them."

Here the devil is transformed into an angel of light. He tempts Christ with what is right for Him. Think of the mighty attraction here for one whose heart is filled with love and sympathy for those who dwell in the kingdoms of the earth.

"Nothing was more righteous than that all the kingdoms of the world should be Christ's, nothing more certain than that He, as Messiah, should one day be heir of all. Feeling then and knowing Himself to be the rightful king of men, and to have the power of infinitely blessing them as their king, with such prophecies going before of His kingdom and what that kingdom should be, as Isaiah 32:1-8, Psalm 72, He must have unutterably desired, and it belonged to the perfection of His nature that He should so desire, that the kingdoms of the world should be His own.

"How many bleeding hearts were waiting to be bound up by Him; how many who now sat in darkness were waiting for light from Him; what truths were waiting for Him to utter; what wrongs were waiting for Him to redress; what strongholds of oppression for Him to cast down.

"The power of accomplishing all this, of staunching all those fountains of tears, of imparting all that knowledge of His Father's love, of redressing all those wrongs, of destroying all the destroyers of the earth, this was 'the glory' which the royalties of the world wore in His sight" (Trench).

But the world is not to be saved apart from the cross. The essence of the temptation is to avoid the cross. This Christ will not do. He will pay the price of redemption by giving Himself "*a ransom for many*" (Mark 10:45).

4:6. ". . . For that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it.

7. If thou, therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine."

The devil here weaves a cunning fabric of lies and half-truths. By God's permission the kingdoms of this world have been delivered to him (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11 see below), but not in the absolute sense. Only as men surrender themselves in sin to the devil does God permit him to rule over them.

John 12:31—Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out.

John 14:30—I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.

John 16:11—And concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

MEMORY (Luke 4:4): And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

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God never gets out of the driver's seat. He always rules and overrules to the end that everything leads to His glory. *"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1)*. Satan and his cohorts can act only under the permissive will of God. Earth's prince, ruler not owner, has no power to give the kingdoms of the world and their power to whomever he chooses. God alone holds that right. He, who established that power, gives it to whom—He—will (compare Daniel 4:17, etc.; John 19:11; Romans 13:1).

"This sentence is by the decree of the angelic watchers, and the decision is a command of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whom He wishes, and sets over it the lowliest of men" (Daniel 4:17).

Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me up to you has the greater sin" (John 19:11).

Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God (Romans 13:1).

"And that act of homage which the tempter now asked of Christ, what did it imply? Simply that of Christ He should become Antichrist—nothing short of this" (Trench).

The reward would have been transitory. The devil's gifts are always that. **"He can give nothing to men with the right of eternal possession. He gives for the time being"** (Morgan, p. 60).

And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority (Revelation 13:2).

Christ's Answer: Deuteronomy 6:13
"Thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (4:8).

The devil had said nothing about God and nothing about service. He had dismissed God. He had ignored the fact, which Christ brings out, that worship always results in service.

"There is one Throne to be considered, one King to Whom submission is to be rendered; worship, homage, to Him is the only worship and homage of a human life" (Morgan, p. 60).

Third temptation—spiritual and religious

Place: pinnacle of the temple

Now the devil attempts to seduce by the Word of God. Christ could not be enticed from it; **"can it be so presented as that He should be seduced by it?"** (Grant, p. 364).

In Satan's mouth, the Word must necessarily be misapplied and perverted.

MEMORY (Luke 4:4): And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

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4:9. "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down from here. . . ."

A popular Jewish legend placed Messiah on the pinnacle of the temple to mark the hour of national deliverance, Messianic proclamation, and Gentile submission:

"Our Rabbis give this tradition:

"In the hour when King Messiah cometh, He standeth upon the roof of the Sanctuary, and proclaims to Israel, saying, 'Ye poor (suffering), the time of your redemption draweth nigh. And if ye believe, rejoice in My Light, which is risen upon you. . . ."

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee (Isaiah 60:1) . . . upon you only . . . For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee (Isaiah 60:2)."

"In that hour will the Holy One, blessed be His Name, make the Light of the Messiah and of Israel to shine forth; and all shall come to the Light of the King Messiah and of Israel, as it is written, 'And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising' (Isaiah 60:3).

"And they shall come and lick the dust from under the feet of the King Messiah, as it is written, 'And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the

LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me' (Isaiah 49:23).

"And all shall come and fall on their faces before Messiah and before Israel, and say, 'We will be servants to Him and to Israel'" (Edersheim, p. 293).

Such quotations as this are important for they show that these ideas were prominent in the Jewish mind, but in a sense completely opposite to the Gospel.

"In other words, they were regarded as the rightful manifestation of Messiah's dignity; whereas in the Evangelic record they are presented as the suggestions of Satan and the temptation of Christ. Thus the Messiah of Judaism is the Anti-Christ of the Gospels" (Edersheim, p. 293).

4:10. "For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee and in their hands they shall bear thee up,

11. lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone."

The devil quotes from Psalm 91:11, "For He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." Notably, he leaves out those last four words.

"Try to imagine just what was here suggested. Think of a great throng of people gathered in the temple courts, and our Lord looking down upon that worshiping multitude from one of the highest heights of that noble building. Remember He has come to present Himself as the Messiah of Israel. Now

MEMORY (Luke 4:4): And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

Satan pretends to cooperate with Him and suggests: ‘Here is your opportunity to prove to the people that you are really the Son of God and their promised Messiah. . . . I am only asking you to do what Scripture warrants: leap from the pinnacle of the temple and count upon God to fulfill His own Word and to protect you from harm’” (Ironsides, pp. 121-22).

Satan has omitted the key phrase “in all Thy ways.” It could never be part of the holy ways of the Son of God to put God to such a test. It could not be His way to avoid the rejection, suffering, and death appointed for the Savior.

That to which Satan challenged the Lord “was not ‘a way’ appointed by His heavenly Father for His treading, and in which as such He might be confident that He would not stumble (John 11:9-10), but a precipice from which He would have wantonly chosen to fling Himself down; and the promise of being kept in all his ways no one has a right to take to himself, who has exchanged his appointed ways for any such headlong precipices as that now suggested to the Lord” (Trench).

Christ’s Answer: Deuteronomy 6:16
“*It says: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test’*” (4:12).

This reply of the Lord Jesus shows that to put God to the test would be “to prove that His trust in God was not perfect. That is always so.

“The moment we do something to

prove God, we are proving that we are not sure of God. Trust never employs tricks to find out whether the one trusted is trustworthy.

“That is the philosophy of spiritual life” (Morgan, p. 61).

“The reply of our Lord indicates that He will not pander to the Jews’ love of a sign, nor will He burgle the house of a man’s soul.

“He will realize His Messiahship by dependence upon God, not by force. He will not dazzle into submission by carnal sensationalism” (Johnson, p. 114).

D. Results For Us

a. What Christ’s victory in the wilderness is not:

It is not the basis of our redemption.

If it were, then there would be no judicial dealing with sin upon the cross.

b. What Christ’s victory in the wilderness is:

It is the prelude to Christ’s active public life, just as Gethsemane was the prelude to the cross.

When the enemy came in at both times, it was to turn Him away from the path of expiation, redemption, and propitiation.

It marks Jesus Christ as the One perfectly qualified morally to be the Savior of the world.

“The cross was anticipated in this conquest. . . . In the temptation there

was, then, a pledge of the crucial victory of Golgotha, which Paul describes in these words, ‘And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it’ (Col. 2:15)” (Johnson, p. 114).

c. His victory is a lesson to us to know and use the Word of God in context.

The Lord used the Word of God in His victory over Satan in the wilderness. He quotes from one portion of the Word, the part of Deuteronomy which sums up for us God’s lessons taught in the wilderness. This points up to us the great importance of knowing the Word of God.

In Matthew’s Gospel, Christ replies to the third Satanic suggestion, “It is written again.” Here lies a lesson for us, and the secret of defense against distorted use of isolated passages (as the Jehovah’s Witnesses sect practices). We need to be able to balance the Scriptures, seeing one in the light of the others. Hence, the “it is written again.” We must understand the unity of Scripture, how each part is balanced, completed, and explained by the whole.

“What very often are heresies are one-sided, exaggerated truths—truths rent away from the body of the Truth, without the balance of the counter-truth, which should have kept them in their due place, coordinated with other truths, or subordinated to them” (Trench).

d. His victory is an encouragement to see the mighty Conqueror sitting on

the throne of grace, and to hear His invitation to come boldly for timely help (Heb. 4:15-16).

He provides the “way through” whatever temptation has taken us. He has led the way, and He has triumphed. Therefore He can lead you and me through in conquest. He was Victor.

“We rest on Thee”—our Shield and our Defender!

**We go not forth alone against the foe;
Strong in Thy strength, safe in Thy
keeping tender,**

**“We rest on Thee, and in Thy Name
we go!”**

**Yea, “in Thy Name,” O Captain of sal-
vation!**

**In Thy dear Name, all other names
above;**

**Jesus our Righteousness, our sure
Foundation,**

**Our Prince of glory and our King of
love.**

**“We go” in faith, our own great weak-
ness feeling,**

**And needing more each day Thy grace
to know:**

**Yet from our hearts a song of triumph
pealing;**

**“We rest on Thee, and in Thy name we
go.”**

**“We rest on Thee”—our Shield and
our Defender!**

Thine is the battle, Thine shall be the

MEMORY (Luke 4:4): And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

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praise
When passing through the gates of
pearly splendour,
Victors—we rest with Thee, through
endless days.

—Edith G. Cherry

He used the Word of God. As Martin Luther sang in “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God,”

And though this world, with devils
filled,
Should threaten to undo us;
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us:
The Prince of Darkness grim,
We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
For lo! His doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.

As Victor, Christ dwells in us.

Therefore we should let Him direct us into the Word that will answer temptation.

After this victory in the wilderness, the devil “departed for a season” or stood off for a time, only to return with new onslaughts.

Christ returned to Galilee “in the power of the Spirit.” That power is available to us today because of Calvary.

II. TOUCHED BY OUR NEEDS

(Luke 4:16-32)

In the central section of this chapter, Christ is the One who is “*touched with the feeling of our infirmities.*” He is the One who knows all about the need of every heart. He alone can meet each need. Christ

presents Himself to the people.

Edersheim paints the scene for us:

“Sabbath morn dawned, and early He repaired to that Synagogue where, as a Child, a Youth, a Man, He had so often worshipped in the humble retirement of His rank, sitting not up there among the elders and the honored, but far back.

“The old well-known faces were around Him, the old well-remembered words and services fell on His ear. How different they had always been to Him than to them, with whom He had thus mingled in common worship!

“And now He was again among them, truly a stranger among His own countrymen; this time, to be looked at, listened to, tested, tried, used or cast aside, as the case might be.

“It was the first time, so far as we know, that He taught in a Synagogue, and this Synagogue that of His own Nazareth (Edersheim, Vol. I, pp. 430-31).

“On His entrance into the Synagogue, or perhaps before that, the chief ruler would request Jesus to act for that Sabbath as the Sheliach Tsibur. For according to the Mishnah, the person who read in the Synagogue the portion from the Prophets, was also expected to conduct the devotions, at least in greater part. If this rule was enforced at that time, then Jesus would ascend the Bima, and standing at the lectern, begin the service by two prayers” (Edersheim, Vol. I, pp. 439ff).

Following this introduction, others would take their part in reading and pray-

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ing. As portions of the Old Testament were read in Hebrew, the interpreter standing by the side of the reader would interpret into Aramaic, the language commonly spoken by the people. Finally, the section from the Prophets was read, and this was usually followed by an address by the reader or someone else in Aramaic.

We can imagine the Lord taking His part that day—**“the reverent solemnity, which would seem to give a new meaning to each well-remembered sentence. And in His mouth it all had a new meaning. . . . We are expressly told that the minister ‘delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Isaiah’ . . . and that, ‘when He had unrolled the book,’ He ‘found’ the place from which the Evangelist makes quotation:**

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

19. to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

“It was indeed Divine ‘wisdom’—‘the Spirit of the Lord’ upon Him—which directed Jesus in the choice of such a text for His first Messianic sermon. It struck the keynote to the whole of His Galilean ministry. The ancient Synagogue regarded Isaiah 61:1-2 as one of the three passages in which mention of the Holy Ghost was connected with the promised redemption. In this view, the application which the passage received in the discourse of our Lord was peculiarly suitable. . . . ‘This day is this Scripture fulfilled in

your ears!’” (Edersheim, Vol. I, p. 454).

The Lord draws the passage together in one focus:

“All Scripture fulfilled by a present Christ! And this—in the Gospel which He bears to the poor, the release which He announces to the captives, the healing which He offers to those whom sin had blinded, and the freedom He brings to them who were bruised; and all as the trumpet-blast of God’s Jubilee into His world of misery, sin, and want! A year thus begun would be glorious indeed in the blessings it gave.

“There was not a word in all this of what common Jewish expectancy would have connected . . . with Messiah—not a word to raise carnal hopes, or flatter Jewish pride. Truly it was the most un-Jewish discourse for a Jewish Messiah of those days, with which to open His ministry. And yet such was the power of these ‘words of grace’ that the hearers hung spell-bound upon them. Every eye was fastened on Him with hungry eagerness. For the time they forgot all else” (Edersheim, Vol. I, p. 454).

“Our Lord Jesus read this scripture and then He closed the Book. He rolled up the Scroll and gave it again to the minister, and He sat down. He rose up to read the Word and sat down to teach it. And He began to say unto them, ‘This day is the scripture fulfilled.’ That is, He applied the scripture to Himself. ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me’—upon Jesus. It was He who had come in actual fulfillment

MEMORY (Luke 4:4): And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

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of this Old Testament prophecy.

“In the Old Testament, in the Book of the prophet Isaiah we have this wonderful prediction of the Messiah who is coming. The Lord Jesus Christ took these same words and read them, and He applied them to Himself, to the amazement of His hearers. To apply them to Himself is one thing and to prove it quite another, but He proved it by what He did.

“He did the very thing that these words said He would do, and He has been doing it all through the centuries since. Millions have tested Him for themselves. They have come to Him. They have come with their sins. They have come to be delivered from their chains of evil habits, and they have put their trust in Him, and they have found He is able to do what He said He would do” (Ironsides, pp. 133-34).

“The discourse had been spoken, and the breathless silence with which, even according to Jewish custom, it had been listened to, gave place to the usual after-sermon hum of an Eastern Synagogue. On one point all were agreed: that they were marvelous words of grace, which had proceeded out of His mouth. And still the Preacher waited, with deep longing of soul, for some question, which would have marked the spiritual application of what He had spoken. . . . They were indeed making application of the sermon to the Preacher, but in quite different manner from that to which His discourse had pointed. It was not the fulfillment of the Scripture in Him, but the circumstance, that such an one as

the Son of Joseph, their village carpenter, should have spoken such words, that attracted their attention” (Ederheim, Vol. I, pp. 454-55).

In His reading of Isaiah, the Lord Jesus had stopped in the middle of a sentence, as He pronounced “*the acceptable year of the Lord*”—the year of Jubilee. He did not read “*the day of vengeance of our God*” because this was His first coming in grace, not His second coming, which will be the day of judgment.

Would they receive Him? Did His words apply to them?

“They were not the poor, the captive, blind or fetter-bruised. . . . After all the question was of Him and not of them. Who was He?

But they had heard of miracles wrought at Capernaum: let the physician heal himself; what they had heard of elsewhere let Him repeat in His own city. . .” (Grant, p. 366).

Why, then, did He not answer their request and prove Himself by miracles?

“But, He, seeing more deeply, sees He is rejected. Even while they wonder at His gracious words, they have no need of them: and of what use were miracles save to confirm that of which they had no need” (Grant, p. 366).

The Lord points to Elijah and Elisha to show that this is so often the case—a prophet without honor in his own country. So, God’s grace rejected goes out to others who recognize their need.

MEMORY (Luke 4:4): And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

“There were the poor, the blind, the captives of sin elsewhere—even among the Gentiles” (Grant, pp. 366-67).

That He should make such an application to themselves stung them to the quick and kindled their murderous wrath.

“Out they thrust Him from the Synagogue; forth they pressed Him out of the city; on they followed, and around they beset Him along the road by the brow of the hill on which the city is built . . . this with the intention of crowding Him over the cliff, which there rises abruptly about forty feet out of the valley beneath. . . .

“We can conceive how Jesus, Who had hitherto, in the silence of sadness, allowed Himself . . . to be pressed onwards by the surrounding crowd, now turned, and by that look of commanding majesty, the forthbreaking of His Divine Being, which ever and again wrought on those around miracles of subjection, constrained them to halt and give way before Him, while unharmed He passed through their midst.

“Cast out of His own city, Jesus pursued His solitary way towards Capernaum. There, at least, devoted friends and believing disciples would welcome Him. There, also, a large draught of souls would fill the Gospel net. Capernaum would be His Galilean home” (Edersheim, Vol. I, pp. 456-57).

Nowhere in the gospels do we read of the Lord Jesus ever returning again to Nazareth.

III. ABLE TO HELP

(Luke 4:33-44)

In this section we have Christ reaching out to those who come to Him for help. He reaches in love, putting His hands on them, speaking the Word of power and deliverance.

“In this story of a Sabbath day, we see Jesus in four different places: In the morning He was found in the synagogue. In the afternoon He went to Simon’s house in Bethsaida. Then at eventide we see Him in the streets.

“Then presently we see Him breaking away, and getting out into the desert alone. In the morning in the synagogue, the scene of religion.

“In the afternoon in the home, the great circle of God for the creation of a true society, the family, the place of the family. In the evening in the streets, confronting all massed humanity with its sorrows and its sufferings. And then when the day was done, between the stroke of midnight and the blush of dawn, alone in the desert with God” (Morgan, pp. 66-67).

What did He teach the people? Luke 24:44 gives an insight here: *“Now He said to them, ‘These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled’.”*

He opened up the Old Testament Scriptures and showed them things concerning Himself. He showed that every type, prophecy, and word of praise concerning Messiah was fulfilled in Him.

MEMORY (Luke 4:4): And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

And they wondered at the authority with which He spoke. Next He demonstrated His power to deliver from the hand of Satan. We see His grace going out to those who cannot help themselves.

“The condition of man is such that he is quite incapable for service either Godward or manward. But the gracious power of Jehovah’s Horn of deliverance came out in dispossessing the unclean demon that was in the synagogue, so that the man might be found in conditions suitable to the holiness of God and the service of God. Then Simon’s mother-in-law was incapable of service manward by reason of fever.

“The two incidents largely characterize the Gospel of Luke. God has introduced a Person who in the application of His grace is capable of delivering men from everything that incapacitated them for service Godward and manward.

“A great many people want deliverance.

“The secret of it is a Person, and that Person is fully available for us. All that is in Him as power is as much available for us in our moral weaknesses and necessities as it was physically for the people that came in contact with Him in the days of His flesh.

“We have to go to the gospels to learn the character of the Person of whom the epistles speak. The doctrine is unfolded in the epistles, but for the substance we must go to the Gospels. The substance and power of deliverance are in the Person of Christ” (Coates, pp. 71-72).

*In your hearts enthrone Him;
There let Him subdue
All that is not holy, all that is not true;
Crown Him as your Captain
In temptation’s hour,
Let His will enfold you in its light and
power.*

—Author Unknown

GENESIS 3

From *An Outline of Genesis* by C. A. Coates

I think all believers realize that this is one of the most important chapters in Scripture. It shows how evil came into this world, the source from which it came, and its effect and consequences.

It is a blessed chapter, too, as showing God’s resource in mercy and grace, and that ultimately all the designs of the serpent will be brought to nothing; his head will be crushed. In a certain sense Satan’s head is bruised already; it was at the cross. But Romans 16:20 tells us, “*God shall bruise Satan shortly under your feet.*”

The saints will be brought to participate in the complete triumph of Christ, and all that Satan has brought in will have to go out.

We cannot ponder this chapter too much; it shows what the poison of the serpent really is, and that helps us to judge that poison in ourselves.

The poison is distrust of God; this lies behind all lust and disobedience. The first seed to be sown in the heart of man by the serpent was distrust of God. If this were admitted all was lost.

MEMORY (Luke 4:4): And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

For God to have lost the confidence of His most highly favoured creature was the most terrible thing possible.

To admit the suggestion that God was withholding good was to be inwardly fallen already. We find this same distrust in ourselves, and we have to judge it; and we can do so now in the light of the fact that God has come out and has revealed His love so that we might have unreserved confidence in unreserved love.

There is no reserve in God's love; He has given the best in heaven for the worst on earth, and in this way has rebuked distrust and established confidence, so that "*the works of the devil*" might be undone in our hearts.

If we only want what God gives we shall be perfectly happy. Nothing is of real value to us that we cannot take from God's hand and thank Him for.

The first doubt the serpent instilled into the human heart was as to the goodness of God; and then he said to Eve, in effect, "God is trying to frighten you; what He says will not come to pass; *ye will not certainly die.*"

Then, further, , "*God knows that in the day ye eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be as gods, knowing good and evil.*" Man before the fall knew that it was right to obey God and wrong to disobey Him, but he did not know good and evil.

That was a knowledge which the serpent could rightly attribute to God. God knows good and evil in a holy nature; man could only come into that knowledge by disobedience and therefore in a sinful nature. He could only know good and evil by becoming evil himself.

It was a question purely of obedience to God—of His authority. To eat of the tree would not have been wrong if it had not been forbidden. To disobey God was evil, and the moment they had done it they knew good and evil in their own consciousness. Their eyes were opened, indeed, but opened on their own wretched state as having become evil.

If we once accept a suggestion from the enemy, and begin to reason about it, it is all over. In Eve we see how disobedience presented itself, and, we may say, justified itself to her. She exercised her judgment upon the tree. She saw that it was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise.

She judged of it entirely in the light of what the serpent had said, and not at all in the light of what God had said. How solemn is all this! How often we reason ourselves into believing that wrong is right!

God and His goodness are left out: then the sight of the eyes and the judgment of the mind are sure to be wrong. Nothing is good for me that I cannot receive as God's gift, and give Him thanks for.

We get the three forms of lust here; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life are all here in embryo. It is God excluded from the confidence of His creature, His solemn warning disregarded, and the lust and will of the creature made the deciding factor. That is the fall. It was the utmost outrage that could be offered under the circumstances to the goodness, truth, and authority of God.

MEMORY (Luke 4:4): And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

Then in Adam's case it was not the direct temptation of the serpent, but the seduction of the woman. "*Adam was not deceived; but the woman having been deceived was in transgression.*"

Adam sinned, we might say, knowing what he was doing. He allowed himself to be led by his affections. The whole character and relative positions of the man and the woman were thus reversed.

Eve should have been led by her affections, and if so she would have called Adam at once when the serpent

spoke to her. Instead of that she parlayed with the serpent and used her judgment.

Adam should have been led by his judgment exercised in the fear of God, but instead of that he allowed himself to be led by his affections without giving God any place at all. Satan's object is always to get divine order reversed.

Adam was the responsible head; so when things are taken up formally in Romans 5, sin is regarded as coming in by him.

The full responsibility rested on him.

VII. DRAW ME AFTER THEE

Questions on Luke 5:1-6:11

REVIEW: Luke 4:1-44 by reading the passage and the Lesson 6 notes.

MEMORY: Review Luke 1:4; 10:10; 24:19; 1:37; 2:49; 3:21-22; 4:14.

MEMORIZE: Luke 5:32.

What blessed your heart and what was the main application of Lesson 6 to your life?

READ: Luke 5:1-6:11 and the notes on Lesson 7.

List the main events of this section.

I. PETER, CONVICTION AND A NEW COMMISSION

READ: Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; John 1:35-42.

DO QUESTIONS: 2-8

READ: Pages 125-129

1. What are several outstanding differences between these various accounts of the call of Simon Peter?

2. In the Lord's presence, what discovery did Peter make about himself?

3. How was Job's experience similar in Job 42:5-6? How can you apply this to your own life?

Job 42:55-6—"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees Thee: Therefore I retract, and I re-

pent in dust and ashes."

4. How did the Lord deal with Peter? What encouragement do you find for your own life from this?

5. What did the Lord Jesus tell Peter that he (Peter) would do henceforth and what does this imply?

6. How was this fulfilled in Peter's life? See Acts 2:14-41.

7. Is your heart ready for "a new call" that comes as in Peter's life to those who have already been His disciples? What does this mean to you?

8. Do you find encouragement for your own life as you read about the Lord's dealings here with Peter? Be specific.

II. LEPER AND PARALYTIC: A NEW DEALING WITH SIN

READ: Luke 5:12-26; Leviticus 13:1-3; 4:2-32

DO QUESTIONS: 9-16

READ: Pages 129-134

9. If a person in Bible times had leprosy, what was he to do about it? (Lev. 13:1-3; 4:2-32)

9A. Why do you think leprosy is considered to be a picture of sin?

MEMORY (Luke 5:32): "I have not come to call righteous men but sinners to repentance."

9B. Why do you think the Lord added “for a testimony unto them” (5:14)?

10. Explain the significance of C.A. Coates’s statement (p. 132, col. 2) that the cleansed leper had a dignity in Israel that attached to no other person save God’s anointed priest and king. What application has this for you?

11. Think about verse 16. On what other occasion mentioned by Luke 3:21 have we seen the Lord praying? What significance has this for you personally?

12. Write down three lessons for your heart and life from this passage in Luke 5:16-26.

13. Why were the scribes and Pharisees, the multitudes, the four men and the paralytic there?

14. Trace the progression of opposition in Luke 5:12-6:11 by writing verse references where opposition occurs and noting down Luke’s comments about it.

15. How is this a fulfillment of Isa. 53:3
He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him?

16. How can this encourage us when people reject our witness?

III. LEVI AND HIS FRIENDS: NEW INTEREST AND A NEW JOY

READ: Luke 5:27-39

DO QUESTIONS: 17-23

READ: Pages 134-137

17. What are the stages in Levi’s life that we see here? Luke 5:27-39

18. What do you think Christ means in response to the Pharisees when He says (Luke 5:32), “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance?” Why sinners, not the righteous?

19. In verses 34-35, what does the Lord Jesus call Himself? What will be true in your life if this is your relationship to Him? See:

2 Corinthians 11:2-3—For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy, for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

Eph. 5:28b-33—He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. For THIS CAUSE A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, AND SHALL CLEAVE TO HIS WIFE; AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband.

1 John 4:19—We love, because He first loved us.

MEMORY (Luke 5:32): “I have not come to call righteous men but sinners to repentance.”

20. They had seen the leper and a paralytic healed. Why do the Pharisees continue to attack Him?

21. How would you characterize the Pharisees' attitude toward the Lord Jesus and His Word and toward those in need in Luke 5:12-6:11?

22. Contrast the attitude of the Pharisees with that of the Psalmist in Psalms 86:11 and 139:23-24. (See also James 1:22; 1 John 3:16-18 and John 3:17-21.)

Psalm 86:11—Teach me Thy way, O LORD; I will walk in Thy truth; unite my heart to fear Thy name.

Psalm 139:23-24—Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.

James 1:22—But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

1 John 3:16-18—We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

John 3:17-21—For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for

their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.

23. (Personal): What kind of attitude do I have as I come to the Word of God?

IV. SABBATH: A NEW REST AND A NEW AUTHORITY

READ: Luke 6:1-11

DO QUESTIONS: 24-30

READ: Pages 137-142

24. Using a concordance and/or Bible dictionary, look up what you can find about the Sabbath. Jot down notes that interest you. Think especially about the following:

25. Why did God give the Sabbath?

26. To whom did He give it?

27. Of what is Sabbath a spiritual picture?

28. Are New Testament saints to continue worshiping on the Sabbath? Prove your answer.

29. Think back over Luke 5:1-6:11 and the way the Lord drew people to Himself. What about Him drew them?

30. What draws you? Do you need to draw closer? How would you do that?

MEMORY (Luke 5:32): "I have not come to call righteous men but sinners to repentance."

VII. DRAW ME AFTER THEE

(Luke 5:1-6:11)

Draw me after thee. We will make haste (Songs 1:4)

All four gospels present the miracle of the net full of fish. Let us compare the four:

And walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.

And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

And they immediately left the nets, and followed Him.

And going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them.

And they immediately left the boat and their father, and followed Him (Matthew 4:18-22).

And as He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen.

And Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men."

And they immediately left the nets and followed Him.

And going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother,

who were also in the boat mending the nets.

And immediately He called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went away to follow Him (Mark 1:16-20).

5:1. Now it came about that while the multitude were pressing around Him and listening to the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret;

2. And He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them, and were washing their nets.

3. And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and began teaching the multitudes from the boat.

4. And when He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch."

5. And Simon answered and said, "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but at Your bidding I will let down the nets."

6. And when they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish; and their nets began to break;

7. And they signaled to their partners in the other boat, for them to come and help them. And they came, and filled both of

MEMORY (Luke 5:32): "I have not come to call righteous men but sinners to repentance."

the boats, so that they began to sink.

8. But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

9. For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken;

10. And so also James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men."

11. And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.

And again the next day John was standing, and two of his disciples;

And he looked upon Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"

And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

And Jesus turned, and beheld them following, and said to them, "What do you seek?" And they said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?"

He said to them, "Come, and you will see." They came therefore and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.

One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

He found first his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ).

He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him, and said, "You are Simon the son of

John; you shall be called Cephas (which translated means Peter)" (John 1:35-42).

This section of Luke begins with the drawing in of fisher nets filled to breaking. Just so would the Lord Jesus draw hearts to Himself.

Now we see Him going the Galilean roadway in His work of fishing for men. But He never forces them into the Gospel net. He lets them see Him and hear His words of grace, and He calls them to follow.

Some respond with glad obedience. Some others draw near with their lips and harden their hearts against Him. The Lord reads their hearts and describes them:

You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME (Matthew 15:7-8).

In this section, then, we see the gathering of two forces—one in hatred against Him, the other a band of loyal disciples in loving fellowship with Him.

Today, the Lord is still in the business of casting the Gospel net and drawing hearts to Himself. We want to be like those who respond in repentance and love. Like Levi, may we see our gold grow dim as our hearts go after Him:

And He said unto him, "Follow Me." And he left all, rose up, and followed Him (Luke 5:27b-28).

**I heard Him call,
"Come, follow!"—that was all!**

MEMORY (Luke 5:32): "I have not come to call righteous men but sinners to repentance."

**My gold grew dim:
My soul went after Him.
I rose and followed—that was all:
Who would not follow,
If they heard Him call?**

--William R. Newell

Let us ask Him to draw us more closely to Himself. Let us go with Him, following and being taught the ways of fishing. Then we shall learn to cast the nets, drawing others to Himself, becoming true “fishers of men.”

Now we observe the Lord Jesus as He draws first one and then another. He draws to Himself, and He does a new thing in each life.

PETER

*Conviction And A New Commission
(Luke 5:1-11)*

He said, “Depart, Lord!” But the Lord reads hearts, and He knew what Peter meant. Let us survey the scene:

“We are once again out of the stifling spiritual atmosphere of the great City, and by the glorious Lake of Galilee.” Close by, on either side of Capernaum, the country “was studded with villages and towns, a busy, thriving, happy multitude. During that bright summer He had walked along that Lake, and by its shore, and in the various synagogues preached His Gospel. And they had been ‘astonished at His doctrine, for His was with power.’” (Edersheim, p. 472)

Now the crowds of people were follow-

ing and “pressing” upon Him, hearing Him speak “the word of God.” The fishermen had toiled all night and caught nothing.

Now they were washing their nets of sand and pebbles, for after each fishing trip the equipment had to be checked for rips and cleaned in readiness for the next trip out.

The Lord has come especially to call four of these fishermen—Andrew and Peter, sons of Jonas, and James and John, sons of Zebedee.

On earlier occasions the hearts of these men had been drawn to Christ.

Now the time had come for a deeper work and a new commissioning.

Luke focuses upon the Lord’s further dealing with one of the men—Peter. About a year previously Peter had asked to dwell with the Lord. During the intervening months he had followed the Lord from time to time and had listened to His gracious words.

Now the Lord is about to call His disciples to be *with* Him:

And He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him, and that He might send them out to preach (Mark 3:12).

But first their hearts must be prepared to make that permanent choice. This is done in the searchlight of His presence.

First, they must hear more of His word. Then they will see His power. At last, Peter will fall on his knees in the boat and make the Lord the Captain of his life.

The crowds press around the Lord to the edge of the lake. Peter’s boat now becomes a pulpit, and the Lord Jesus speaks to the multitude and to Peter.

MEMORY (Luke 5:32): “I have not come to call righteous men but sinners to repentance.”

“The boat has been thrust out a little from the land, and over the soft ripple of the waters comes the strange melody of that Word.” It comes to those who labor and are heavy laden. It speaks of the wonder and the glory of a new kingdom and “by contrast, the deep poverty and need of their souls. And Peter had heard it all in the boat, as he sat close by, in the shadow of His Majesty.” This is the teaching of which he is to become a disciple (Edersheim, Vol. I, p. 476).

“It is easy to visualize that scene. Here is the Lord Jesus sitting in the boat, ... and I can fancy Simon Peter sitting there with all the sense of ownership, thinking, “This is my boat, and Jesus is here talking to these people. I am glad to see so-and-so here; I hope he is taking this in, and I hope so-and-so is getting what she needs.” But apparently Peter was not taking in anything. He was just allowing it all to go to the rest of the folks. The Lord Jesus recognized his true state, and his need for something to probe his conscience” (Ironsides, pp. 151).

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

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

Now the lesson must be driven home to the hearts of Peter and his three friends. They must be qualified to become fishers

of men. The Lord will continue to search out their inmost feelings and longings. This is the object of all of His work, the miracles being no exception. Each miracle is a spiritual lesson.

“So He said unto Simon, ‘Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.’ Simon was bewildered and surprised. Jesus was not a fisherman. He was a carpenter and He had not lived in a town on the lakeside. He lived in Nazareth, some miles away from the lake; and He could not be expected, if He were only a man, to know the right time or the right conditions for fishing.

“So Peter explains in the next verse that they had been out all night long fishing and had gotten nothing. . . . “Instead of saying it is useless to let down the nets today, he says, ‘Nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net’ (KJV).

“Jesus did not say, ‘Let down the net.’ Jesus said, ‘Let down the nets,’ to prepare for a great draught. Peter said, ‘Well, Lord, we will let down one net anyway.’ Of course, he felt it was a poor time to fish and he did not expect to get anything, but since Jesus said so, he let down a net” (Ironsides, pp. 151-53).

The net is pulled up, full to breaking, filling and almost swamping both boats. He who could see through Peter, see through to the very bottom of his heart, could also see through the waters right down to the bottom of the sea if that were necessary.

But He who by a thought could change water to wine would have no problem filling a net with fish.

MEMORY (Luke 5:32): "I have not come to call righteous men but sinners to repentance."

In the presence of God, Peter falls to his knees on top of the fish, convicted of his sin. Like Isaiah, beholding the glory of the Lord, he says in effect, “Woe is me, for I am undone.” “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man!”

Peter, even while clinging to Him, tells Him to depart.

“Conscience and heart are at strife within him. But he does not flee. How should he flee from Him who is what he realizes Him to be—who has searched out the paths of the sea and his heart together?” (Grant, p. 369).

The Lord understands and speaks the word of comfort and grace. He thus teaches Peter that God always meets the need of the repentant heart.

“Henceforth. . . .” It is the great word of hope—“from now on.”

“It breaks with the past. It changes everything” (Morgan, p. 74).

5:10. Do not fear. From now on you will be catching men.

Such a new call came to those who had already been His disciples and who understood something of the message and person of the One who drew their hearts. They must make the choice. They understood clearly that it meant leaving their occupation for association with one who was about to clash openly with Jewish authority. They probably understood the implications better than we do.

“All the deeper, then, must have

been their loving belief in Him . . . when, in self-surrender . . . they forsook ship and home to follow Him. And so, successively, Simon and Andrew, and John and James—those who had been the first to hear, were also the first to follow Jesus. And ever afterwards did they remain closest to Him”—the men who were the first fruits of His ministry (Edersheim, p. 475).

5:11. And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything, and followed Him.

The new calling came after a new kind of conviction of sin—conviction in the *presence* of the Lord Jesus. Peter fell down before this revelation in dismay, but he fell at His feet. He was as near to the Lord as he could get. His heart was drawn to Him in the most powerful attraction.

Like Peter, we too need this kind of conviction which brings us to His feet. As we confess our unfitness to be in His presence, He brings cleansing by His blood and new power for service. This is what the Lord now illustrated in the two miracles which follow.

LEPER AND PARALYTIC **(Luke 5:12-26)** ***A NEW DEALING WITH SIN***

5:12. And it came about that while He was in one of the cities, behold, there was a man full of leprosy; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”

13. And He stretched out His hand, and

MEMORY (Luke 5:32): “I have not come to call righteous men but sinners to repentance.”

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touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately the leprosy left him.

14. And He ordered him to tell no one, "But go and SHOW YOURSELF TO THE PRIEST, AND MAKE AN OFFERING FOR YOUR CLEANSING, JUST AS Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."

15. But the news about Him was spreading even farther, and great multitudes were gathering to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses.

Then the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, "When a man has on the skin of his body a swelling or a scab or a bright spot, and it becomes an infection of leprosy on the skin of his body, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest, or to one of his sons the priests.

"And the priest shall look at the mark on the skin of the body, and if the hair in the infection has turned white and the infection appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is an infection of leprosy; when the priest has looked at him, he shall pronounce him unclean (Leviticus 13:1-3).

Read also Leviticus 4:2-32.

We remember that in the prologue to this Gospel, Luke says that he has arranged everything "in order." What he received "from above," under the direction of the Holy Spirit, Luke has laid out according to a beautiful pattern.

All in this Gospel is designed to show us the Son of Man in His gracious priestly work. He seeks out and saves the lost, delivering from sin's bondage and bringing people to God.

We have just seen His dealing with one of these, Peter, and meeting his heart's need.

Now this need to which the Lord Jesus ministers is to be more deeply probed and laid out to view.

We are to see two aspects of the sin which fills man's heart.

These are illustrated by the leper and the paralytic: Sin produces *corruption* and *impotence*.

The Corruption of Sin

Luke uses the medical term here and tells us that the man was full of leprosy. Nowhere in the Bible is leprosy named as a type of sin.

But Hebrew and Christian writers alike have always seen in the disease a symbol in the natural of what sin is in the moral realm.

Leprosy is the well-known picture of sin in the Old Testament— "**in its subtle invasion, its certain spread, its contagion, its breaking up of human relations, its banishment from God (Leviticus 13). Man was powerless in the presence of this malignant scourge.**

"The mere touch of one who had it was defilement. Every leper was known, and had to make himself known to all around him, that none might come in contact with him" (Grant, p. 369).

The work of the Lord Jesus began where that of the Jewish rabbis ended.

"Whatever remedies—medical, magical, or sympathetic—Rabbinic writings may indicate for various kinds of disease, leprosy is not included in the catalog" (Edersheim, p. 491).

MEMORY (Luke 5:32): "I have not come to call righteous men but sinners to repentance."

Lepers were considered morally dead. They were to avoid all contact with the living, and they were to dress like mourners.

“As the leper passed by, his clothes rent, his hair disheveled, and the lower part of his face and his upper lip covered, it was as one going to death who reads his own burial service, while the mournful words, ‘Unclean! Unclean!’ which he uttered, proclaimed that his was both living and moral death” (Eder-sheim, p. 491).

Rabbinism professed itself helpless in the presence of this living death. Although the sacrificial ritual for the cleansed leper implies the possibility of a cure, this is in every instance traced to the direct hand of God.

“In truth, the possibility of any cure through human agency was never contemplated by the Jews” (Edersheim, p. 492).

The Jews’ treatment of these sufferers presents a marked contrast to that of the Savior.

“And yet, as if writing its own condemnation, one of the titles which Rabbinism gives to the Messiah is ‘the Leprous,’ the King Messiah being represented as seated in the entrance to Rome, surrounded by, and relieving all misery and disease, in fulfillment of Isaiah 53:4” (Edersheim, pp. 492-93).

Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted (Isaiah 53:4).

We think of 2 Cor. 5:21:

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

The Jews spared little or no compassion for lepers. They must keep a distance of no less than six feet away from them. They were not allowed to say any greeting to the sufferer. If the wind came up from the leper’s direction, people must keep more than one hundred feet away.

“Rabbi Meier would not eat an egg purchased in a street where there was a leper. Another Rabbi boasted that he always threw stones at them to keep them far off, while others hid themselves or ran away. To such extent did Rabbinism carry its inhuman logic in considering the leper as a mourner, that it even forbade him to wash his face” (Edersheim, p. 495).

We are now in a position to appreciate something of the contrast between the Lord Jesus and His contemporaries in His bearing toward the leper. We can also judge by the healing of this leper the impression which the Savior was making upon the people. The leper would have fled from a rabbi. He came in the lowliest manner of entreaty to Jesus. There was no Old Testament precedent for it and no Jewish expectancy of it.

“But to have heard Him teach, to have seen or known Him as healing all manner of disease, must have carried to the heart the conviction of His absolute power. And so one can understand this

MEMORY (Luke 5:32): “I have not come to call righteous men but sinners to repentance.”

lowly reverence of approach, this cry which has so often since been wrung from those who have despaired of all other help: ‘If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean!’ It is not a prayer, but the ground-tone of all prayer—faith in His power, and absolute committal to Him of our helpless, hopeless need. And Jesus, touched with compassion, willed it” (Edersheim, p. 495).

It was fitting that the Old Testament Naaman should have been disappointed in his hope that Elisha would heal by touching his leprosy.

It is even more fitting that Jesus should **“surprise the Jewish leper by touching (him) before by His word He cleansed him”** (Edersheim, pp. 495-96).

5:13. And He stretched out His hand, and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” And immediately the leprosy left him.

It is God’s kind pleasure to do just this for the sinner. He so loved us that He sent His Son to the cross. There Christ became sin for us. For those who believe on Christ there is not a trace of defilement under the eye of God, for God views the believer in Christ. This is the value of the death of Christ!!

“I will: be thou clean’ is the word of the cross. That word rings down through the ages from Calvary. ‘I will: be thou clean’ is a new kind of cleansing altogether; it is not merely ceremonial cleansing such as an Israelite might have by observing the rites and ordinances of the law.

“It is a new kind of cleansing, which makes us spotless in the presence of the holiness of God, all secured by the death of Jesus” (Coates, pp. 75-76).

The Lord orders the cleansed leper to tell no one. Such news would only add to the excitement of the crowds looking for temporal benefits and a mighty miracle-working deliverer. Not thus is His Kingdom to be established.

The man is to present himself to the priests in the temple. Think of him, taking the offerings described in Leviticus 14, each one speaking of the Person who had cleansed him.

The cleansed leper was to bring a trespass offering, speaking of sins done; a sin offering, speaking of the sinner himself; the burnt offering, the One who perfectly glorified God; the meal offering, the perfection of Christ’s life. The oil spoke of the power of the Spirit.

The blood and the oil were placed upon him.

“The cleansed leper had the blood on his ear, his thumb, and his toe, and he had the oil on the blood, and then he had all the rest of the oil poured on his head.

“The cleansed leper had a dignity in Israel that attached to no other person save God’s anointed priest and king.

“He went out as an anointed man” (Coates, pp. 76-77).

The spiritual rulers in Israel at just that time were showing their hostility to the Lord. The Lord sends the cleansed leper to Jerusalem *“for a testimony to them.”*

MEMORY (Luke 5:32): “I have not come to call righteous men but sinners to repentance.”

“So He replied to the sending forth of the Scribes of Jerusalem to watch, oppose, and arrest Him, by sending to Jerusalem as His embassy the healed leper, to submit to all the requirements of the Law. It was His testimony unto them—His, Who was meek and lowly in heart; and it was in deepest accord with what He had done, and was doing” (Edersheim, p. 498).

There is a significant break in the chapter at verse 16. The Lord leaves the throngs and slips away to a quiet place to pray. We see Him as the dependent Son in communion with the Father. It speaks to our hearts of our need to be in touch with heaven.

In this whole section we are seeing the Lord Jesus as sufficient to meet any need of man’s heart. Leprosy is a picture of the corruption of sin. The unsaved person is in this state of corruption. The cross brings cleansing. For the believer there is also cleansing. The flesh is still in the Christian. Christ is the only remedy in either case—unsaved or saved.

“In John 13, He takes our feet into His blessed hands to cleanse them from all the defilements of the way, and this is the touch of Jesus for the Christian” (Grant, p. 370).

The aspects vary, for the truth is the same. The Lord’s power and love will meet human need and guilt.

Now we look at another illustration of what sin does to the life.

*A Paralytic
The impotence of sin*

Here we have four friends who take an unconventional way to bring the sufferer to the Lord Jesus.

Now for the first time appear the hostile watchers from Jerusalem, the scribes and Pharisees. His word and work will no longer go unchallenged. Right after this incident they charge Him with blasphemy.

The Lord is standing within what is probably a good-sized house, the scribes and Pharisees sitting alongside Him, watching. The crowds must have filled the house, the halls, the courtyard and out into the street. It was impossible to bring the patient on his stretcher through the crowd. Outside the house, as well as inside, a stair led up to the flat, tiled part of the roof, under which the Lord was standing. It would have taken four strong men only a few minutes to unroof the covering of tiles and dig an opening through the lighter framework which supported these tiles. Through this hole they lowered their burden down into the room.

“We can imagine the arresting of the discourse of Jesus, and the breathless surprise of the crowd as this opening through the tiles appeared, and slowly a pallet was let down before them. Busy hands would help steady it and bring it safe to the ground. And on that pallet lay one paralyzed—his fevered face and glistening eyes upturned to Jesus” (Edersheim, p. 503).

5:20. “Friend, your sins are forgiven you.”

MEMORY (Luke 5:32): “I have not come to call righteous men but sinners to repentance.”

The Lord looks down into the deepest place, past the physical need, down into the heart. It was this inward sickness that He met first. By this He also establishes His divine authority. Then He proves this authority by the healing which follows.

Remember that the enemies are watching. They did not question the fact of the miracle, but they were seeking to attribute it to some magical and Satanic influence. When the Lord speaks the word of forgiveness, they criticize.

“*Blasphemy,*” they conclude, for who but God has the power to forgive sins.

Exactly right.

Who was He?

“Man, indeed, but the Son of Man in the emphatic and well-understood sense of being the Representative Man, who was to bring a new life to humanity”—the second Man, the Last Adam, the Lord from heaven (Edersheim, pp. 505-06).

“He was teaching them that the word of authority in the moral realm is proved by the word of power in the physical realm. God forgives sins. God heals; and in this case the two things were identical” (Morgan, p. 78).

And the man departed *to his own house*—the best place to glorify God!

All of this is a picture of the fact that the natural man cannot walk or live to please God. He can never live a completely morally upright life. The power to walk in a manner glorifying to God is the proof of forgiveness of sins.

Those watching were amazed. What had brought this about? The faith of the friends

who brought him to Christ and the Word of God, who reconciles the world to Himself.

We need here to get the sense of the Lord’s heart of kindness. He will never leave us without the power to live for His glory. He grants us—

According to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man (Ephesians 3:16).

Thus we are enabled to—

Walk in love, just as Christ also loved us, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma (Ephesians 5:2).

The fragrance of the Lord’s grace and kindness filled that house that day, indeed fills the whole gospel. We may appropriate that grace for living today. As the sense of His kindness fills our hearts, we can—

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven us (Ephesians 4:32).

As we see the grace of the Lord Jesus and His loving kindness to all who came to Him, our hearts are drawn to Him, too. In the next section, this power of attraction works in a life to give him a new interest and a new joy and a new love.

LEVI AND HIS FRIENDS

*New Interest And A New Joy
(Luke 5:27-39)*

Throughout this section the Lord is drawing hearts to Himself. He is present-

MEMORY (Luke 5:32): “I have not come to call righteous men but sinners to repentance.”

ing Himself as the Bridegroom of the heart. The whole Gospel of Luke is the disclosure of Him as the heavenly Bridegroom. *“The charm of a man is his kindness” (Proverbs 19:22).*

There is no more beautiful word in Scripture, and we might say that it describes Luke’s Gospel.

The people who are drawn to Christ become immediately aware of their own unfitness. They are convicted of sin in His presence, but there is no discouragement. We learn this *in His presence*, and that makes the difference—the attractiveness of the Bridegroom. At the end of Luke, repentance and remission of sins are to be preached in His name. In His name, in all the personal charm of the Lord Jesus, repentance and remission are to be preached. When we see this wonderful Person, it is true that we become aware of our sinful condition; but at the same time we love Him, for He satisfies the deepest need. He calls out the loving response of our hearts.

It is no wonder that people are always astonished when they see this wonderful Lord.

“There was only astonishment left in their hearts. Think of the charm about One who was personally delightful to God as His beloved Son; we see His charm in that character in chapter 3. Then we see in chapter 4 the charm of One who was untouchable by the devil, and the charm of the anointed Preacher who could fully set forth the grace of God to men, and then the charm of the Deliverer who can relieve us of every power of evil and every

infirmity. Now in chapter 5 we see the charm of His kindness” to Peter, a man convicted of sin; to a leper and a paralytic, men bound by sin (Coates, p. 74).

Finally, at the close of this chapter the Lord draws to Himself Matthew Levi, the materialist, whose gold grows dim in the light of His glory and grace.

Let us look at this next scene. The other synoptic Gospels record it, too.

Matthew Levi was **“collecting tolls from the boats on the seashore. Matthew in all probability, almost certainly, was a servant of Herod, a vassal of Rome. He would probably pay an annual sum to Rome, and put the toll in his pocket. I have no doubt it was a lucrative business. He was a rich man. Jesus passing by, looked at him, and said, ‘follow Me!’ . . . “There was immediacy; there was a sudden call, and in response to it, a sudden act” (Morgan, p. 79).**

Of course, it is likely that Matthew had over the months seen and heard much of the Lord Jesus; when the call came, he was ready. He dropped everything and went.

“The result was ultimately that he became the King’s recorder, and when the Gospel was to be written that shows the Kingliness of Jesus, this is the man who wrote it” (Morgan, p. 79).

Levi becomes a true Levite. He now has a new center of interest and joy. He has come to the Lord, whose grace sets us

MEMORY (Luke 5:32): “I have not come to call righteous men but sinners to repentance.”

apart from self-interest. Levi's attention is on the Bridegroom and on His interests, the interests of heaven.

This brings new joy and rejoicing, and it is the sharing of *His* joy. Psalm 19 speaks of the joy of the "*bridegroom coming out of his chamber*" and rejoicing;" it compares Him to the shining out of the sun. It is His joy. He rejoices to bring us the grace of heaven. We can, like Levi, appreciate this.

"The joy of God in forgiveness is far greater than our joy in being forgiven. It is a far greater joy to God to cleanse us in all the efficacy of the death of Jesus than it is for us to be cleansed. It is a greater joy to God to set us up in the power of the Spirit than it is for us to have the power. The joy of God in grace is set forth in the Bridegroom, and He would have us as His companions in the joy of grace" (Coates, p. 81).

Levi takes up this new interest which issues in His newfound joy in the Bridegroom of his heart.

Now Levi wants to minister to the Lord Jesus. He arranges an entertainment for *Him*—not for his friends the tax gatherers and sinners. He knew the kind of company that He would enjoy.

So he made a feast for Him and invited all of his friends. Levi knew that He would like it. He could now use his money in this way—the proper use of it—to express the grace of God *in his house*, where the paralytic also glorified God.

Witness and testimony will come out in very practical ways. Here Levi shows his new interest and joy in a practical way in his own house. He brings the Lord Je-

sus into the center of his life. It is this companionship that the Lord values more than our service.

Levi had let Him displace all of the self-interest, and now the joy of the Lord fills home and heart. Of course, it meant blessing for all the others, too.

In the background there is another sound—murmuring and grumbling. This comes from those who draw near not with heart, but with lips. Their hearts are far from Him. They are filled with self-interest, and they harden themselves against Him. Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. From these scribes and Pharisees came the grumbling.

Now they gather their forces for the attack.

First, they strike at Him indirectly through His disciples, then frontally with an accusation to His face.

First, they ask His disciples why He eats and drinks with such men as these. The Lord knows the question and answers them directly. He reaches the ones who recognize their need. It is these tax gatherers and sinners who came to John the Baptist in repentance, not the Pharisees and Sadducees, who turned away.

The Lord does not disregard the need of repentance. Quite the opposite. He is the Great Physician who has come to heal the soul of sin-sickness.

But the scribes and Pharisees will not come to Him for healing because they do not recognize their own sickness.

Then they ask about fasting. They complain that these people are all too cheerful. The Lord answers with a statement and then a parable.

He is the bridegroom. This is the feast of rejoicing, the time to be joyful in His

MEMORY (Luke 5:32): "I have not come to call righteous men but sinners to repentance."

presence. Mourning would be inappropriate in His presence. The time is coming, He says, when His disciples and friends will mourn—when He goes to the cross, He means.

“That has no application to us. Why? Because He is with us. He is not taken away. That only applied to the few days between the cross and the resurrection, and in a lesser degree to the period between the resurrection and Pentecost.

“When He came back by the Spirit to abide with them, the need for fasting passed. He was simply looking at the facts of the case. You criticize My disciples for living the life of merriment, of joy; they cannot help it; they are with Me; we are together; but the days will come when the Bridegroom shall be violently taken away; then they will fast” (Morgan, p. 81).

Then He uses His first parable: the new garment and the new wineskins. The Old Covenant is passing away, because He is fulfilling it. The New is being brought in. The old Jewish institutions are shadows, pointing to Him. Now He has come. The Old was just the shadow of good things to come (Heb. 8). Reality is better than symbol.

“Our Lord here was talking about new wine, the new wine of the Kingdom, unfermented, pure wine. He said: You cannot put that back into your old bottles, that have had in them fermented juices. He was saying in effect, You cannot put My new wine, the unfermented wine of the kingdom, into these old bottles, because if you do, it

will become fermented, and break the bottles and everything be lost.

“What is the great teaching here? It is that He did not come to mend, but to end the past and start the new; and that the things of His Kingdom, the things He had come to initiate, cannot be contained within the formulae of the past. It requires new forms, new methods, new laws, new rules, new wineskins for the new wine.” Then He comments satirically on these scribes and Pharisees. **“You are satisfied with this old; you have been drinking the old, and you are drunk; and you are saying, ‘We like the old best!’ That is why they crucified Him!”** (Morgan, p. 82).

He is doing a new thing. He is drawing hearts to Himself. This is something the self-righteous and self-interested cannot understand. But those who are drawn to Him in love can take it all in.

They have in Him everything that satisfies. They have release from sin’s bondage because of His redemptive work at the cross. They have a new center of interest in Christ Himself. And He is the source of their joy and pleasure.

Truly *“all things have become new”* (2 *Corinthians 5:17*). He is the dearest companion, the Bridegroom of the heart. Thus He brings us into rest, a new kind of rest—rest in Himself.

SABBATH

New Rest And A New Authority
(*Luke 6:1-11*)

When He takes the place of authority in our lives, then we have rest of heart,

MEMORY (Luke 5:32): “I have not come to call righteous men but sinners to repentance.”

and then we can really serve Him. Christ draws hearts to Himself to learn these lessons—a heart at rest in Christ, the life poured out in service. All of this is pictured in the next scenes of two Sabbath days.

We consider the following:

The Meaning of the Sabbath
Rest in His Provision
The Lord of Rest
Rest in His Authority

He would have our hearts drawn out to Him in rest, for we hear Him say:

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30 KJV).

The Meaning of the Sabbath

The next scene in Luke takes place in a wheat field on a significant day—the “second-first” Sabbath. The sabbath of Passover was the first sabbath. The second sabbath, featuring the waving of the sheaf of grain, occurred the next week. This waving speaks of Christ in resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:23) and of the believer’s union with Him. It reminds us that we have been united to Christ in death, burial, and resurrection. Set free from the bondage of sin, we are free to walk in His resurrection power (Romans 6:1-13). He has made full provision for such a life. This is what is signified in the waving of the sheaf of grain on the Sabbath after Pass-

over. The “second-first” was the sabbath following the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits (Leviticus 23).

The sabbath of the Old Testament pictures the spiritual reality God gives to the one who is drawn to Him. At the end of Leviticus, the sabbath series is presented; and it pictures heart rest in the person and work of Christ: rest from trying to earn salvation, rest in assurance of sins forgiven, rest from self-seeking, and ultimately, rest from all the effects of sin and failure. It is a reminder of God’s purpose in creation: a man in His image (Genesis 1:27-28; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18)— and a man to have dominion (Genesis 1:31; Romans 5:17; Hebrews 2:8)—

And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Genesis 1:27-28).

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren (Romans 8:29).

But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18).

And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day (Genesis 1:31).

MEMORY (Luke 5:32): “I have not come to call righteous men but sinners to repentance.”

For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ (Romans 5:17).

“THOU HAST PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET.” For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him (Hebrews 2:8).

It pictures as well God’s own rest of delight (Genesis 1:31; Revelation 4:11; Exodus 31:13; Genesis 2:2-3; Ezekiel 20:12).

And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day (Genesis 1:31).

“Worthy are Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created” (Revelation 4:11).

“But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘You shall surely observe My sabbaths; for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you’” (Exodus 31:13).

And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made (Genesis 2:2-3).

And also I gave them My Sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them (Ezekiel 20:12).

It is this—God’s own rest of delight—that God gives to man, and it is to remind man of God’s kind and full provision (Exodus 20:10—11; Deuteronomy 5:5; Matthew 11:28). It is meant to be a joy.

And the seventh day is a Sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you (Exodus 20:10).

See, I have taught you statutes and judgments just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do thus in the land where you are entering to possess it (Deuteronomy 5:5).

“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

Rest in His Provision

Augustine in his *Confessions*, Book I, said, “Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, until it repose in Thee.”

The universal need of hearts is rest. We find this in Him, and so He draws us to Himself. The writer to the Hebrews says, “There remains therefore a REST for the people of God” (4:9).

This is not the usual word for rest, but the writer uses a different word. It means “a keeping of sabbath.”

He is saying, “See all that God has put in the sabbath series in the Old Testament,

MEMORY (Luke 5:32): “I have not come to call righteous men but sinners to repentance.”

and enter into God's rest." We are to "make haste" to enter into the spiritual reality God has provided.

This is exactly what the Jews did not see. They had added traditions and interpretations to the law of the sabbath—restrictions which completely missed the spiritual meaning of the sabbath.

So we find them at this point, in their dead rituals, clashing with the very Lord of the Sabbath.

Lord of Rest

The Lord who created the Sabbath now shows its true significance.

At the beginning of Luke chapter six, we see Him with His disciples in the wheat field on the Sabbath. The Jewish authorities are also watching, and He does something which rouses their further hostility.

His disciples did something that was lawful to do. They rubbed the grains of wheat in their hands and ate because they were hungry (Deuteronomy 23:25).

The problem was that they did this on the sabbath, and the Jews had decided that this was unlawful on the sabbath because it was like reaping and threshing! They had added to God's law restrictions of their own.

They completely missed the point that the sabbath was given by God for man's good, for his delight and refreshing. The sabbath was for life.

The Jews had made it a day of weariness and deadness in its boredom and dull restrictions.

In His reply to their criticisms, the Lord strips away all of the dead ritual. The sabbath was not just empty rituals made

by men. It was the day God made for man. As such, it is to be understood in the spiritual reality of God's grace.

"There will be no true sabbath until men rest in the known grace of God. The Son of Man is Lord of the sabbath. He exercises the rights of God in grace, and brings in a true sabbath rest for men" (Coates, p. 88).

David, the man after God's own heart, pictured the Greater David (Luke 20:44). In 1 Samuel 21, when David ate the showbread, he said, 'The Bread is in a manner common.' Had the Jews ever read this?

They had and they had not. They had not seen the incident with spiritual eyes. David was saying that the bread of God's house was holy and at the same time always available for needy persons whose hearts were right before God.

The Lord always teaches those who have ears to hear.

His intention is to draw their hearts in affection to Himself. We see Him doing this in scene after scene through Luke's Gospel. We see Him drawing hearts to Himself as He teaches them the lessons of the wheat, the true sabbath, and the showbread. All point to Christ.

"All belong in their true significance to the new system. Each had to be seen as having Christ in view, and not man in the flesh. God's thought has ever been that man should be blessed through Christ and in Christ, and even the power to appropriate this is of God, as we see in the next incident" (Coates, p. 89).

MEMORY (Luke 5:32): "I have not come to call righteous men but sinners to repentance."

Rest in Authority

If we are going to have strength from Christ, strength for a walk that pleases God, we need to appropriate His grace. This is pictured in the man with the shriveled hand. This is the hand of power and authority, but he was helpless; he could not take anything with that hand.

The Pharisees could do nothing for him, and they did not want any one else to help him either. They cared nothing for this man, seeing in him only an occasion to accuse and oppose Christ. There was no room in their system for a man who needed mercy.

It is another sabbath in the synagogue, and the scribes and Pharisees are watching. Their watching is malicious, but it is also **“an unconscious compliment to Jesus. All sorts of people were in the synagogue, and a man with a withered hand. He was the one derelict there, and these malicious watchers knew Jesus well enough to know that this cripple was the man who would appeal to Jesus. He is always after the derelict”** (Morgan, p. 84).

The real fact was that there was no room for God in their system. There He was in their midst—*Immanuel*—and they are laying their plans to murder Him.

“If Judaism was to be preserved, God must be shut out; what a terrible thing to contemplate! It shows how old and unrepairable (sic) the old garment was. It had become a system that looked with suspicion and hatred on the actings of God in mercy” (Coates, p. 89).

The test for the man was obedience. Would he stretch out his hand to obey the word of Christ? When we, too, want power, we have it in obedience to Christ. He asks each of us, and we can ask ourselves, “Am I willing to obey?” Am I willing to yield to the authority of Christ?

DRAW ME: WE WILL RUN AFTER THEE.

Christ would draw me to Himself. What is my response?

In this lesson we have looked at two groups of people who were drawn to the Lord Jesus.

He calls us to *draw near with true hearts*. One group drew near to Him with lips, but with hearts far from Him. It is possible for us to be like that sometimes, too, giving lip service but little heart affection. Let us draw near with true hearts of love for Him.

Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:22).

The Lord calls us to be with Him. He delights in our fellowship with Him, for there He can meet all of our need. There is the place of joy and blessing. We have seen Him in this lesson drawing hearts.

He brings men to a new conviction of sin in His presence, a new confession, and a new commission. He provides for full cleansing from sin, and He empowers for service. He delivers from self-interest and He gives true joy in His presence.

As Lord of the Sabbath, He calls to the weary and heavy laden, the hungry and

MEMORY (Luke 5:32): “I have not come to call righteous men but sinners to repentance.”

the weak. He gives His rest and the power to enter in.

The writer to the Hebrews said, "Let us fear to stop short." Instead, "Let us make haste to enter that rest" (4:1,11).

We reply with the words of Canticles,
"Draw me. We will run after Thee!"

Like Levi, we see our gold grow dim. Our hearts go after *Him*, for who would not follow when they hear *Him* call?

MEMORY (Luke 5:32): "I have not come to call righteous men but sinners to repentance."

VIII. VALUES

Questions on Luke 6:12-7:10

REVIEW: Luke 5:1-6:11

1. What was the practical theme of the section? What blessed your heart from the notes?

READ: Luke 6:12-7:10 and the notes on Lesson 8.

MEMORIZE: Luke 6:45.

2. List the major divisions and identify the practical theme of this section.

3A. How is the fact that the Lord Jesus prayed before He called the disciples an example to us when we must make decisions?

B. What other times did the Lord Jesus pray and what can we learn from this? See Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16; 9:28; John 17; Heb. 7:25.

Mark 1:35—And in the early morning, while it was still dark, He arose and went out and departed to a lonely place, and was praying there.

Luke 5:16—But He Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray.

Luke 9:28—And some eight days after these sayings, it came about that He took along Peter and John and James, and went up to the mountain to pray.

Heb. 7:25—Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God

through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

4. Why must God pray to God?

5. Look up “disciple” and “apostle” in the dictionary and write down their definitions.

6. Why do you think the Lord chose Judas Iscariot even though He knew Judas was a traitor?

7. What of spiritual significance stands out for you in Luke 6:12-19?

8. In Luke 6:20-26, find the following:

A. An outstanding spiritual principle:

B. Four contrasts

Blessed

Woe

Blessed

Woe

Blessed

Woe

Blessed

Woe

MEMORY (Luke 6:45): "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart."

9. Explain Morris's statement regarding Luke 6:20-26 in the text (p. 154, col. 1): **"Together with the following woes these beatitudes make a mockery of the world's values. They exalt what the world despises and reject what the world admires."** Give examples.

10. Can we be rich in this world's goods and poor in spirit? Explain.

11. Explain the difference between Luke 6:27-31 and 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a. Share an incident from your family life when some aspect of 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a was practiced.

1 Cor. 13:4-8a—Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

12. In Luke 6:27-38, what seems to be the basic law?

13. Is Luke 6:30 to be taken literally? Explain. See 1 Corinthians 6:7, Hebrews 10:34, 1 Timothy 5:8, 14.

1 Cor. 6:7—Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?

Heb. 10:34—For you showed sympathy to the prisoners, and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing

that you have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one.

1 Tim. 5:8, 14—But if any one does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever. Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach.

14A. What did the Lord Jesus mean when He said, "Judge not" (Luke 6:37)? Did He mean we are not to judge right and wrong? Support your answer with Scripture.

B. How should Luke 6:37 affect our reactions in our church family? What are we to do when we detect error?

15. What responsibility is put upon each of us (as a parent and/or teacher) in Luke 6:39-40? See also Heb. 13:7.

16. If we find a beam in our own eye, should that forever kill our concern for the mote in someone else's eye? (Luke 6:41-42) Why or why not?

(Personal): Is there anything in Luke 6:20-45 that strikes close to home in your heart? Be specific. If your answer is yes, will this mean a change in your life in some way? How can this change come about? Consider:

John 15:5—I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

MEMORY (Luke 6:45): "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart."

Phil. 2:13—For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

17. In verses 20-45, what evidence do you find that Christ is God? In verses 46-49, what claim is Christ making for His teaching?

18. What was the centurion's philosophy of life and how did this affect his view of the Lord Jesus?

19. How is the story of the centurion's servant (Luke 7:1-10) an illustration of Luke 6:20-49?

20. Does his faith put you to shame in some way? If so, what can you do about it? Think about:

Rom. 4:19-20—And without becoming

weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God.

Heb. 11:6—And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

21. The centurion felt he was not worthy to entertain Christ.. Is this the view that every Christian should have? Is it your view? Explain your view of the authority of Christ in your life.

MEMORY (Luke 6:45): "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart."

VIII. VALUES

(Luke 6:12-7:10)

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ (Philippians 3:7).

6:45b. For a man's words will always express what has been treasured in his heart.

**Riches I heed not, nor man's empty
praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and al-
ways:
Thou and Thou only, first in my
heart,
High King of heaven,
my Treasure Thou art.**

-- Ancient Irish: "Be Thou My Vision"

After a night of communion with heaven, the Lord calls the Twelve and teaches them His ways. He sets before them the value system of heaven, so different from that of earth.

Let us look at His value system, as an approach to this section of Luke:

- I. Priority Value (6:12)**
- II. Valuable Persons (6:13-19)**
- III. Two Value Systems (6:20-26)**
- IV. Comparative Values (6:27-45)**
- V. Practical Values (6:46-7:8)**
- VI. The Evaluation that Counts (7:9-10)**

Christ deals with us here as the heart-searching God, His Word the critic of thought and motive.

For the Word that God speaks is alive and active; it cuts more keenly than any two-edged sword: it strikes through to the place where soul and spirit meet, to the innermost intimacies of a man's being: it exposes the very thoughts and motives of a man's heart (Hebrews 4:12).

This section of Luke warns and corrects so that our lives may be conformed to the image of Christ. It provides new values for our hearts.

I. PRIORITY VALUE (6:12) **Prayer**

6:12. And it was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.

At a time of crisis, hostile forces consolidating against Him, Christ withdraws to a mountain retreat for communion with the Father. Immediately following, He will select the small band of men who will go out as missionaries with the gospel after His death and resurrection.

He must have prayed for each member of the little band, those whom He said the Father had given Him.

An example of His intercessory prayer

MEMORY (Luke 6:45): "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart."

for them is John 17. There He prays that they may know the fullness of His joy, that they may be kept from the evil of the world, that they may be sanctified through His truth.

He prays also for those who will believe on Him through their preaching. He asks the Father that believers demonstrate their living unity in Him, that they be with Christ, beholding His glory, in order that others will know that He was sent by the Father and that they are loved of God. These were His concerns at the end of His ministry; they were certainly His desires in the beginning, as the thrust of His teaching in Luke 6 shows.

Prayer is not simply asking God for guidance. It also involves communion, praise, worship, and intercession.

If the Lord Jesus spent so much time in prayer during His life upon earth, how much more should we, who are so prone to wander from Him, seek His face in prayer.

We are invited to come boldly to the throne of grace, to find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

**Thou art coming to a king,
Large petitions with thee bring;
For His grace and power are such,
None can ever ask too much.**

—John Newton

“Come, My Soul, Thy Suit Prepare,” v. 2

Communion with the Father was the highest priority in the life of the Lord Jesus. What an encouragement it is to remember that He has prayed for you and me.

“Let us not forget the prevailing efficacy of the prayers of Jesus. Whatever

need I may become conscious of, I may be assured that there is not one of those needs that the Lord Jesus has not felt and taken up in intercession for me. How it draws one’s heart to Him!”
(Coates, pp. 77-78).

He has prayed that we might live for His glory and that we might be in the constant joy of His presence. We need to understand more of God’s favor toward us. As we see the Lord in prayer and as we read the prayer of John 17, we learn more of His tender regard for us.

If we get a sense of His heart for us, **“we shall understand that He will not leave us without power to walk for His glory”** (Coates, p. 79).

That was ever the Lord’s concern as He prayed for His own, for you and me.

On our list of priorities, how do we value prayer? How do you value His concern to have us *with Him*?

II. VALUABLE PERSONS (6:13-19)

Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.

But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before him (1Cor. 1:26-28).

Having loved his own which were in the

MEMORY (Luke 6:45): “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.”

world, he loved them unto the end (John 13:1b).

For God so loved the world. . . . (John 3:16)

Every human being is of infinite value to God. He “so loved” each one that God came to die for the sins of all the world. The heart of Christ was moved with compassion for the multitudes who came to Him with their needs. He saw not just a crowd of people, but each individual with a personal need. He was ready to minister to each one. We see this at the end of this section of Luke (vv. 17-19).

From among His followers, He also selected twelve and designated them “apostles” (vv. 13-16).

Every human being is valuable and the object of His love. Each person is not equally valuable as His servant, however. Value in service is measured by personal response to His word. This is what we see in the call and response of the apostles.

As we consider the call of the apostles, we can learn things that will make us more valuable bondservants of Christ.

Apostles and Missionaries (vv. 13-16)

6:13. And when day came, He called His disciples to Him; and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles:

14. Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew;

15. Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot;

16. Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

Mark gives us additional information about the call of the Twelve. He says that Christ first called them “to be with him and to be sent out to preach” (3:14).

That is the proper order for us, too. We need first to be with Him, to know Him, before we can effectively speak about Him. How can we be with Him today? By spending time getting to know Him in His Word and by obeying that Word.

The twelve apostles represent a unique position in the church. It is upon their preaching that the church was founded (Ephesians 2:20; Revelation 21:14).

They are “apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 17). Peter calls them “your apostles” (2 Peter 3:2).

They were chosen to be with Christ, to speak His Word with power, and to suffer with Him as “apostles of the Lamb” (Revelation 21:14).

We look at the names of the 12 apostles. Among them is a traitor. There is not an aristocrat among them. They are fishermen and what not.

“The three most prominent (are) frequently made so, it seems, by their lack of understanding and appreciation of Christ” (Grant, pp. 373-74).

Here they are then, twelve men chosen from among the wide circle of disciples:

1. **Simon Peter**, son of Jonas, writer of two epistles, impetuous, devoted.

“He was a man of contradictions,

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which is to say, that like all true believers, he had two natures. Sometimes we see the flesh in activity, and more often, the spirit. Though he denied his Lord on the night of the betrayal and mock trial before Caiaphas, he became valiant for the truth after the Pentecostal enduement, and eventually, in old age, about A.D. 69 or 70, sealed his testimony by a martyr's death" (Ironsides, p. 188).

2. **Andrew**, brother of Peter, great personal worker, who was always leading people to the Lord Jesus, including his brother Peter. He always served in the background, a helpful, humble man. According to tradition, he died a martyr's death on a cross (Matthew. 4:18; Mark 1:29; 13:3; John 1:40; 6:8; 12:22; Acts 1:13).

And walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen (Matthew 4:18).

And immediately after they had come out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John (Mark 1:29).

And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him privately (Mark 13:3).

One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother (John 1:40).

One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, "There is a lad here . . ." (John 6:8-9a).

Philip came and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip came, and they told Jesus (John 12:22).

And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, that is, Peter and John and James and Andrew . . . (Acts 1:13).

3. **James**, son of Zebedee, a fisherman like Andrew and Peter. He was designated by Jesus with his brother John "Boanerges—Sons of Thunder."

"This suggests that they were stormy, energetic young men" (Ironsides, p. 188).

He was the first to be put to death for the sake of Christ, "slain with the sword" by order of Herod Agrippa I. (Matthew 4:21; 10:2; 17:1; 26:36-37; Mark 1:19; 3:16-17; 9:2; 14:33; Acts 12:2).

And going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the Son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them (Matthew 4:21).

Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother (Matthew 10:2).

And six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and brought them up to a high mountain by themselves (Matthew 17:1).

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disci-

MEMORY (Luke 6:45): "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart."

ples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed (Matthew 26:36-37).

And going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were also in the boat mending the nets (Mark 1:19).

And He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter), and James, the son of Zebedee . . . (Mark 3:16-17).

And six days later, Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John, and brought them up to a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them (Mark 9:2).

And He took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled (Mark 14:33).

And he had James the brother of John put to death with a sword (Acts 12:2).

4. **John**, son of Zebedee, writer of a gospel, three epistles, Revelation. He suffered much for Christ but died a natural death at Ephesus, after living past ninety years of age.

5. **Philip**, of Bethsaida, close friend of Nathaniel. (He should not be confused with the Philip, evangelist of Acts.) (John 1:43; 12:22; 14:8; Matthew 10:2-3; Mark 3:18.)

The next day He purposed to go forth into Galilee, and He found Philip, and Jesus said to him, "Follow Me" (John 1:43).

Philip came and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip came, and they told Jesus (John 12:22).

Philip said to Him, "Lord show us the Father, and it is enough for us" (John 14:8).

Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: . . . Philip and Bartholomew" (Matthew 10:2-3).

And He appointed the twelve . . . Philip (Mark 3:14, 18).

6. **Nathanael Bartholomew** (John 1:46; 21:2; Matthew 10:2-3; Mark 3:16-18; Acts 1:13). He is mentioned only in the listings of the apostles, as "Bartholomew," but he is generally identified with the Nathaniel of John's Gospel.

And Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46).

There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee (John 21:2).

"Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: . . . Bartholomew" (Matthew 10:2-3).

And He appointed the twelve . . . Bartholomew (Mark 3:16-18).

And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying; that is, Peter . . . and . . . Bartholomew (Acts 1:13).

7. **Matthew Levi**, tax collector, writer of first Gospel. He worked under Rome in an office in Capernaum.

There he left all to follow Christ, "and

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probably devoted his wealth to the cause in which he was enlisted” (Ironside, p. 189). (Matthew 9:9; 10:2-3; Mark 2:14)

And as Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man, called Matthew, sitting in the tax office; and He said to him, “Follow Me!” And he rose, and followed Him (Matthew 9:9).

Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: Matthew the tax-gatherer (Matthew 10:2-3).

And as He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting in the tax office, and He said to him, “Follow Me!” And he rose and followed Him (Mark 2:14).

8. **Thomas**, also called Didymus, which means “twin.”

“Because of his attitude following the resurrection, we often call Thomas, ‘the Doubter.’ But he was more than that. He came to conclusions slowly, but he was faithful and devoted and was ready to go to Judea with Jesus and die with Him if necessary. He seems to have carried the gospel to India. To this day, there is a church of many members in that land, who call themselves Christians of Saint (or, holy) Thomas” (Ironside, p. 189).

(Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:16, 18; John 11:16; 20:24; Acts 1:13)

Now the names of the twelve apostles are these . . . Thomas (Matthew 10:3).

And He appointed the twelve . . . Thomas (Mark 3:16,18).

Thomas therefore, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with Him” (John 11:16).

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came (John 20:24).

And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying; that is Peter . . . and Thomas (Acts 1:13).

9. **James**, son of Alphaeus. **“Thus he would be the same as ‘James the Less’ or rather, ‘the Little,’ a son of Mary, the sister-in-law of the Virgin-Mother”** (Edersheim, p. 521 footnote).

We do not know very much for sure about this James. He may have been the James who wrote the epistle which bears that name and the James who was prominent in the church of Jerusalem (or that James may have been the Lord’s half-brother, James). (Matthew 10:2-3; Mark 3:16, 18; 15:40; Acts 1:13).

Now the names of the twelve apostles are these . . . James the son of Alphaeus (Matthew 10:2-3).

And He appointed the twelve . . . James the son of Alphaeus (Mark 3:16, 18).

And there were also some women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less (Mark 15:40).

And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying; that is, Peter and . . . James the son of Alphaeus (Acts 1:13).

MEMORY (Luke 6:45): “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.”

10. **Simon Zelotes** or Cananaean (not Canaanite), **“both terms indicating his original connection with the Galilean Zealot party, the Zealots for the Law”** (Edersheim, p. 522).

He seems to be, as pointed out by Hege-sippus, **“the son of Clopas, and brother of James, and of Judas Lebbaeus. These three were, in a sense, cousins of Christ, since, according to Hegesippus, Clopas was the brother of Joseph, while the sons of Zebedee were real cousins, their mother Salome being a sister of the Virgin”** (Edersheim, p. 522).

He was probably **“formerly a member of a secret order that had as its object the overthrow of the Roman government and the deliverance of the Jews from that authority. He turned from this to Christ as the true Deliverer of Israel”** (Ironsides, p. 189). (Matthew 10:4; Mark 3:18; Acts 1:13)

Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: . . . and Simon the Cananaean (Matthew 10:2, 4).

And He appointed the twelve: . . . and Simon the Cananaean (Mark 3:16,18).

And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying; that is Peter . . . and Simon the Zealot (Acts 1:13).

11. **Judas**, the son or brother of James, probably the writer of the epistle of Jude. Scholars believe he was Lebbaeus, surnamed Thaddaeus (Matthew 10:2-3; Mark 3:16-18).

Now the names of the twelve apostles are these:: Thaddaeus (Matthew 10:2-3).

And He appointed the twelve: . . . and Thaddaeus (Mark 3:16, 18).

12. **Judas Iscariot**, “a man of Kerioth,” a town in Judah, the only one of the twelve not a Galilean. He is called by the Lord Jesus “the son of perdition” (John 17:12). He is always mentioned last in the listings of the apostles. The Lord also says, “Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?” (John 6:70). Three years of being with Christ failed to move the heart of this man to Christ. Outwardly he was a follower of the Lord, but it was a dishonest profession. After betraying the Lord, he committed suicide; and Matthias was chosen to take his place as the twelfth apostle (Acts 1:15-26).

These twelve occupy a unique place, as we have seen, in the history of the church. But in a sense we are all in the apostolic succession (Ephesians 4:11-13), for apostle can be spelled with a small “a.”

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13).

“We all know an apostle means a messenger; but there is a value in the word which we may miss. The Greek word *apostello* is formed of two words:

MEMORY (Luke 6:45): “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.”

apo, apart; stello, set fast. The first meaning of apostello is one set apart. The second meaning, the meaning it gained in use, is delegated messenger, representative. The word came to indicate ministration, service; but its root significance is ‘set apart’” (Morgan, pp. 88-89).

Someone has said that every human being on earth is either a missionary or a mission field. Every Christian is meant to be a missionary, one sent to tell of the Lord. This is what apostleship is all about. We are called first to be set apart; then we are to tell others. We are first to be with Him. Then we are to go.

If we remember the lessons of apostleship, we can be valuable servants of Christ.

A MULTITUDE OF VALUABLE PERSONS (vv. 17-19)

6:17. And He descended with them, and stood on a level place; and there was a great multitude of His disciples, and a great throng of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon,

18. who had come to hear Him, and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were being cured.

19. And all the multitude were trying to touch Him, for power was coming from Him and healing them all.

The Good Shepherd will send His missionaries out for the lost sheep of this world. Now He begins the training of His

under-shepherds. He trains them by example (6:17-19) and by word (6:20-49).

As He descends to a plateau partway down the mountain, the crowds hike up to meet Him, coming from near and far in response to reports of His fame. Many are not committed to Him as yet, but they come with their needs.

The Lord never sees just the crowd. He looks at each individual, and His heart is moved with compassion as they come to Him one by one to touch Him and to receive deliverance and healing.

The disciples learn that without Him they can do nothing (John 15:5).

“He is all of wisdom to them, all of power. They, like the crowd that swarm to Him from the regions round, are joined to Him by that absolute need of Him, their entire dependence on Him. A Judas even must serve Him. How we see the Christianity that is to spring out of this! The whole of Christianity is Christ: ‘Christ is all, and in all’” (Colossians 3:11) (Grant, p. 374).

Thus they are beginning to learn that only as vessels are they valuable because of the treasure they can contain:

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us (1 Corinthians 4:7).

They are beginning to learn from Christ the lessons of service.

Now He will speak to them, showing them a new kind of man—the kind of man He wants them to be—and giving them a

MEMORY (Luke 6:45): "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart."

new set of values, so different from the value system of the world.

III. TWO VALUE SYSTEMS (6:20-26)

Christ now sets before us two opposing systems of value—one belonging to the Kingdom of God and one pertaining to the kingdoms of this world.

The first He characterizes with the word “bless” and the second by the word “woe.” He is speaking to His disciples, but so that the crowd can listen (6:20). He is contrasting the system which produces the true prophet (v. 23) with that which produces the false prophet (v. 26).

One system is summed up under four “beatitudes” and the other is summed up under four “woes.”

“Together with the following woes these beatitudes make a mockery of the world’s values. They exalt what the world despises and reject what the world admires” (Morris, p. 126).

“Observe the perfect balance of all this. Blessed, woe; poverty, riches; hunger, repletion; mourning, laughter; persecution, popularity” (Morgan, p. 91).

Poverty/Riches (vv. 20, 24)

6:20. *And turning His gaze on His disciples, He began to say, “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.*

24. *But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full.”*

Riches in this world so often mean self-confidence and independence of God.

The rich receive their “consolation” in the perishing system of worldly things.

“Do we long to be such as He can admire (Psalm 16:3)? Then we must be content to be poor in all that the world esteems valuable. . . . How can any lover of God find consolation in things in which God has no place?” (Coates, p. 92).

“The poor in spirit are the men and the women who are supremely conscious of their own poverty, of their own unworthiness, who are mastered by a great humility” (Morgan, p. 90).

We get the idea of this kind of humility in the Lord’s use of “meekness.” He said, *“I am meek and lowly”* (Matthew 11:29). It is the attitude which puts the good of others before that of oneself.

“The man who is poor in spirit in his own self-consciousness, is mighty in spirit when he stands in front of men to speak for God” (Morgan, p. 90).

*Hunger/Repletion—Mourning/Laughter
(vv. 21-26)*

6:21. *“Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.*

22. *Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and heap insults upon you, and spurn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man.*

23. *Be glad in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets.*

MEMORY (Luke 6:45): “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.”

25. *Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.*

26. *Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for in the same way their fathers used to treat the false prophets."*

Inevitably, when one leads a holy life, he will collide and conflict with the ungodly.

"It is a danger when all men speak well of you, for this can scarcely happen apart from some sacrifice of principle. There is, it is true, a sense in which being 'well thought of by outsiders' (1 Timothy 3:7) is important. But that is different from universal popularity. It is the false prophets who win wide acclaim (cf. Jeremiah 5:31). A true prophet is too uncomfortable to be popular" (Morris, p. 128).

The false prophet has a system of values characterized by satisfaction with the present; a lack of concern for the sorrows of earth caused by sin; a spirit of compromise, which refuses to bear the reproach of Christ.

Which do we value more—the things of time or things of eternity—the reproach of Christ or the pleasures of sin for a season? (Hebrews 11:25-26).

IV. COMPARATIVE VALUES (6:27-45)

"The Lord has just spoken woe to those whose ears are attuned to the transient pleasures of sin, and now He turns to those who are spiritually attentive. To

both groups, however, His is an appeal of grace and compassion. 'Woe' in the original language is more like the English 'Alas' or 'How terrible.'

"It is an expression of regret and compassion, not a threat" (Morris, p. 127).

Now He proposes a new principle of conduct for those who have hearts to obey Him.

Do we have hearing ears? Then we must have hearts that are willing to obey His words. If we would know how we ought to feel and act toward others, we should often study these verses that follow. Let them be written in letters of gold in our hearts. If we follow these words, it will be plain to all around us that we are children of the Most High (v. 34).

The Absolute Standard—His love (6:27-31)

6:27. *"But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,*

28. *bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.*

29. *Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either.*

30. *Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back.*

31. *And just as you want men to treat you, treat them in the same way."*

Here everything is based upon the Law of Love. This is the heart of His message

MEMORY (Luke 6:45): "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart."

to those who have hearing ears, for it is the very heart of Christ. It is the revelation of Christ in all of the New Testament. It is what is to govern the lives of His own, as Paul writes to the Ephesians:

Be ye, therefore, followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor (Eph. 5:1-2).

“There are several words for love in Greek. Jesus was not asking for *storge*, natural affection, nor for *eros*, romantic love, nor for *philia*, the love of friendship. He was speaking of *agape*, which means love even of the unworthy, love which is not drawn out by merit in the beloved but which proceeds from the fact that the lover chooses to be a loving person” (Morris, p. 128-29).

This standard seems to be impossibly high, for it is God’s own love with which He loves us. But God never gives us a command without providing the power with which to obey. This power is the Holy Spirit living within the believer, and the fruit of such life is *agape* love (Galatians 5:22). Therefore we *can* put away all malice. We *can* return good for evil and blessing for cursing. We *can* love our enemies and do good to those who hate us, taking the trouble to be kind and courteous.

Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in in-

iquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a).

We are to turn the other cheek, literally the other side of the jaw. Here the Lord forbids any kind of unforgiving, revengeful spirit, a spirit which all too quickly can rear its head in the Christian home. We’re the sunshine of the office out where others see us, but too often we’re the shadow of the home. We resent injuries. We’re quick to take offence and to display a quarrelsome and contentious disposition. We justify asserting our rights. We defend ourselves by blaming others. All, all are contrary to the mind of Christ. His mind was expressed at the cross, “*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do*” (Luke 23:34). So we are to pray for those who harm us. Prayer is the resource of faith in all of this.

“None are so vicious or depraved but what there is a possibility that they may be reached and softened by means of the throne of God. We reach that throne by prayer. Blessing those who curse us, we intercede with God on their behalf” (Ironsides, p. 202).

We are to do this no matter how others respond.

Thus we are to love and do good without the hope of anything in return. It is the love that gives and gives and gives again. This is expressed in the continuous tense of the word *give* in v. 30. It lies behind the words about the coat (outer garment) and the shirt (tunic, inner garment). We must

MEMORY (Luke 6:45): “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.”

not react in anger against the one who takes the coat, but instead let him have the shirt as well. We can for the sake of Christ suffer ourselves to be defrauded. "Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?" (1 Corinthians 6:7). It is this spirit that the writer commends in the Hebrew Christians: You "joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions" (Hebrews 10:34).

"Observe it is not said that we are to give what every man asks. To do so would often mean to work injustice on others, as for the head of a family to give to beggars what his own household, for whom he is responsible to care (1 Timothy 5:8), might sorely need. There are times when it is better to give faithful advice than to bestow alms" (Ironside, p. 203).

"If Christians took this one [example in v. 30] absolutely literally, there would soon be a class of saintly paupers, owning nothing, and another of prosperous idlers and thieves. It is not this that Jesus is seeking, but a readiness among His followers to give and give and give. The Christian should never refrain from giving out of a love for his possessions. Love must be ready to be deprived of everything if need be. . . . Jesus is talking about the habitual attitude, not the occasional generous impulse" (Morris, p. 130).

The Golden Rule of love (v. 31) is often compared and contrasted with similar negative expressions in Jewish and other cul-

tures, expressions which are pre-Christian. Confucius, for example, told his disciples not to do to others what they would not have done to themselves (*Analects*).

The Jew Hillel said, **"What is hateful to thee, do not to another. This is the whole Law; all else is only its explanation"** (Shabbath, really a quotation from Tob. 4:15, Edersheim, p. 535).

The negative is far below the Lord's injunction to lavish upon others the good we ourselves desire.

"And, be it observed, the Lord does not put self-love as the principle of our conduct, but only as its real test" (Edersheim, p. 535).

In the Christian's set of values, the absolute standard by which all else is measured is God's own self-sacrificing love.

The Contrasting Standard of the World
(vv. 32-34)

6:32. *"And if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.*

33. *And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same thing.*

34. *And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, in order to receive back the same amount."*

"What's in it for me?" This is the way the world looks at things. Take care of

MEMORY (Luke 6:45): "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart."

Number One first—myself! Then practice the virtue of repaying those who have done favors for me: Love those who love me. Do something good for someone who has helped me. Lend to others in order to get money back on a loan for *myself* some time.

This is not the mind of Christ. This is just what appears to be common sense or the normal reaction. The Lord's standard is far above this, for even when we have done what He has commanded, we are not to congratulate ourselves; instead we are to say in humility, "*We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty*" (Luke 17:10). Furthermore, we should ask if we have done anything more than the average unbeliever would do.

Here the Lord underscores this with three penetrating questions, concluding each time with "*What credit is that to you,*" meaning, "*What grace have you?*" (vv. 32-34).

"It is grace which outstrips every demand of mere righteousness, and of mere justice, and of mere equity. That is what He is looking for in His own, and especially in His prophets" (Morgan, p. 92).

*Back to the Highest Value—God's own
love and mercy
(vv. 35-36)*

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

36. *Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*"

Our own experience has proved God's love. This is how He has acted towards us. When we hated Him, He loved us. When we were unthankful and wicked, He steadfastly did us good and was kind to us. This is the grade which He has shown us, and it is only righteous that we should show this same grace toward others, for God will then have children like Himself. This is His purpose—to have us conformed to the image of Christ.

35. *And you shall be the children of the Highest (KJV).*

This is what Christ is supremely—*Son of the Highest (1:32)*. "*The Highest*" or "*Most High God*" is the title of God that Luke uses more than any other New Testament writer. It seems to refer to the way in which God is above all the evil of men. He is so great and so high that the evil of men does not hinder Him; He moves on in the height of His own blessed way of grace and goodness because of what He is.

"He is so high that He is far above the unthankfulness and wickedness of men; He is good to them in spite of what they are" (Coates, p. 92).

God has in mind that His disciples should be like him, *children of the Highest*. This is having the mind of Christ (Phil. 2), and He is *the most High*.

Because as He is, so are we in this world!
(1 John 4:17b).

"He loved His enemies. He did good to them that hated Him.

MEMORY (Luke 6:45): "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart."

He blessed them that cursed Him. He prayed for those that spitefully used Him.

When they smote Him on the cheek, He turned the other.

When they tore away His coat and gambled for it, He made no protest.

The Master is the Revelation and the Interpretation of His own law.

I cannot live there, save in the measure in which my life is His life, interpreted to me, realized within me, manifested through me, by the ministry of the Holy Spirit” (Morgan, p. 92).

6:35 And your reward shall be great.

Because of our tendency to be motivated by sinful self-interest, we need to be careful here. We all know how easily the spirit of self-seeking intrudes even into the most sacred areas of the Lord’s work—“into the most sacred themes and places.”

Yet rewards are **“not intended to be denied or disregarded; for that which God gives it cannot but be of God, and it should have place in our thoughts and in our hearts. . . . (Yet) the most precious truths can be distorted by the mirror that reflects them. . . . How jealous should we be of ourselves, lest we should pervert what we imagine we but receive, and turn our blessing into loss and shame!”** (Grant, p. 201).

“He gains who for Christ’s sake loses; but not for gain’s sake” (Grant, p. 375).

But what things were gain to me,

those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may win Christ. . . . (Phil. 3:7-8).

And this is the reward, as Abram discovered: “I am thy shield, and thy exceedingly great reward,” said the Lord (Genesis 15:1-2).

“Reward must be understood in terms of communion with God and opportunity for further service” (Morris, p. 131).

It is to receive the crowns, but only that these may be laid at His feet (Revelation 4:10). The reward is to hear Him say, *“Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of your Lord”* (Matthew 25:21). The reward of the lover is to bring pleasure to the heart of the Beloved. Our reward is that He *“see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied”* (Isaiah 53:11a).

With His glory, not our own, before us, we are thus being transformed into His likeness—even as by the Lord the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18). His transforming work is best done as we are not aware of it; for here again the flesh can intrude with a form of spiritual pride. As He does the work of making us like His Son, He works all circumstances together for good (Romans 8:28-29), even that the wrath of man will praise Him (Psalm 76:10).

Thus the Lord turns opposition and all other kinds of suffering in the life of the true bondservant to blessing. Men may mean it to us for evil, but God turns it to good (Genesis 50:20). Then we shall fi-

MEMORY (Luke 6:45): “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.”

nally be what we are—*children of the Highest*. This, too, will be our reward. With the Psalmist, I can say,

As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness (Psalm 17:15).

Such reward is of highest value to God. Having this goal will transform anyone's set of values. All will be for the glory of God.

Value Judgments
(6:37-42)

6:37. *“And do not pass judgment and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you shall not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned.*

38. *Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For whatever measure you deal out to others, it will be dealt to you in return.”*

39. *And He also spoke a parable to them: “A blind man cannot guide a blind man, can he? Will they not both fall into a pit?”*

40. *A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher.*

41. *And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?*

42. *Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the*

speck that is in your brother's eye.”

The Word of Christ continues to probe deeply into the hearts of His hearers, dissecting out motives connected in our reactions to people.

Here again, these must all be brought into line with the absolute standard—the character of God Himself.

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him (Colossians 3:17).

Our judgments of people and our dealings with them will be guided by the rule of His love; this is what Paul is saying in Colossians 3, and he is thereby summarizing the Lord's teaching here in Luke.

The Lord has a warning here for teachers and followers, too. He gives this in the two parables about the beam and the mote and the blind leading the blind. The person with a plank in his own eye cannot see to remove the speck of sawdust in the eye of another. Neither can the blind lead the blind.

We are to *judge not*. Here the Lord is not prohibiting the administration of justice in courts of law. Neither is He saying that we are not to discern between right and wrong doctrines. What He is saying is that we have no right to judge people's motives. He who can plumb the depths of every heart assesses innocence and guilt.

He knows the opportunities, privileges, privations and limitations of everyone who has lived. He has the proof that legally enables Him to condemn those who have rejected His salvation. According to the light of the Word of God and the Holy

MEMORY (Luke 6:45): "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart."

Spirit's directing us into all truth, we do have the right to "*distinguish things that differ*" (*Philippians 1:10*).

We are to discern error, with the hope of seeing it corrected in others; but it is not ours to judge and condemn others. That is God's right only. Ours is to forgive those who grieve us, not to censor or get even. If we proceed to censor others in this judgmental way, we invite the same criticism of God upon us.

"It is the man with the forgiving attitude who is forgiven. This is not salvation by merit; rather the thought is that the true disciple is not judgmental. When God accepts a man, God's grace changes him. A forgiving spirit is evidence that the man has been forgiven" (Morris, p. 132).

When we treat people in a forgiving, merciful manner, they tend to respond in kind. Here Christ refers to a proverb about receiving *good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over*.

"The metaphor is from measuring out grain in such a way as to ensure that full volume is given.

Your lap is really your 'bosom' and refers to a fold in the outer garment made as it hung over the girdle. It was used as a kind of pocket" (Morris, p. 132).

He is saying that we receive in kind; we receive what we give.

How does this affect leadership and discipleship? Here the "blind" teachers are no doubt the Pharisees and Sadducees of Judaism.

But the same principle holds today. The teacher we follow has a molding influence upon our lives. We are responsible not to surrender ourselves to the teacher of error. And when we detect error, we must be careful first to judge ourselves.

"Evil must first be judged within before it can be judged outside; and this will give tenderness and compassion, as well as clear sightedness. Judging without self-judgment is but hypocrisy" (Grant, p. 376).

"It is important to take the log out of our own eye. It is not important that we concern ourselves with the speck in our brother's. And it is impossible for us to put our brother right before we have dealt with our own shortcoming. We cannot see clearly enough for the job" (Morris, p. 134).

So here again, our sense of values affects all of our judgments. Christ would have us judge everything in the light of His glory, everything that would dim spiritual vision.

Intrinsic Values (6:43-44)

6:43. *"For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit; nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit.*

44. *For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush."*

The Lord is after fruit (John 15), and the kind of tree determines the kind of

MEMORY (Luke 6:45): "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart."

fruit. One cannot change the intrinsic nature of the tree. The thorn tree cannot produce figs, and the bramble bush does not give grapes.

We need, then, in looking at ourselves to judge the tree as well as the fruit. We need to see ourselves—what we are by nature in ourselves—as a corrupt tree bearing corrupt fruit. The axe should be laid to the root of the tree. The basic trouble within is not what we do but what we are—that is the root.

Here Christ would strike through profession where there is no reality. Intrinsic values are all laid bare before Him.

The Treasure of the Heart (6:45):

What do we really value?

6:45. *“The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.”*

Our words are the evidence of the state of our hearts, as surely as the taste of the water is an evidence of the state of the spring. *“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”* The lips only utter what the mind conceives. Our words will form one subject of inquiry at the day of judgment. We shall have to give account of our sayings, as well as our doings. Truly these are very solemn considerations. If there were no other text in the Bible, this passage ought to convince us that we are all guilty before God and need a righteousness better than our own, even the righteousness of Christ (Philippians 3:9).

“Let us be humble as we read this passage, in the recollection of time past. How many idle, foolish, vain, light, frivolous, sinful, and unprofitable things we have all said! How many words we have used, which, like thistle-down, have flown far and wide, and sown mischief in the hearts of others that will never die! How often when we have met our friends, ‘our conversation,’ to use an old saint’s expression, ‘has only made work for repentance.’

“There is deep truth in the remark of Burkitt, ‘A profane scoff or atheistical jest may stick in the minds of those that hear it, after the tongue that spake it is dead. A word spoken is physically transient, but morally permanent.’

“‘Death and life,’ says Solomon, ‘are in the power of the tongue’ (Proverbs 18:21).

“Let us be watchful as we read this passage about words, when we look forward to our days yet to come. Let us resolve, by God’s grace, to be more careful over our tongues, and more particular about our use of them. Let us pray daily that our ‘speech may be always with grace’ (Colossians 4:6).

“Let us say every morning with holy David, ‘I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not in my tongue.’ Let us cry with him to the Strong for strength, and say, ‘Set a watch over my mouth, and keep the door of my lips.’ Well indeed might James say, ‘If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man’” (Psalms 39:1; 141:8; James 3:2) (Ryle).

What we value in our hearts comes out through our lips. Do we value *Christ*?

MEMORY (Luke 6:45): “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.”

V. PRACTICAL VALUES (6:46-7:8)

Hearers and Doers Evaluated (6:46-47)

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

47. *Everyone who comes to Me, and hears My words, and acts upon them, I will show you whom he is like."*

Now the Lord is speaking not so much to the Twelve, but to the crowd. Not everyone who says, "Lord, Lord" is a true servant. Peter's "Not so, Lord!" was a contradiction in terms.

To profess to believe God's Word and to live in disobedience to it is hypocrisy. There is no use saying "Lord" unless we confirm it with our lives.

"Not that the best life will justify before God, or save in the day when all that can be will be shaken. But it is evidence, nevertheless, that Christ is the foundation of the soul" (Grant, p. 376).

All will be revealed at His coming, when hearers and doers will be evaluated in the light of glory.

Meanwhile, we are to show our faith by our words and our works. Christ is again showing that what we value in our hearts will eventually come out in practical expression.

He would have inner and outer in conformity to His own character.

Building Appraisals (6:48-49)

6:48. *He is like a man building a house,*

who dug deep and laid a foundation upon the rock; and when a flood arose, the river burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built.

49. *but the one who has heard, and has not acted accordingly, is like a man who built a house upon the ground without any foundation; and the river burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great.*

Such a person who hears the Word of Christ and builds his life upon it is like a builder digging the foundation of his house into solid rock. The storm breaks over it, and the house stands.

"What are the conditions? He that cometh, that is surrender; he that heareth, that is discipleship; he that obeyeth, that is obedience" (Morgan).

What about the one who hears *and does not act?*

He is like a man building upon sand. The wind comes, and the ruin is great. What a tragedy, such an unnecessary tragedy this one makes of his life.

We must take heed how and where we build. The one who stakes his life upon the Word of God will stand the test of the Appraiser.

Evaluation of a Soldier (7:1-8)

7:1. *When He had completed all His discourse in the hearing of the people, He went to Capernaum.*

2. *And a certain centurion's slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die.*

MEMORY (Luke 6:45): "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart."

3. *And when he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders asking Him to come and save the life of his slave.*

4. *And when they had come to Jesus, they earnestly entreated Him, saying, "He is worthy for You to grant this to him;*

5. *for he loves our nation, and it was he who built us our synagogue."*

6. *Now Jesus started on His way with them; and when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not fit for You to come under my roof;*

7. *for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed.*

8. *For indeed, I am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes; and to another, 'Come!' and he comes; and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."*

After His discourse in Luke 6, Christ enters the city of Capernaum. Both Matthew and Luke record the next event, but Luke gives more details.

For example, Matthew says only that this Roman officer came to Jesus. Luke adds that he sent Jewish representatives. Matthew does not mean, therefore, that he necessarily came in person, though he might have done so at some point along the way.

We know from Luke, however, that he approached the Lord through representatives at least twice.

What Luke shows us now is a living example of the teaching just given. The centurion speaks and acts upon the set of

values which Christ commends. This Gentile is an encouragement to us to do the same.

We are looking at practical values. The Romans were a notably practical people. A centurion was chosen for the ability to act upon principle. The historian Polybius describes a centurion's qualifications.

"They must not be so much 'seekers after danger as men who can command, steady in action, and reliable; they ought not to be over anxious to rush into the fight; but when hard pressed they must be ready to hold their ground and die at their posts'" (quoted in Morris, p. 136).

As for his rank, it probably compares with that of an army captain in today's military.

We are interested in evaluations, too, and in the passage we find three opinions of this man. We look at the first two.

The first is the opinion of the town of Jews. They expressed this when they came to ask Jesus to heal the esteemed slave of the centurion: "He is worthy for You to grant this to him; for he loves our nation, and it was he who built us our synagogue" (7:4-5).

This is a remarkable appraisal of Jews for a Gentile and a member of their oppressor nation at that. They said that he was worthy.

Now look at the centurion's opinion of himself.

7:6 *"Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not fit for You to come under my roof;*

MEMORY (Luke 6:45): "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart."

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7. for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed.”

This is the man’s opinion of himself—not worthy for Christ to be entertained by him.

How did he view himself? Humbly. He said, *“I am a man under authority,”* though he could have said, *“I am a man of authority,”* for he exercised authority in the Roman system.

As a man who recognizes authority, now he sets himself under the authority of Christ, and we have the third opinion of the man—the appraisal that really counts.

VI. THE EVALUATION THAT COUNTS (7:9-10)

7:9. And when Jesus heard this, He marvelled at him, and turned and said to the

multitude that was following Him, “I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith.”

10. And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.

Only twice are we told that the Lord Jesus marveled at something—here at the faith of the centurion and in Nazareth at their unbelief (Mark 6:6).

“The statement that He marvelled does not mean that He was ignorant, but rather that He had clear comprehension of that man’s faith, of the majesty of it, of the sweep of it, of the grasp of it, of the marvel of it” (Morgan, p. 95).

The Lord marveled twice—once at belief, once at unbelief.

What does He marvel at in my life?

MEMORY (Luke 6:45): “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.”

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IX. MARKS OF WISDOM'S CHILDREN

Questions on Luke 7:11-8:3

REVIEW: Luke 6:12-7:10 by reading the passage again and going over the notes of Lesson 8.

Write down anything that impressed your heart from Lesson 8.

Think about Luke 6:45 as a key to Luke 6:12-7:10—

"The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart."

Restate the main idea of this verse in your own words.

Write down main topics of your conversation yesterday and today. Which of these topics might indicate the real treasures of your heart? If you wish, share with your group anything that you think would be helpful as you have considered these things. Pray for one another.

MEMORY: Review Luke 19:10; 24:19; 2:49; 3:21-22; 4:14; 5:32; 6:45.

LEARN: Luke 7:22-23: *And He answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the*

gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me."

READ: Luke 7:11-8:3

1. List the main events of this section.
2. Write down several statements in this section—phrases which you consider to be very significant.

I. THE MARK OF A LIFE

READ: Luke 7:11-17

DO QUESTIONS: 3-6

READ: Pages 172-176?

3. How do these two events in Luke 7:11-17 illustrate Simon's prophecy of Luke 2:32—"A light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel"?
4. In these two incidents, what do you notice about the feelings of the Lord Jesus?
What seems to move His heart?
5. As you think about this, how are you affected? Are you encouraged to change in some way? Are you comforted? Motivated to do something? Share, if you wish.
6. Consider these two incidents as illustrations of spiritual truths. What truths might be illustrated here? Consider verses like:
1 Peter 2:9-10—"But you are A CHOSEN

MEMORY (Luke 7:22-23): And He answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: THE BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, THE POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me."

RACE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY."

Hebrews 11:1, 6—"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

Romans 6:4—"Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life."

Ephesians 2:4-7—"But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."

II. THE MARK OF TRUST

READ: Luke 7:18-35

DO QUESTIONS: 7-15

READ: Pages 176-179

STUDY: Luke 7:11-23 (text of this chapter); 3:13-17; Isa. 40:1-5; 61:1-11; Isa. 8:14-15; 28:16; Rom. 9:32-33; 2 Cor. 1:23; 3:11; Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Pet. 2:4-5, 8; Luke 4:17-21. (See below.)

Luke 3:13-17—And He said to them, "Collect no more than what you have been ordered to." And some soldiers were questioning him, saying, "And what about us, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages." Now while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he might be the Christ, John answered and said to them all, "As for me, I baptize you with water; but He who is mightier than I is coming and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He Himself will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire. "And His winnowing fork is in His hand to clean out His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Isaiah 40:1-5—"Comfort, O comfort My people," says your God. "Speak kindly to Jerusalem; and call out to her, that her warfare has ended, that her iniquity has been removed, that she has received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins." A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. Let every valley be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; and let the rough ground become a plain, and the rugged terrain a broad valley; Then the

MEMORY (Luke 7:22-23): And He answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: THE BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, THE POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me."

glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Isaiah 61:1-11—The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and freedom to prisoners; To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, To grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.

Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, they will raise up the former devastations, and they will repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations. And strangers will stand and pasture your flocks, and foreigners will be your farmers and your vinedressers. But you will be called the priests of the LORD; you will be spoken of as ministers of our God, you will eat the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast. Instead of your shame you will have a double portion, and instead of humiliation they will shout for joy over their portion.

Therefore they will possess a double portion in their land, everlasting joy will be theirs. For I, the LORD, love justice, I hate robbery in the burnt offering; and I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. Then their offspring will be

known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples. All who see them will recognize them because they are the offspring whom the LORD has blessed. I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, my soul will exult in my God; for He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

For as the earth brings forth its sprouts and as a garden causes the things sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

Isaiah 8:14-15—Then He shall become a sanctuary, but to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, and a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. "And many will stumble over them, then they will fall and be broken; they will even be snared and caught.

Isaiah 28:16—Therefore thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed."

Romans 9:32-33—Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, just as it is written, "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and he who believes in Him will not be disappointed."

1 Corinthians 1:23—But we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness.

MEMORY (Luke 7:22-23): And He answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: THE BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, THE POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me."

1 Corinthians 3:11—For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:20-22—Having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

1 Peter 2:4-8—And coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected by men, but choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For this is contained in Scripture: "Behold I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, and he who believes in Him shall not be disappointed." This precious value, then, is for you who believe, but for those who disbelieve, "the stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner stone," and, "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.

Luke 4:17-21—And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book, and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD." And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and

sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

7. In the light of this background reading, now consider the occasion, the question ("Are You the One who is coming, or do we look for someone else?") and the answer of Luke 7:17-23.

8. Why do you think John the Baptist sent the two disciples to Jesus?

9. What is the question and how does the Lord begin to answer? v. 19-21

10. Consider how John had preached about the coming Messiah. What causes his puzzlement now?

11. Does the Lord prove that He is fulfilling prophecies about Himself? (Explain.)

12. Think about 7:23 and the background readings about the stone of stumbling. How was John in danger of stumbling?

13. How does the "Stone" become a stumbling stone? A foundation stone?

14. (Personal): How can you stumble Christ? Are you in any danger of this in your life right now? Explain. Then what must you do to avoid it?

STUDY: Luke 7:24-8:3

Think about verse 28, "greatness" in the

MEMORY (Luke 7:22-23): And He answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: THE BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, THE POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me."

eyes of God. What made John great? In what sense is today's believer greater? Consider these verses:

Luke 16:16—"The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since then the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, and every one is forcing his way into it."

John 3:29—"He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. And so this joy of mine has been made full."

Ephesians 3:4-6—And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel."

1 Corinthians 12:12-13—For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Ephesians 1:15-23—For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you, and your love for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a

spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. and He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.

15. If you can, explain verses 31-35. If you have trouble with this, paraphrase the section.

III. THE MARK OF LOVE

READ: John 12:1-11 and compare Luke 7:36-50.

DO QUESTIONS: 16-17.

READ: Pages 179-183.

16. Read John 12:1-11 and compare it with Luke 7:36-50.

What are several similarities?

What are several differences?

MEMORY (Luke 7:22-23): And He answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: THE BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, THE POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me."

17. What alabaster box of perfume might you break for the Lord Jesus, symbolically speaking?

IV. THE MARK OF SERVICE

READ: Luke 8:1-3

DO QUESTIONS: 18-20.

READ: Pages 183-184.

18. Write down the heart attitudes of the woman, Simon, the Pharisees, and the women.

19. Consider Luke 7:47. Are some people forgiven more than others? Are you one who has been forgiven little or much? What does forgiveness have to do with love? Explain your answer. (See:

Romans 3:23—“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Romans 5:8, 12—“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, be-

cause all sinned.”

Romans 7:18—“For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.”

Titus 3:5—“He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.”

Hebrews 9:22—“And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”

1 John 4:10,19—“By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. We love, because He first loved us.”

20. What in these scenes moves your heart toward the Lord Jesus? Are you encouraged by any of this to make a practical change in your life? Share if you wish.

MEMORY (Luke 7:22-23): And He answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: THE BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, THE POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me."

IX. MARKS OF WISDOM'S CHILDREN

(Luke 7:11-8:3)

**Thou art the living Truth!
All wisdom dwells in Thee,
Thou Source of every skill,
Eternal Verity!
Thou great I Am!
In Thee we rest,
True answer to our every quest.**

— E. Margaret Clarkson, 1947
“We come, O Christ, To Thee”

Christ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:2-3)

. . . who became to us wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:30)

7:35. Wisdom is vindicated by all her children.

Children look like their parents. Wisdom's children are no exception.

The wisdom of God is Christ, and His children look like Him. They bear the likeness of Christ. His character marks them out as Wisdom's children.

In the incidents which Luke now brings before us, we can trace the marks of Wisdom's children—marks of *life, trust, love, service*.

This is because each of these belongs to Christ. He is the Resurrection and the *Life*. His Word only is perfectly *trustworthy*. Because He is *Love*, He gives Himself at the cross. He comes not to be served, but to *serve* and give His life a ransom for many.

In Him only are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. As the Wisdom of God, He offers Himself to meet the needs of the people now before us. Those who respond in faith become His children. As we consider Christ's effect upon people, we trace the marking out of His children.

We trace His pattern and discover the following marks:

I. THE MARK OF LIFE

*in a son resurrected and returned to his mother
(7:11-17)*

II. THE MARK OF TRUST

*in a man who always depends on Christ and points others to Him
(7:18-35)*

III. THE MARK OF LOVE

*in a forgiven woman who pours out her appreciation at His feet
(7:36-50)*

IV. THE MARK OF SERVICE

*in a band of women who leave all to minister humbly to Christ
(8:1-3)*

Some view this with suspicion and brand it all foolishness. We see them in Luke—the scribes, lawyers, Pharisees. They are “the wise,” “the debaters of this

MEMORY (Luke 7:22-23): And He answered and said to them, “Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: THE BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, THE POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me.”

age” described by Paul in his first letter to Corinth (1:18-2:16). They are really the foolish ones, for God makes foolish the wisdom of this world. For them the preaching of the cross is foolishness and a stumbling block, but they have it all backwards. Christ is “the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1:24). But the world in its wisdom cannot come to know God through its own cleverness. Simon the Pharisee, in our Luke passage, stands as an example and warning that the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God.

Now we turn to the passage to look for the marks of Wisdom’s children. And we find that He chooses “the foolish things of the world to shame the wise” (1 Cor. 1:27). Here He encourages us, for Christ today can be “made unto us wisdom.” In Him alone we find the “true answer to our every quest.”

I. THE MARK OF LIFE (Luke 7:11-17)

When we speak of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, sometimes we mean the same thing, but often we are emphasizing shades of difference. “Knowledge” means a grasp of facts. “Understanding” refers to comprehension, reaching insight as to the meaning of these facts. “Wisdom” goes a step farther and points to the ability to reach conclusions, to use and apply facts and insight. Wisdom is the use of knowledge. It is a very practical thing. It sees the need and meets it.

Christ is the Wisdom of God. He sees our need and meets us there, for He is the One who comes “to seek and to save that

which is lost.” He comes to those who are “*dead in trespasses and sins*,” and in gracious wisdom brings them into resurrection life. This is what is pictured in the incident of Luke 7:11-17, as the gracious touch of Christ brings life to the dead boy. Christ sees the need, and His heart is moved with compassion. As the Wisdom of God, He is able to meet the need for *life*.

In the previous miracle, the healing of the centurion’s slave, Christ is “the Light to lighten the Gentiles.” Now in this miracle, He is “*the glory of*” His “*people Israel*” (Luke 2:32). He is set for a sign to them all (2:34), and His works testify to that; the miracles are symbolic of the deeper spiritual work which they are so well qualified to picture (Grant, p. 377).

Let Morgan picture the scene itself:

“This is one of the meetings of two processions at a city gate: one approaching the gate, the other emerging from the gate. Look at this processions coming up the narrow road that led to Nain. The central figure was Jesus. Round Him were His disciples; and Luke says a great multitude. They had traveled, some of them I have no doubt from Capernaum with Him, others joining with Him from everywhere. I think that I am warranted in saying that if you could have looked into those faces the dominant color would have been a color of joy and gladness; and a scowling face or two perhaps, on some of the rulers that were watching Him.

“Look now at this procession going out. What is the central figure there? A

MEMORY (Luke 7:22-23): And He answered and said to them, “Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: THE BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, THE POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me.”

corpse, ‘one that was dead.’ And then his mother; oh, the pathos of it, ‘his mother,’ and he her only son, and she a widow. All the tragedy of life is in that procession coming out, somber, sad, sorrowful—the central figure dead, and the mother walking in desolation.” It was a large procession, and this now doubt reflects the regard friends had for this woman. “So a crowd was coming that way, too. Look at their faces. No smiles there.

“These two processions met. The two central figures are at once connected in Luke’s narrative” (Morgan, p. 95).

“The Lord saw her.” He always sees the one in need, the one who is heavy laden with sorrow. Moved with compassion for her, He said, “Do not weep.” This is our compassionate Lord, touched with the feeling of our infirmities, the One who has “borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.” He is the One whose hand will later on “wipe away all tears” from our eyes, and “there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain” (Revelation 21:4).

Then He spoke. On each of the three occasions when He raised the dead, Christ spoke the word of life. His word is life-giving. He described this quickening word on another occasion when people also marveled:

Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth. . . . Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me

has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life (John 5:28, 24).

“(Christ) has met the power of death in a more wonderful way even than was seen at the gate of the city of Nain. I do not doubt that when Jesus ‘touched the bier’ it was an intimation that He would come into personal contact with the power of death. He did this, as we know, at the cross; the full power of death came upon Him, not because He was personally liable to death, but because He tasted it by the grace of God for all that had come under it as a result of sin.

“But death was not able to hold Him. He saw no corruption, and on the third day He rose triumphant. God has triumphed over death through Jesus. His victory has been gloriously seen in one Man, but it is seen there to be available for all who are in bondage through fear of death (Heb. 2:14-15). Death is annulled in a risen Christ for all who believe on Him” (Coates, pp. 99-100), and He says to us,

“I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:25-26).

Such mighty work explained by such gracious words of wisdom must call forth a response. We read that

7:16 Fear gripped them all, and they be-

MEMORY (Luke 7:22-23): And He answered and said to them, “Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: THE BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, THE POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me.”

gan glorifying God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and, "God has visited His people!"

They grasped the fact of the mighty miracle. This was "knowledge." Then, as fear gripped them, they gained some insight. Seeing Him partially for who He was, they declared Him to be a great prophet, but He was far more than that. Seeing His compassion for the widow, they rejoiced in God's "visitation," or "caring for" His people.

Here they reflect a measure of "understanding." With many on that day, however, we trust—we hope for the widow and her son particularly—that this fear which gripped them was the beginning of "wisdom," as the proverb of Solomon says: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (9:10).

And we hope that many went on to find in Him the penalty for their sins met at the cross, being raised in Him to walk in resurrection life:

**Through death into life everlasting
He passed, and we follow Him there;
Over us sin no more hath dominion—
For more than conquerors we are!**

—Helen H. Lemmel, 1922
"Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus"

There is so much comfort for our hearts in this scene of disappointment and sorrow. Such is the lot of every one of us.

"The dearest natural tie must be broken; the most valued friend is snatched away; the one on whom our fondest hopes have been built lies in the silent grave.

"Now is it not an immense thing to know that God feels and cares for the sorrows of His creatures? He has compassion, notwithstanding that sin and rebellion are the cause of it all. He would love to make Himself known to the bereaved widow of Nain, that is, as entering compassionately into the sorrow, and as having power to relieve the heart that is oppressed by it.

"I venture to say that the knowledge of God in this way, as we may learn Him in the incident before us, brings a greater relief to a sorrowing heart than would be brought about by any outward deliverance. We have learned something of the heart of God, and that is greater than having our dead back again, for it is an indestructible and eternal possession" (Coates, p. 99).

Wisdom's child is comforted by the changeless compassion of the Lord—the gift of His heart for us and which we can never lose. Wisdom's child is marked by the risen life of Christ. He "*walks in wisdom,*" for this is a walk "*in newness of life*" (Rom. 6:4; Eph. 5:15). Wisdom has then been justified in her child (7:35), the one who reckons self dead indeed to sin and alive to God (Rom. 6:11).

The Lord's final act in this scene is full of grace:

7:15. He gave him back to his mother.

"What pictures of joy that statement inspires. A funeral procession had become a march of life. A bier had become empty. A desolate mother had

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been turned into a singing mother. A public highway had been a highway of glory when Jesus passed along” (Morgan, p. 96).

He can put that mark of resurrection glory on my life today, as I yield to the cross—life out of death, the mark of wisdom’s child.

**O Cross, that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;
I lay in dust life’s glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms
red
Life that shall endless be.**

--George Matheson, 1882

II. THE MARK OF TRUST (Luke 7:18-35)

Reports of these wonderful miracles are taken to John the Baptist in prison. John’s disciples, if not John himself, seem to be honestly perplexed. John had preached judgment. Christ was preaching life and grace. How will this bring in the Kingdom? John always points people to Christ, so again he sends his disciples with the question to the Lord. He has confidence in Him. There he will find the answer to any perplexity. The Lord Jesus is the only One to trust. He is the answer to our problems and perplexities today as well: “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (Jas. 1:5).

They bring the problem question to the Lord: “*Are you the one who was to come, or are we to look for someone else?*” (v. 20)

The Lord begins His answer in the most gracious way. He lets them see His work: He goes right on with His healing and delivering ministry. Then He tells them to carry the report back to John and to look again at Scripture—Isaiah 35:5-6; 61:1, the passage which He read in Nazareth to begin His ministry:

7:22. The blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the gospel preached to them.

This speaks a beautiful and reassuring word to John’s heart. The Lord says in effect, “Trust Me when you can’t understand. Take another look at the Scriptures which point to Me.” By pointing to Messianic passages, He is saying that all the works which He is doing are mentioned there. This then leaves no doubt that He is “the one who was to come.” His works back up His Word.

“Blessed is he who keeps from getting tripped up over Me” (v. 23). Christ is a Stumbling Stone and a Rock of offense (Isa. 8:14-15; 1 Cor. 1:23; 1 Pet. 2:4-5) to those who refuse to see that He is the Promised One. A crucified Messiah became to the Jews “a stumbling block” (1 Cor. 1:23).

But to those who receive Him, He becomes the Foundation Stone and the Head of the corner (1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Pet. 2:4-5). If we receive Him as Savior, we are raised in Christ. If we reject Him, we will be razed by Christ at the day of judgment.

But at this time, Christ says to John

MEMORY (Luke 7:22-23): And He answered and said to them, “Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: THE BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, THE POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me.”

and his disciples, He has not come to judge the nations—to give them the spectacular victories over Roman armies which the Jews wanted—or to set up an earthly kingdom. There is blessing for the one who trusts His Word and does not get offended when he does not understand all that Christ is doing, but one day it will be made plain.

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Meanwhile, we walk by faith, like John, and trust the One who so loves us and makes it all work out for good—as William H. Burleigh wrote in 1935.

**Still will we trust,
though earth seem dark and dreary,
And the heart faint
beneath His chastening rod;
Though rough and steep
our pathway, worn and weary,
Still will we trust in God.**

**Our eyes see dimly
till by faith anointed,
And our blind choosing brings us grief
and pain;
Through Him alone,
Who hath our way appointed,
We find our peace again.**

**Choose for us, God.
Nor let our weak preferring
Cheat us of good**

**Thou hast for us designed:
Choose for us, God;
Thy wisdom is unerring,
Foolish we are and blind.**

**Let us press on,
In patient self denial,
Accept the hardship,
Shrink not from the loss:
Our portion lies
Beyond the hour of trial,
Our crown beyond the cross.**

Stumbling over Christ marks one out as a child of foolishness. Resting upon Him in humble dependence is the sign of real wisdom. Scoffing at His Word is foolishness with God. But trusting Him is the mark of Wisdom's child.

“When the deputation had left Him, the Lord did a wonderful thing, a gracious and beautiful thing. He did not allow that crowd, who had heard the question asked, and heard His answer, to think unworthily of John” (Morgan, p. 99).

“In a most appreciative way He insisted on the greatness of the ministry of this devoted man.

“There is something here that should be very precious to our hearts. We are all inclined, at times, to feel that we have been neglected and forgotten, and the Lord does not always speak words of endorsement directly to us, but we may be assured of this: if we have sought to be faithful to Him, He always approves us before His Father and the holy angels.

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“John himself could not hear what Jesus said to the multitude. If he could have done so, it would, no doubt, have been a great encouragement to him, but he was left in ignorance of this for the time, in order that his faith might be more firmly established” (Ironsides, pp. 222-23).

The Lord Jesus now addresses three rhetorical questions to his hearers in order to point up the greatness of His forerunner and to make them face up to what John stood for. He was no reed, easily swayed. Neither was he a man seeking the easy life.

Was he a prophet? Yes, but much more. The quotation from Malachi 3:1 shows John to have been given the high honor of being the forerunner of the Messiah.

As such, then, he was the last of the Old Testament prophets, and the greatest.

7:28a. Among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist. . . .

“Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and all the rest of the prophetic brotherhood, looked forward to the coming of Messiah, but it was given to John alone to actually present Him to Israel and proclaim Him definitely as the long-expected Deliverer” (Ironsides, p. 224).

7:28b. But he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

John belonged to the preparation period, not to the time of fulfillment. He knew nothing of Christ as Redeemer,

Light of the World, the Door, the Shepherd of the sheep, the Vine, the Crucified One, the Resurrected Savior. He knew nothing of the Indwelling Christ. His baptism called Israel to a national repentance. His baptism was in no way connected to the baptism of the born-again believer in Christ. Pre-eminent as a prophet though he be, he is less than the least believer “in the kingdom of God.”

By quoting from Malachi 3:1, Christ is making the greatest claim about Himself: He is “the Lord”—God Himself. John, the Forerunner of Messiah, is the Herald of God.

Now Christ turns to the reactions of people first to John and then to Himself. Here the response of the common people differs from that of the Jewish leaders. It is the difference which marks the generation as children of wisdom or children of folly.

Wisdom’s children justified God. They were the common people—“publicans” and outcasts (v. 29, cf. 1 Cor. 1:26-29). When these people heard John preach, they vindicated God. They agreed with the righteousness of God, pressed upon them through John. They acknowledged their personal wickedness and national apostasy. They knew from their history that Rome ruled their land because—they—had forsaken Jehovah God. They agreed with John that—they—deserved judgment, even condemnation. They confessed their sins. They repented. Baptism signified and sealed the fact that God forgives the repentant sinner. Thus a remnant—these the outcasts—were being prepared to receive the grace of God in Christ. They justified God by trusting His Word and acting upon it.

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As for the rest, the generation at large, represented by the Jewish leaders, they rejected the message and counsel of God, refusing to be baptized (v. 320). They expected quite another forerunner and quite another Christ and disbelieved and complained because the real forerunner and Messiah did not meet their foolish thoughts.

“They were like children in a market-place, who expected their fellows to adapt themselves to the tunes they played” (Edersheim, p. 670).

Christ quotes the children’s playsong, which is a jingle in Aramaic:

*Cholelna lekhon we-la raqqedhton
‘ailelna lekhon we-la ‘arqedhton.*

We played at weddings for you, but you wouldn’t dance;

And we played at funerals for you, and you wouldn’t cry!

“John came, refusing absolutely to dance to the piping of his day. . . .

“The Son of man came, and the disciples that gathered round Him were happy souls . . . and wherever He came there was the note of gladness and joy and merriment. . . .

“What made men merry in those days? What made people sad in those days? John would not dance to their piping. Jesus would not weep to their mourning.

“The unreasonableness of the generation was revealed in that it was neither satisfied with the ascetic note of John nor with the happy note of the

Lord” (Morgan, p. 100).

“They were too careless to understand either the one or the other. To them John was but a demoniac, Christ a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, to be judged according to the company He kept” (Grant, p. 380).

Wisdom’s child refuses to dance to the piping of the age. He is in tune with heaven’s music. He has believed God’s Word and has trusted this as the true wisdom “that is from above”—pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy, without partiality, without hypocrisy (Jas. 3:17).

Wisdom is justified in her child who refuses **“to be overburdened and crushed by sorrows that are transient and will pass”** (Morgan, p. 100).

The mark of wisdom’s child is *trust* in the eternal Word of the God who does not change.

Next Luke will show us two examples of two kinds of children—a child of folly and a child of wisdom—and he will trace for us another mark of Wisdom’s child.

III. THE MARK OF LOVE (Luke 7:36-50)

**Take my love, my God, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.**

— Frances Ridley Havergal

The scene is in the house of Simon, a Pharisee. Two people are in the Lord’s presence. Nothing could be greater than

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the contrast between them.

Simon the Pharisee has invited Him to dinner. That he is not at all solicitous of his Guest's comfort and welfare is obvious. Why has he invited Him to come home to dinner if he did not respect Him enough to attend to His personal needs? He does not love Him.

More likely, he is curious about the miracles he's seen. Perhaps he wants to spy on Him or gather information that can be used against Him. Certainly, the Lord knew all that was and all that was not in Simon's heart. He loved Simon. He longed that Simon would love Him and would come to repentance.

But Simon's house has a chilling atmosphere. The Pharisee has no real welcome for the Lord.

"A woman of the city"—an unwelcome, uninvited "sinner" (the word probably describes a prostitute)—provides the loving welcome. In the east a meal like this one was not private. People could come and go from the courtyard where it was probably held. They could sit along the side wall and watch and listen to what was going on. But a woman like this one certainly would not have been encouraged to join that company of observers. It was unheard of that a prostitute would enter the house of a Pharisee.

The name "Pharisee" tells us immediately what sort of person Simon was and what kind of class he belonged to. The name is from a Hebrew word which means "separated." The Pharisees originally had formed to keep the people from mixing Judaism with the idolatry of the Gentiles.

"In the process of time they had become satisfied with externality and ritualism and creed, until the very word Pharisaic for us today has come to describe an attitude of complacent self-satisfaction. Their hostility to Christ is marked. Luke names them twenty-eight times in the course of his Gospel, and every time they are seen in hostility to Jesus. Simon belonged to them—perfectly satisfied with himself, perfectly satisfied with observing the tradition of the elders, and the ritual of ceremonial ablutions, and so forth" (Morgan, p. 102).

At a feast it was customary that the diner take off his sandals and recline on one of the low couches ranged around the table, leaning on the left elbow facing the table with feet stretched toward the back. So it was easy for this woman to slip in and kneel at His feet.

She brought with her "an alabaster flask of ointment." This would have been a round container with a long neck, which would be broken off when the perfumed oil was to be used. The perfume was undoubtedly very costly. When she came into the house uninvited, she evidently intended to anoint the Lord Jesus with the perfumed oil. It is clear from the parable which the Lord tells to Simon later that this was not the first meeting between Jesus and the woman. At some time she had listened to Him with hearing ears; her heart had been convicted, touched with the message of grace. As a heavy-laden sinner, she had turned to Him for forgiveness and her restless heart had found rest in Him.

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Now she comes in, stands at His feet in preparation for anointing Him, and her emotions get the better of her. Her tears begin to fall on His feet and she kneels quickly and begins to wipe them with her hair, **“a significant action, for Jewish ladies did not unbind their hair in public. Clearly she was completely oblivious of public opinion in the grip of her deep emotion. This will explain her kissing of the feet”** repeatedly (Morris, p. 147).

The value of the Greek word used here is **“smothered them with kisses”** (Morgan, p. 103).

Here is someone who is “little in the kingdom of God” and therefore “greater than John the Baptist.” The Holy Spirit is showing us what kind of greatness she had. She was great in her appreciation of Christ. She had learned His grace and her heart had responded.

Now she pours her affection at His feet. She knows her sins, that she has been forgiven much. She has an intense appreciation of His grace; her heart overflows in gratitude and love as she breaks the vial and pours the precious oil on His feet.

Now Simon carries on a conversation with himself, which of course the Lord reads. Simon disapproves of all of this very much. His thoughts show that he assumes that Jesus is not a true prophet because He does not know “who and what sort of person” is touching him. The Lord proceeds to correct the misapprehension: He knows who she is and also what Simon is thinking.

“I have something to say to you, Simon.”

Simon replies somewhat coldly, *“Say it, teacher”* (v. 40).

Then the Lord gives him “that exquisite little parable. It is full of playful irony” (Morgan).

It is the little story about two debtors whose debts are wiped clear by the creditor, one for five hundred denarii, the other for one day’s wages—fifty denarii.

“It did not need a great deal of insight to recognize which would love the benefactor the more. Yet Simon’s reply is somewhat grudging, with his I suppose.” Jesus does not comment on this, but agrees that Simon has “given the right answer” (Morris, p. 148).

Now the Lord turns to the woman, talking to Simon over His shoulder. *“Do you see this woman, Simon?”*

He says in effect, “‘You cannot see her, Simon. You are blind; you cannot see this woman as she *is* for looking at her as she *used* to be. . . . I will help you to see her by putting her into contrast with you.’ He does not put her into contrast with Simon on the high level of spiritual condition. He does not contrast her even on the level of morality.

“He puts this woman into contrast with Simon on the level of common everyday courtesy” (Morgan, p. 104).

On entering Simon’s house, the Lord has not received any of the usual courtes-

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sies. "Now Simon, let me help you see what this woman has done for me."

"I came into your house. You neglected the common courtesies of an Eastern home. She has remedied your boorishness. You brought Me no water for My feet. She has bathed them with her tears. You gave Me not the ordinary kiss of polite salutation. She has smothered My feet with kisses. You did not even bring oil, the coarser material, for My head, the supreme member of My body. She has brought ointment, the finer material, and poured it out upon My feet. Simon, you said, if I were a prophet I could see her. Can you see her, Simon? I have put you side by side, and by comparison you are as coarse as sackcloth, and she is as fine as finely spun silk!" (Morgan, p. 104).

Now the Lord says something to her which provokes much comment by the other guests.

48. *Your sins have been forgiven. . . .*

50. *Your faith has saved you; go in peace.*

Her act of love has been proof of the fact that she was rejoicing in forgiveness already received by faith in His Word. "Who is this?" What is this, they ask. Who can forgive sins, but God? But the Lord ignores them at this moment as He speaks the word of peace to her heart.

The Lord notices neglect and appreciates devotion. He noticed Simon's discourtesy and cold disregard.

"He did not say anything. He went in, and took the invitation, the uncouth welcome as it came, but He noticed it; and under stress of circumstances, He revealed the fact He noticed it." What kind of reception do I give Him? "He notices neglect and He values adoration" (Morgan, p. 105).

The One who has covered our transgressions seeks our love, our worship (John 4:23).

He who covers transgressions seeks love (Prov. 17:9).

"It is wonderful that God should want my love, sinner as I am. He wanted the woman's love and He wanted Simon's love. He got the first, but He did not get the second, and He felt it. . . .

"It is our privilege now, in the face of a cold and heartless profession, to show that we love Him much, not merely by working for Him, but by lavishing upon Him personally that which love only can give.

"None of us would dare to say that we had been forgiven little, but many of us might well pray that we might have a deeper sense of how much we have been forgiven, so that we might love much" (Coates, p. 103).

From the standpoint of heaven, Simon was very foolish. He did not know what it meant to have lasting treasure there. In heaven's eyes, this poor woman was the child of Wisdom. 9-9

She lavished all she had on Him, and

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that is never a waste. The Lord is never debtor to anyone. He notices the smallest act of love and repays in more abundant ways than we can ask or think. In Proverbs 8, Wisdom speaks about her child:

I love those who love me; and those who diligently seek me will find me. . . . I walk in the way of righteousness. In the midst of the paths of justice, to endow those who love me with wealth, that I may fill their treasuries (Prov. 8: 17. 20-21).

Wisdom's child is concerned about such treasure, for it is something more to lay at His feet (Rev. 4:10-11). The mark of Wisdom's child is love lavished upon Christ.

**Take my love, my God, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store!**

--Frances Ridley Havergal
"Take My Life and Let It Be" (v. 6)

IV. THE MARK OF SERVICE (Luke 8:1-3)

First our love, then our service—this is the order that the Lord appreciates.

Now we are introduced to another band of Wisdom's children, a group of women. In the Gospels no woman is described as ever turning against Christ. This is worth reflecting upon. May we all be like these women.

The Lord begins a preaching tour of Galilee with the twelve disciples. Here we are given a glimpse as to how they were cared for as they went from place to place preaching glad tidings. A group of women ministered to them, following the rest of

the months down into Judea as He set His face toward Jerusalem and the cross. They followed Him there (John 19:25) and to the grave, and they were among the first witnesses of His resurrection (Luke 23:49,55; 24:1-10).

These were women who had experienced forgiveness and deliverance. We do not know very much about each individual. Each had evidently received much blessing from Him and expressed gratitude by leaving normal pursuits for a time. While not all of us can ever leave our normal routines, every one of us today can emulate their heart attitude of loving service.

We are not told exactly what they did. Evidently several of them were well-to-do, for they "used to look after His comfort from their own resources" (v. 3).

Many of their tasks must have been routinely mundane—cleaning and arranging accommodations, preparing meals, washing clothes, etc. Whatever it was, it was for His glory, and He appreciated it. He wrote it down here in His book of remembrance, for all to read down through the following centuries. They ministered to Him. They did it *for His sake*.

"For His sake"—what a clause to think about:

**A servant with this clause
This is the famous stone
Makes drudgery divine;
That turneth all to gold;
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws
For that which God doth touch and
own
Makes that and the action fine.
Cannot for less be sold.**

— George Herbert (1593-1633)

MEMORY (Luke 7:22-23): And He answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: THE BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, THE POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me."

All through His life the Lord was poor. He left the riches of heaven and became poor for our sake “*that we through His poverty might be made rich*” (2 Cor. 8:9). He never utilized His power to serve Himself, to create a largess from which He could draw, to indulge His creature comforts. His humbling was so deep that He had to depend on the generosity of others, women whom He had healed, to provide the means for daily living. The rabbis had a completely different attitude toward women from that of the Lord Jesus. They gave them a very inferior place and refused to teach them. But the Lord freely admitted them into His fellowship and accepted their loving service (Morris, p. 149).

Their humble devotion is just a reflection of His own far greater humility in receiving such service from them.

These are the attitudes expressed in the great passage of Philippians 2:1-18. It is the mind of Christ—His own attitude of bondslavery, willingly given from the heart of selfless love. Do I have this mind? It is the attitude pictured in the Old Testament bondservant; for love of his master, he freely chooses to remain the servant (Ex. 21:5). It is what Christ gladly did for our sakes (Psa. 40:6-8; Heb. 10:5-7) and for love of the Father.

Do I have the mind of the bondservant? It is the mark of Wisdom’s child.

What kind of marks do we bear?

No Scar?

Hast thou no scar?

No hidden scar on foot, or side, or hand?

I hear thee sung as mighty in the land,

I hear them hail thy bright ascendant star,

Hast thou no scar?

Hast thou no wound?

Yet I was wounded by the archers, spent,

Leaned Me against a tree to die; and rent

By ravening beasts that compassed Me,

I swooned:

Hast thou no wound?

No wound? No scar?

Yet, as the Master shall the servant be,

And pierced are the feet that follow Me;

But thine are whole:

Can he have followed far

Who has nor wound nor scar?

— Amy Carmichael
Gold Cord, (p. 64)

It costs something to bear the marks of Christ. He wears the scar of nail and thorn for all eternity. *Yet, as the Master shall the servant be.*

Will I bear the marks of Wisdom’s child?

Am I willing to pay the price?

MEMORY (Luke 7:22-23): And He answered and said to them, “Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: THE BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, THE POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me.”

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