

# *The Gospel Parallel*

Release 2.0

May 25, 2021

The following content has been extracted from the full document titled "Between the Lines (of the Bible)." Hyperlinks to other chapters in full document may not work.

If you find grammatical or other errors or have any comments in general, I would be happy to receive your feedback in email.

Stephen Ing

[feedback@btlb.org](mailto:feedback@btlb.org)

<http://btlb.org>

## Contents

The Gospel .....	8
Matthew.....	8
Mark.....	9
Luke.....	12
John.....	14
Introduction to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.....	16
Miraculous birth of John the Baptist .....	19
Birth of Jesus to the Virgin Mary.....	22
Genealogy of Jesus.....	25
Dating the birth of Jesus .....	27
Announcement to the shepherds.....	30
Dedication at the Temple.....	32
Visit of the Magi, the flight to Egypt, and the return to Nazareth.....	35
Childhood of John and Jesus.....	39
Preaching of John the Baptist .....	40
Baptism of Jesus.....	42
Dating the baptism of Jesus .....	43
Forty days fasting in the wilderness, and being tempted by Satan.....	44
The first disciples.....	47
The first Miracle .....	50
Jesus cleanses the Temple at the first Passover of His public ministry .....	52
Nicodemus .....	54
He must increase, I must decrease – John’s imprisonment .....	56
The Samaritan woman at the well .....	57
Jesus teaches in Galilee and heals the royal official’s son .....	60
Jesus rejected in His home town of Nazareth.....	61
Jesus calls Peter, Andrew, James and John to follow Him full-time .....	63
Jesus casts out an evil spirit in the synagogue on Sabbath .....	65
Jesus heals Peter’s mother-in-law .....	66
Jesus teaches and heals throughout Galilee, and touches a leper in healing him .....	67
Jesus offers forgiveness for sin .....	69
Jesus calls Matthew .....	70
Jesus heals a lame man at the pool of Bethesda on Sabbath.....	71

The disciples accused of harvesting and threshing on the Sabbath .....	74
Jesus heals a withered hand on the Sabbath.....	77
Jesus names the twelve apostles .....	78
Peter.....	80
John .....	82
James.....	83
Andrew.....	84
Philip.....	86
Bartholomew or Nathanael .....	87
Thomas or Didymus .....	88
Matthew.....	89
James the son of Alphaeus.....	91
Simon the Zealot .....	93
Judas or Thaddaeus .....	94
Judas.....	95
Matthias .....	98
Jesus heals a multitude of people.....	99
The Sermon on the Mount.....	101
Jesus heals the Centurion's servant.....	107
Jesus brings a widow's son back to life.....	109
John the Baptist asks Jesus for confirmation of His identity .....	110
Simon the Pharisee invites Jesus to his house .....	114
Women who financially supported Jesus' ministry .....	115
Jesus heals a blind and mute demon possessed man .....	117
The unpardonable sin .....	119
We will be judged by the words we speak .....	120
The scribes and Pharisees ask for a sign .....	121
Evil must be replaced by good .....	122
Jesus disowns His family? .....	122
Woes on the scribes and Pharisees .....	124
Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.....	126
The parable of the fig tree .....	128
The parable of the sower and the seed .....	130
The parable of the wheat and the tares .....	132

The parables of the mustard seed, and the leaven .....	135
Let your light shine so that people will glorify your Father in heaven .....	136
Parables of the treasure in the field and the pearl of great price .....	137
“No one, after having put his hand to the plough, and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God” .....	139
Jesus calms the storm .....	141
Jesus heals the demoniacs .....	142
Matthew invites his friends to meet Jesus .....	146
Jesus heals a woman and brings a little girl back to life .....	148
Jesus heals two blind men and a man who can't speak .....	151
Jesus is not accepted in His home town of Nazareth .....	152
Jesus sends His disciples out in pairs to teach and preach .....	153
Death of John the Baptist .....	157
Jesus teaches His disciples that they needed rest .....	160
Jesus feeds five thousand .....	161
Jesus walks on water .....	165
Many to desert Jesus after He says to eat His flesh and drink His blood .....	167
Jesus accuses the Jews of prioritizing their law above God's .....	170
Jesus heals a Canaanite woman's daughter .....	173
Jesus feeds four thousand .....	175
Jesus warns His disciples to be on guard against the leaven of the Pharisees .....	177
Jesus tells His disciples that He must suffer and die .....	179
The cost of following Jesus .....	184
The transfiguration .....	186
Jesus casts out a demon the disciples couldn't .....	188
Who is the greatest? .....	190
He who is not against us is for us .....	192
Giving and receiving forgiveness for sins? .....	195
Jesus sends out seventy .....	197
Jesus goes through Samaria on His way to Jerusalem .....	198
The feast of Tabernacles .....	200
Jesus is asked to judge a woman caught in adultery .....	203
The truth will make you free .....	204
The Good Samaritan .....	207
Only one thing is necessary .....	209

The Lord's Prayer .....	210
Jesus heals a blind man.....	212
The Good Shepherd .....	215
If you are the Christ, tell us plainly .....	216
The Death and Resurrection of Lazarus .....	218
Jesus heals a hunchbacked woman on Sabbath.....	221
Narrow is the way that leads to life and few find it.....	222
Jesus heals a man of dropsy in a Pharisee's house on Sabbath.....	223
The parable of the marriage feast .....	225
Test of discipleship.....	226
The lost sheep, the lost coin and the prodigal son .....	228
The shrewd steward.....	230
No man can serve two masters.....	231
The rich man and Lazarus .....	232
The persistent widow.....	233
The Pharisee and the tax collector .....	235
Is it lawful to divorce your spouse? .....	237
Do not block the children from coming to me.....	240
The rich young ruler.....	242
Day laborers in the vineyard (the last will be first and the first will be last) .....	247
James and John request the top two positions in the kingdom .....	249
Blind men by the road request healing.....	250
Zaccheus.....	252
He who is faithful in small things will also be faithful with more important matters .....	253
Mary anoints Jesus' head and feet with the expensive ointment of Spikenard.....	255
Triumphal entry to Jerusalem .....	257
The second cleansing of the Temple.....	260
The barren fig tree .....	262
Authority of Jesus questioned, parable of the two sons and the vineyard .....	264
The parable of the vineyard and the wicked caretakers .....	266
Is it lawful to pay tax to Caesar .....	269
Whose wife will she be in the resurrection? .....	271
What is the most important commandment.....	274
Whose son is the Christ?.....	275

More woes on the scribes and Pharisees .....	277
The poor widow's offering.....	281
Jesus foretells His death again .....	281
Signs of the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the World .....	284
Assuredly, I say to you, not [one] stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down. ....	290
For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.....	292
The end is not yet, all these [are] the beginning of sorrows .....	293
You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. "But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak;.....	293
"For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; "and 'a man's enemies will be those of his [own] household.' .....	294
Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. ....	294
And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. ....	295
Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. 18 "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. ....	295
Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ....	298
Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ....	300
Then two [men] will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. 41 "Two [women will be] grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. ....	301
The ten virgins.....	303
Separating the sheep and the goats at the judgment .....	309
Judas agrees to betray Jesus.....	312
Jesus washes the disciples' feet.....	316
Jesus predicts He will be betrayed and denied.....	318
The last supper, the first Communion .....	321
Jesus promises to return to take His disciples Home with Him.....	324
Jesus is the vine and we are the branches.....	327
Jesus tries to prepare His disciples for His death and departure from them .....	331
Jesus prays for His disciples .....	333

The garden of Gethsemane ..... 335

Peter denies knowing Jesus in the courtyard of Annas ..... 341

Jesus taken to stand before Caiaphas..... 345

Jesus stands before Pilate ..... 348

Jesus stands before Herod after which He is returned to Pilate ..... 351

The crucifixion and death of Jesus ..... 358

The burial of Jesus..... 365

Resurrection and appearance to the women ..... 370

The walk to Emmaus ..... 376

Jesus appears to more than 500 people over forty days before ascending to heaven ..... 381

Appendix B – Prophetic time & Daniel's 70-week Prophecy ..... 385

    Seventy-week prophecy..... 385

    Day for a year conclusion..... 389

    Time, times, half-time ..... 389

    Days in a month and days in a year ..... 390

    Conclusion and Summary ..... 391

Appendix C – The age of the world ..... 392

Appendix E – Hands, feet, eyes and ears of God ..... 395

    Word search results: ..... 396

Appendix F – Seventh year sabbaths and the year of Jubilee ..... 403

Appendix G – Unanswered prayer ..... 410

Appendix H – Women at the cross and tomb..... 413

# The Gospel

Gospel is translated from the Greek word [εὐαγγέλιον, euangelion](#)<sup>1</sup>, which in this context has the meaning “glad tidings”, or more specifically, “glad tidings of the kingdom of God”, or “glad tidings of salvation.” The Greek word is used 77 times in the KJV translations of Matthew and Mark, but surprisingly not at all in Luke and John. The word “gospel” is used 15 times in Matthew, Mark and Luke, but not at all in John. It is most often used together with a form of the word preach.

My goal is to cover the life of Jesus in a chronological order, using all four of the gospels. This is by no means a new approach to discussing the life of Christ, and I intend to lean heavily on the work of others in ordering the events, primarily the book “[A New Harmony and Exposition of the Gospels](#),” by James Strong.<sup>2</sup> Prior to moving onto the events associated with the life of Jesus Christ, I will briefly discuss the four books, their authors and target audiences.

First, I would like to share an observation that has been made and is shared by most scholars. The content and composition of the first three books, Matthew, Mark and Luke share so much in common that it seems unlikely that they were written independently. The predominant view now is that Mark was written first and was used as a source for Matthew and Luke. Because of their similarities, they have, since the 1780’s been known as the synoptic Gospels.<sup>3</sup> Wikipedia has a nice graphic in the right margin showing the relationship between the three books, with 76% of Mark’s content appearing in both Matthew and Luke.<sup>4</sup>

A side note is that a resource that I found very useful in my study of the Gospels was a website that cross linked Old Testament quotations with the New Testament.<sup>5</sup>

## Matthew

The content of the book of Matthew does not identify its author, but tradition is that this first book of the New Testament is the Gospel as told by Matthew, one of Jesus’ twelve disciples.<sup>6</sup> The target audience is widely accepted to be the Jews.<sup>7 8 9 10</sup> One of Matthew’s goals was to prove to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah that was prophesied about in their holy scriptures, which for the most part is our Old Testament. In fact he included up to 67 Old Testament quotations<sup>11</sup>, in 56 different statements, most of which were words spoken by Jesus.<sup>12</sup> To re-enforce this assertion,

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G2098&t=NKJV>

<sup>2</sup> Strong, James. *A New Harmony and Exposition of the Gospels*. New York, Carlton & Phillips, 1852.

<https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Synoptic-Gospels>

<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel\\_of\\_Matthew#Setting\\_and\\_date](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Matthew#Setting_and_date)

<sup>5</sup> <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Quotations-NT-OT.htm>

<sup>6</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel\\_of\\_Matthew#Author](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Matthew#Author)

<sup>7</sup> Monser, Harold E (Editor). *Cross-Reference Bible*. New York, Chicago, Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1901, p1751.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=It7AAAAMAAJ&pg=PA1751>

<sup>8</sup> Bland, Rev. M. *Annotations on the Gospel of St. Matthew*. Cambridge, J. Smith, 1878, p5.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=X8LM165r68oC&pg=PA5>

<sup>9</sup> Tarbell, Martha. *Tarbell's Teacher's Guide*. New York, Chicago, Fleming H. Revell Company, 1919, p32.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=qZJVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA32>

<sup>10</sup> Robertson, A.T. *Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew*. New York, Macmillan Company, 1911, p27.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=1dKsbMPkOhwC&pg=PA27>

<sup>11</sup> <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Matthew-OTQuotations.htm>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/intros/matthew.cfm>



Matthew traces the genealogy of Jesus back to Abraham the forefather of the Jews and David their greatest king [[Matthew 1:1](#)].

[Elizabeth Talbot presented a lecture at the 2012 Oregon Conference Camp meeting \(which you can hear by clicking this link\)](#)<sup>13</sup> in which along with her booklet, made some very interesting points. The (mm:ss) at the beginning of each bullet are the time in minutes and seconds in the video. The lecture, being approximately an hour in length may leave out ideas and points made in the booklet. The pages if given at the end of the bullet are from her booklet, *Matthew - Prophecy Fulfilled*.<sup>14</sup>

- (4:43) The Gospel of Matthew has as a main premise, that God has the ability to re-route even though Israel took bad turns.
- (9:59) Matthew's audience [as Jews], liked the law, and kept the law, but now needed to understand what it had to do with Christ.
- (16:28) While Matthew's primary audience may have been the Jews, he also made it clear that everyone is included in the Messiah's blessing. Abraham is specifically mentioned in the genealogy and recall that it was through the covenant with Abraham that all the world was to be blessed. He also repeats, the phrase "from the east and the west," such as the story of the Magi from the east which is only found in Matthew. p17,27
- (15:45) Matthew's main title for Jesus is son of David. p13,14
- (11:15) Matthew wants us to understand that all the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms were about Jesus Christ. He was the fulfillment of what the prophets had foretold. p10,12
- (33:34) Jesus will live a perfect life where Israel failed; Jesus re-lives Israel's history and becomes victorious in every place Israel failed. p33
- (36:55) Jesus is called the Son of God because in the Old Testament Israel was called the son of God, and now Jesus in Israel's place is also called the Son of God.
- (44:26) In wrapping up her lecture, she asserts: Jesus re-lives our lives and perfectly prepares a record for us so that whenever we fall, He has the ability to re-route us. It's not cheap grace, that covers everything, and God doesn't care. It's that He personally would come and pay your ransom. He came and lived a perfect life, death, resurrection so that when we fall, He has the ability and authority to re-route us [to get us back on track].

What do you believe?

- How does Talbot's point about God being able to reroute directly relate to your life?
- If the target audience is the Jews, how is this book relevant to you?
- If you believe that Jesus is an equal member in the Trinity, does it bother you that he is called the Son of God?

## Mark

The book of Mark does not identify its author, other than the name of the book itself. Church tradition has long held that this book was written by John Mark, cousin of Barnabas [[Colossians 4:10](#)]. It is also assumed that this is the same Mark who worked closely with Peter [[1 Peter 5:13](#)], and hence this book could in a sense be considered the Gospel

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXw9AlkeiBQ>

<sup>14</sup> Talbot, Elizabeth Viera. *Matthew Prophecy Fulfilled*. Nampa, Idaho, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2009. [http://www.jesus101institute.org/transaction\\_detail.php?id=1](http://www.jesus101institute.org/transaction_detail.php?id=1)

according to Peter.<sup>15</sup> More recently, some modern scholars have proposed a different Mark as the author<sup>16</sup>, but many people still hold to the traditional views. It has not always been so, but it is now a widely held view that the book of Mark was the first of the Gospels to be written. As such, it is also now thought that the authors of Matthew and Luke used Mark as a source.<sup>17</sup> Few references to the Old Testament<sup>18</sup> and explaining Jewish customs<sup>19</sup> are just some of the reasons that many believe that Gentiles are the target audience of the book of Mark.

[Elizabeth Talbot presented a lecture at the 2012 Oregon Conference Camp meeting \(which you can hear by clicking this link\)](#)<sup>20</sup> in which along with her booklet, she made some very interesting points. The (mm:ss) at the beginning of each bullet are the time in minutes and seconds in the video. The lecture, being approximately an hour in length may leave out ideas and points made in the booklet. The pages if given at the end of the bullet are from her booklet, *Mark - Good News!*<sup>21</sup>

- (9:50) Mark is the only one of the four to call his narrative the Gospel. The general consensus is that this is first of the four Gospels that was written. p8
- (11:03) Mark's challenge is: how do you break through to a people who thought the Messiah would come with an army to save their nation alone, that there was a much bigger picture that was more inclusive.
- (13:30) The pivot point of the book of Mark is the middle, [chapter 8:31](#), out of the 16 chapters. The first half will answer the question: who is He? Answer: the Son of God. The second half will concentrate on why He had to die. p9,10
- (14:40) In [Mark 8:31](#) Jesus makes a revelation that nobody has heard before: that the authoritative Son of God had to die. A dying Messiah was an oxymoron to the Jews. The second half question: why does he have to die? He is the suffering Son of Man. p10
- (15:50) Three predictions that He would die. Chapter [8:31](#), [9:31](#), [10:33](#). p11
- (16:22) The climactic verse of Mark is chapter [10:45](#) which answers the question: why He has to die; to give His life a ransom for many. p41
- (18:55) Chapters 6-8 uses bread to reveal the shocking truth, that the Messiah came not just for the Jews but for everybody, even those who don't think like we do. p33
- (20:55) A series of two step teachings where He will show that that they only understood part, but that there was more that they didn't understand. p35

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/intros/mark.cfm>

<sup>16</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel\\_of\\_Mark](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Mark)

<sup>17</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel\\_of\\_Mark#Place\\_in\\_the\\_Christian\\_Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Mark#Place_in_the_Christian_Church)

<sup>18</sup> Smith, William (editor). *A Dictionary of the Bible*. Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1863, p238.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=3hBUAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA238>

<sup>19</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel\\_of\\_Mark#Composition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Mark#Composition)

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sc9CnjzTOA4>

<sup>21</sup> Talbot, Elizabeth Viera. *Mark Good News*. Nampa, Idaho, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2012.

[http://www.jesus101institute.org/transaction\\_detail.php?id=14](http://www.jesus101institute.org/transaction_detail.php?id=14)

- (20:14) Three stories about bread. The word bread was used 19 times in chapters 6-8.

This column is what the disciples expected	This is the result	This is what they didn't expect
Miraculously multiplying bread to feed large crowds of people		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ (22:10) <a href="#">Mark 6:33-44</a> feeding in Jewish territory. p33</li> <li>▪ 5 loaves of <u>bread</u></li> <li>▪ Took, blessed, broke, gave</li> <li>▪ They all ate and were <u>satisfied</u></li> <li>▪ 12 baskets left</li> <li>▪ Word used for basket was <a href="#">κόφινος, kophinos</a><sup>22</sup></li> <li>▪ 5000 men besides women and children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Satisfied</u></li> <li>▪ <u>Bread</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ (31:24) <a href="#">Mark 8:1-9</a> feeding in Gentile territory [the "other side"] p34</li> <li>▪ 7 loaves of <u>bread</u></li> <li>▪ Took, blessed, broke, gave</li> <li>▪ They all ate and were <u>satisfied</u></li> <li>▪ 7 baskets left</li> <li>▪ Word used for basket was <a href="#">σπυρίς, spyris</a><sup>23</sup></li> <li>▪ 4000 men besides women and children</li> </ul>
(28:14) Jesus steps into unclean territory and meets a Syrophoenician woman who asks for healing of her daughter. Jesus carries on a conversation with her about bread. <a href="#">Mark 7:24-30</a>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is not right to take the children's <u>bread</u> and give it to the dogs</li> <li>▪ Let the children be <u>satisfied</u> first</li> <li>▪ The Jews were considered the children in this case and this statement was in line with their expectations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Satisfied</u></li> <li>▪ <u>Bread</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In the eyes of the disciples, this woman was not worthy of receiving a miracle from Jesus</li> <li>▪ After all she was a woman, a gentile, and from the region of Tyre and Sidon where the wicked Queen Jezebel came from</li> <li>▪ She answered, even the dogs under the table feed on the children's <u>bread</u> crumbs</li> <li>▪ Jesus healed her daughter and she was <u>satisfied</u></li> </ul>
(35:20) Summary <a href="#">Mark 8:18</a> Jesus asked the disciples; how much was left after feeding the 5000? They answered 12. Then He asked, how much was left after feeding the 4000? They answered 7. p35		
(36:52) Jesus heals a blind man in two steps <a href="#">Mark 8:22-25</a> p36		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Jesus partially healed the man and asked if he could see anything</li> <li>▪ He answered yes, but people looked like trees walking around</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ He saw everything clearly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Then Jesus touched him again</li> </ul>
(37:33) This two-step healing was an enacted parable. After the first touch, he could partially see. This was like the disciples partial vision of who Jesus was and what His mission was. They understood from the Old Testament that Jesus would come, but they didn't understand that He would suffer and die. p37		
(38:10) <a href="#">Mark 8:27-31</a> The pivotal moment in the book of Mark comes. Jesus asked the disciples, "who am I?" Peter answers, you are the Christ. This was true, but they didn't see clearly, they were seeing the first half, they were seeing men like trees walking. Then in verse 31, Jesus tells them the Son of Man must be rejected by the leaders, killed, and in three days be resurrected. p38-39		

- (39:15) In [Mark 14:22](#) once again Jesus took, blessed, broke & gave the bread. The He said, take, this is My body. The He elaborates, there is enough bread for Jews & Gentiles, for those on this side & those on that side, those

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G2894&t=NKJV>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G4711&t=NKJV>

who worship with hands down & those with hands up, those who like classical music & those who don't, there is enough bread for everybody. p35

- (42:25) This brings us to perhaps the most important verse in [Mark 10:45](#), the climax, where Jesus explains that His death will pay a ransom for us. He was our goel, our kinsman redeemer [and you can see a summary of the roles of the goel at the end of my chapter on [Ruth](#).] p41

What do you believe?

- Have you taken the time to understand the concept of the goel, the kinsman redeemer, and then to understand how God is filling those roles for you?
- Why do you think the Jews were so blinded to the true mission of the Messiah?
- Does the message of enough bread for everyone, change your idea of who will be saved?

## Luke

Even though the book doesn't explicitly identify its author, there is virtually no debate that this book along with its companion volume, Acts, were written by the physician Luke, who was also a missionary with the Apostle Paul. The target audience is explicitly given in the first four verses, as "most excellent Theophilus," [[Luke 1:1-4](#)] who was also addressed at the beginning of Acts. [[Acts 1:1](#)]

Sir William Ramsay called Luke a first rate historian,<sup>24</sup> which fits in with his style of giving historical context such as in [Luke 1:5](#), [Luke 2:1-2](#), [Luke 3](#), [Acts 5:37](#). Another interesting fact is that despite the quantity of books written by Paul and John, assuming the book of Acts was also written by him, Luke was the biggest contributor to the New Testament in terms of volume or words written.<sup>25</sup>

[Elizabeth Talbot presented a lecture at the 2012 Oregon Conference Camp meeting \(which you can hear by clicking this link\)](#)<sup>26</sup>, in which along with her booklet, she made some very interesting points. The (mm:ss) at the beginning of each bullet are the time in minutes and seconds in the video. The lecture, being approximately an hour in length may leave out ideas and points made in the booklet. The pages if given at the end of the bullet are from her booklet, *Luke - Salvation for All*.<sup>27</sup>

- (6:43) The book of Luke is the one which uses the words salvation and Savior the most of the four Gospels. p7
- (8:04) The Gospel of Luke is so inclusive that he writes: p7
  - A story of a man, followed the story of a woman, ...
  - A story of a Jew, followed by a story of a Gentile
  - A story of a Jew, followed by a story of a prostitute
  - A story of a Jew, followed by a story of a tax collector
- (9:14) 40% of the content in Luke is not found in any of the other Gospels
- Pieces of the puzzle laid out in the shape of a cross:

<sup>24</sup> Ramsay, Sir William Mitchell. *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*. London, New York, Toronto, Hodder & Stoughton, 1915, p222. <https://books.google.com/books?id=NC9VAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA222>

<sup>25</sup> <http://overviewbible.com/word-counts-books-of-bible/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3gbXD0Zslc>

<sup>27</sup> Talbot, Elizabeth Viera. *Salvation for All*. Nampa, Idaho, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2011.

[http://www.jesus101institute.org/transaction\\_detail.php?id=5](http://www.jesus101institute.org/transaction_detail.php?id=5)

	(12:12) The first big prophesy of promise is in <a href="#">Genesis 3:15</a> . There would be a descendant of the woman, who would be a Savior, that would come to the world and do for us what we could not do for ourselves.	
(15:04) One piece of the puzzle that only Luke brings, <a href="#">Micah 5:2</a> . The Savior would be born in Bethlehem.	(12:42) The second is <a href="#">Genesis 12:3</a> . God makes a covenant with Abraham and told him that the Savior would come through his lineage. Through him all the world would be blessed.	(14:02) Another is <a href="#">Isaiah 7:14</a> . A virgin will be with child.
	(13:24) The third is <a href="#">2 Samuel 7:11</a> . God makes a covenant with David that he would have a descendant who would have the throne forever.	

- (15:37) Six main people in the covenant line: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus
- (18:53) Let's talk about the name Caesar Augustus mentioned in [Luke 2:1](#). Luke is going to contrast this narrative with Caesar Augustus, who was a beloved Emperor.
  - His official name was *Imp(erator) Caesar divi f(i)lius* ("son of a god") *Augustus*. p13
  - During his rule there was great peace (pax romana). He built 50,000 miles of road (common saying: all roads lead to Rome). With peace and roads, it made it easier for people to travel.
  - He was venerated for his achievements and was referred to as "the savior of the world." This was the same word used in the Bible for Jesus.
  - His birthday was called the gospel [[εὐαγγέλιον, euangelion](#)]<sup>28</sup>, meaning "good news."
  - At the time, there were emperor cults, and sometimes big choirs would travel with him.
- (26:14) The first thing the angels said to the shepherds was "do not be afraid." This is the most common exhortation in all of scripture. p14
- (26:55) Now we are ready to understand what the angel choir will announce to the shepherds in [Luke 2:10-14](#). Everything they said sounded like they were announcing the emperor. p14
  - "I bring you good news," which the shepherds had heard before, but the angel added, "of great joy"
  - "For all the people," not just Romans.
  - The good news is that, "there has been born to you a Savior," which the shepherds had heard before, but the angel adds, "who is Christ the Lord."
  - Then the angel choir sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men..."

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G2098&t=NKJV>

- (32:26) This good news of the Savior will be the most important interpretive tool for understanding the Old Testament. From now on, we should interpret the entire Old Testament as pointing toward Jesus, our Savior and Redeemer.
- (33:06) The Gospel of Jesus Christ is what the Savior has done for you 2000 years ago. If you believe, God will do things in you and through you for His glory. What God, though the Holy Spirit does in and through you is not the Gospel, it is the result of your acceptance of the Gospel. This was a big part of the divergence between the Protestants and the Catholics. One of the five Solas of the Protestant movement stated the belief that we are saved by faith, but the Catholic Church said no, it is by faith and works.
- (40:00) In [Luke 24:13-27](#), Jesus teaches the disciples on the road to Emmaus, how to interpret the Bible in light of the cross. In [verse 27](#), it says beginning with Moses and the prophets, He explained the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. When they understood this, their hearts were burning within them, and they had to share it [\[verse 32-33\]](#). Then Jesus appeared before the disciples in the upper room and repeated His teaching to the larger group, that the things written in the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms about Him were fulfilled. p59
- (51:01) There is an inclusio in the Gospel of Luke. At the beginning, [Luke 2:10](#), the angels proclaimed “good news of great joy,” and in [Luke 24:52](#), in the next to the last verse of the book, it says the disciples returned to Jerusalem with “great joy.”
- (53:53) There were two groups of people that were not allowed to be witnesses in court because they were considered too low. They were shepherds and women. The shepherds were the first witnesses of Jesus’ birth, and women were the first witnesses of His resurrection. Salvation is for all. p12

What do you believe?

- If you believe the good news of salvation is available to all, does this affect how you think or feel about the people who are down and out in society?
- Where do you stand on the idea that the good news of the Gospel is what Jesus accomplished on the cross for you 2000 years ago, not what He can do in and through you today?
- In your understanding, what is the relationship between what you do and your salvation?

## John

The authorship of the book of John is traditionally credited to the disciple and apostle John. He is also one of the three, Peter, James & John, who seemed to form an inner circle. But in addition to that he often referred to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved. This book is generally considered to be the last of the four Gospels written but does not rely on the other three as sources. The target audience stated in [John 20:31](#) appears to be Christians, with its purpose being to secure and strengthen their faith. Some believe that John wrote with the purpose of filling in the blanks left by the other three Gospels.<sup>29</sup> This book is the only one that mentions more than the final Passover in Jesus’ ministry. In fact, without John, which mentions Jesus’ attendance at three Passover’s specifically, it would be difficult to know that His ministry spanned more than two years. Modern scholars have gravitated away from the traditional authorship<sup>30</sup>, but probably most people still hold the traditional views.

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/intros/john.cfm>

<sup>30</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel\\_of\\_John](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_John)

[Elizabeth Talbot presented a lecture at the 2012 Oregon Conference Camp meeting \(which you can hear by clicking this link\)](#)<sup>31</sup>, in which along with her booklet, she made some observations and highlights from the book of John. The (mm:ss) at the beginning of each bullet are the time in minutes and seconds in the video. The lecture, being approximately an hour in length may leave out ideas and points made in the booklet. The pages if given at the end of the bullet are from her booklet, *John – God Became Flesh*.<sup>32</sup>

- (6:40) The Gospel of John was the last written and is very different from Matthew, Mark & Luke, which are called synoptic (same optic) because they share a lot of common content and point of view. John uses different material and methods to present his portrait of Jesus. 92% of John is unique from the synoptic Gospels.
- (7:45) John's purpose and reason for writing are found in [John 20:30-31](#). It was not his purpose to write everything Jesus did.
  - [John 20:31](#) but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. [John 20:31 NKJV](#)

John used the word "believe" 97 times in his Gospel, and he shows that Jesus is always trying to bring people from knowledge to belief. p63
- (10:27) The Gospel of John is written in two levels. Every story is written in two levels, the level you see and the level you can only enter if you believe. John does not record any of Jesus' parables. p7
- (12:18) Matthew started his genealogy with Abraham, Luke began with Adam, but John starts in the beginning. He wants the reader to know that Jesus is God, that he existed from the beginning, and that He created all things. [John 1:1-3](#)
- (13:08) In John, the phrase used for the cross is "the hour" or "My hour," and when the hour finally comes, it is only John which records the words, "it is finished." p12
- (13:48) In [John 4:4](#) where it says "He had to pass through Samaria," it had nothing to do with geography. The Jews made sure there were roads so that they would never have to pass through Samaria. He "had to pass through Samaria" because He had to find the Samaritan woman. p21
  - (18:06) Samaritans got very confused and when they finally chose to worship the same God as the Jews, they only accepted the Pentateuch. They did not accept the Psalms and the Prophets as inspired scripture. p21
  - (18:56) She had married five times.
  - (19:20) She came to the well alone and at noon because she had no friends.
  - (20:08) In that society, if you had more than three divorces, you became an outcast. You could not enter the synagogue, nobody could invite you to dinner, and no reputable person would be seen with you.
  - (20:31) In the first century, a woman could not initiate divorce. The fact that she was divorced five times meant that she was rejected by every man who knew her intimately.
  - (22:20) There were five obstacles, layers, Jesus had to get through to reach the woman's heart. They are the same layers we use today to protect ourselves from hurt.
    - (23:46) The first obstacle was prejudice. Jesus asked the woman for a drink. She asked Jesus, how is it that you, a Jew, are talking to me, a Samaritan and a woman [[v9](#)]. She tried to use this to keep Jesus from getting too close. Jesus ignores her attempt to raise this layer and pushes on. p22

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ml7YdkKubiw>

<sup>32</sup> Talbot, Elizabeth Viera. *God Became Flesh*. Nampa, Idaho, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2010. [http://www.jesus101institute.org/transaction\\_detail.php?id=3](http://www.jesus101institute.org/transaction_detail.php?id=3)

- (25:35) The second was religious superiority. Jesus starts hinting about who He is as He starts talking about living water [v10]. She thinks He is talking about literal water and asks if He is greater than Jacob [v11-12]. Again, Jesus ignores her next layer and pushes on. p23
- (29:00) The next layer is superficial truth. Jesus asks her to call her husband [v16]. She responds, I have no husband [v17]. Jesus saw right through her superficial response [v17-18]. She had never met a man that knew everything about her and would keep talking to her. p24
- (35:27) The fourth layer was religiosity. It is about rules and regulations, do's and don'ts, lists, but no joy or Jesus. It's about thinking your religious preferences are principles. She said our fathers worshiped on this mountain and you Jews worship on that mountain. Who is right? [v20] p25
- (43:21) The last layer was procrastination. She said, one day the Messiah will come and He will explain everything [v25]. Then Jesus told her directly, I who speak to you am He. This is the only time prior to His crucifixion that He made this declaration of who He really was. p26
- (44:50) The woman took a sip of Jesus' water and got so excited she forgot her own pot [v28-29]. She went back to the city and told them that she had found a man who knew everything about her [and talked to her], is this not the Christ? Jesus knows all our shortcomings and secret sins and still wants us to come to Him and drink the water of life he offers. In describing this water to the woman, Jesus said, "but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." [John 4:14 NKJV](#). p26

What do you believe?

- If you believe God has no beginning, as many Christians do, what does John mean with the phrase "in the beginning," in [John 1:1](#)?
- Do you take [John 1:3](#) to mean that Jesus and not God the Father created our world in seven days?
- In his purpose statement in [John 20:31](#), he wrote that you may believe. If you truly believe and it's not just knowledge, how would it be apparent in your life?

## Introduction to the Gospel of Jesus Christ

[Luke 1:1-4](#), [John 1:1-14](#), [Mark 1:1](#)<sup>33</sup>

[Luke 1:1](#) Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, <sup>2</sup> just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, <sup>3</sup> it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, <sup>4</sup> that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed. [Luke 1:1-4 NKJV](#)

[John 1:1](#) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. <sup>4</sup> In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

<sup>33</sup> Strong. p1. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n53/mode/2up>



<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God, whose name [was] John. <sup>7</sup> This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. <sup>8</sup> He was not that Light, but [was sent] to bear witness of that Light. <sup>9</sup> That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. <sup>11</sup> He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. <sup>12</sup> But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. [John 1:1-14 NKJV](#)

[Mark 1:1](#) The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. [Mark 1:1 NKJV](#)

Luke's Gospel was addressed to a Theophilus. There are numerous theories about who Theophilus was, six of which were listed on wikipedia.<sup>34</sup>

- Coptic – a person from Alexandria, a person of eminent quality, perhaps a Jew
- Roman official – mostly because he was referred to as “most excellent”
- Honorary title – meaning “friend of God,” and hence addressed to anyone who fit the title
- Lawyer – of Paul during his trial in Rome
- Jewish priest – possible the High Priest and son of Annas
- Titus Flavius Sabinus – former prefect and older brother of future Roman Emperor Vespasian

From other sources, the title “most excellent,” leads many to believe that he was a Roman government official or influential citizen who had been converted. It has also been suggested that perhaps he published the writings of Luke.<sup>35 36 37 38</sup>

John's introduction gives us several interesting points which I will list in my own words.

- Jesus was with God, He is God, has always existed with God
- Jesus was the creator of all things
- He gave life to man and He also gave light (I believe to mean hope)
- He became flesh

I believe it is abundantly clear in the Bible that Jesus and the Father are not the same person or being. This introduction along with other things Jesus would say lead me to believe that He, and not the Father, is the one who created and spoke to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

[Genesis 1:1](#) In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. [Genesis 1:1 NKJV](#)

<sup>34</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theophilus\\_\(biblical\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theophilus_(biblical))

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/intros/luke.cfm>

<sup>36</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel\\_of\\_Luke](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Luke)

<sup>37</sup> Robertson, A.T.. *Luke the Historian in the Light of Research*. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920, p5.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=P9oUAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA5>

<sup>38</sup> Clarke, Adam. *Commentary and Critical Notes on the New Testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*. New York, Waugh and T. Mason, 1833, p333. <https://books.google.com/books?id=BGICAQAIAAJ&pg=PA333>

[Genesis 3:8](#) And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup> Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where [are] you?" [Genesis 3:8-9 NKJV](#)

The One who spoke to Noah before the flood.

[Genesis 6:13](#) And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. [Genesis 6:13 NKJV](#)

The One who spoke to Abraham and even appeared to him in human form.

[Genesis 12:1](#) Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup> I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." [Genesis 12:1-3 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 18:1](#) Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. <sup>2</sup> So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw [them], he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, [Genesis 18:1-2 NKJV](#)

[John 8:54](#) Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God. <sup>55</sup> "Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. <sup>56</sup> "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw [it] and was glad." <sup>57</sup> Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" <sup>58</sup> Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." <sup>59</sup> Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. [John 8:54-59 NKJV](#)

The One who spoke to Isaac, Jacob and Moses.

[Genesis 26:2](#) Then the LORD appeared to him and said: "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. <sup>3</sup> "Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. [Genesis 26:2-3 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 28:13](#) And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: "I [am] the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. <sup>14</sup> "Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. <sup>15</sup> "Behold, I [am] with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you." [Genesis 28:13-15 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 3:13](#) Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, [when] I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What [is] His name?' what shall I say to them?" <sup>14</sup> And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' " <sup>15</sup> Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This [is] My name forever, and this [is] My memorial to all generations.' [Exodus 3:13-15 NKJV](#)

I believe Jesus was the public image of the Father. I don't think we can ever really understand what Jesus gave up to take human form and how much if any of it was permanent. Which brings us to the statement, "The Word became flesh." Four simple words with meaning so deep we will probably never fully understand them. Ellen White wrote the following in the *Desire of Ages*.

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,— God's thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, "I have declared unto them Thy name,"—"merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,"—"that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which "angels desire to look," and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which "seeketh not her own" has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto. [Desire of Ages, p19-20](#).<sup>39</sup>

What do you believe?

- If you believe that God has always existed, what does John mean by "in the beginning?"
- Do you believe the God of the Old Testament was Jesus?
- Did God have to become flesh to save us?

## Miraculous birth of John the Baptist

[Luke 1:5-25](#), [Luke 1:57-80](#)<sup>40</sup>

[Luke 1:5](#) There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife [was] of the daughters of Aaron, and her name [was] Elizabeth. <sup>6</sup> And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. <sup>7</sup> But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.

<sup>8</sup> So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, <sup>9</sup> according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. <sup>10</sup> And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. <sup>11</sup> Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. <sup>12</sup> And when Zacharias saw [him], he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

<sup>39</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p19-20. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=19>

<sup>40</sup> Strong. p4. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n57/mode/2up>

<sup>13</sup> But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. <sup>14</sup> "And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. <sup>15</sup> "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.

<sup>16</sup> "And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup> "He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

[Malachi 4:5](#) Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. <sup>6</sup> And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

[Malachi 4:5-6 NKJV](#)

<sup>18</sup> And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years."

<sup>19</sup> And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. <sup>20</sup> "But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time."

<sup>21</sup> And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple. <sup>22</sup> But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless.

<sup>23</sup> So it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house. <sup>24</sup> Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, <sup>25</sup> "Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on [me], to take away my reproach among people." [Luke 1:5-25 NKJV](#)

[Luke 1:57](#) Now Elizabeth's full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son. <sup>58</sup> When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, they rejoiced with her.

<sup>59</sup> So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zacharias. <sup>60</sup> His mother answered and said, "No; he shall be called John."

<sup>61</sup> But they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name." <sup>62</sup> So they made signs to his father--what he would have him called.

<sup>63</sup> And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, "His name is John." So they all marveled. <sup>64</sup> Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue [loosed], and he spoke, praising God. <sup>65</sup> Then fear came on all who dwelt around them; and all these sayings were discussed throughout all the hill country of Judea. <sup>66</sup> And all those who heard [them] kept [them] in their hearts, saying, "What kind of child will this be?" And the hand of the Lord was with him.

<sup>67</sup> Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

<sup>68</sup> "Blessed [is] the Lord God of Israel,  
For He has visited and redeemed His people,

<sup>69</sup> And has raised up a horn of salvation for us  
In the house of His servant David,

<sup>70</sup> As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets,  
Who [have been] since the world began,

<sup>71</sup> That we should be saved from our enemies [Psalm 106:10](#) He saved them from the hand of him who hated [them],  
And from the hand of all who hate us, And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. [Psalm 106:10 NKJV](#)

<sup>72</sup> To perform the mercy [promised] to our fathers  
And to remember His holy covenant,  
<sup>73</sup> The oath which He swore to our father Abraham:

<sup>74</sup> To grant us that we,  
Being delivered from the hand of our enemies,  
Might serve Him without fear,

<sup>75</sup> In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.

<sup>76</sup> "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest;  
For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways,

<sup>77</sup> To give knowledge of salvation to His people  
By the remission of their sins,

<sup>78</sup> Through the tender mercy of our God,  
With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us;

<sup>79</sup> To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death,  
To guide our feet into the way of peace."

[Malachi 3:1](#) "Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts. [Malachi 3:1 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 107:10](#) Those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, ... [Psalm 107:10 NKJV](#)

<sup>80</sup> So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel.  
[Luke 1:57-80 NKJV](#)

Luke is the only one who gives us the miraculous circumstances of the birth of John the Baptist, the Messiah's herald. In fact, it is interesting to learn that the pregnancies of Jesus and John overlapped, and that their mothers were related.

[Luke 1:36](#) "Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. [Luke 1:36 NKJV](#)

Before John was even born, the angel announcing his birth drew a parallel to Elijah, a well-known prophet from the Old Testament.

[Luke 1:17](#) "He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." [Luke 1:17 NKJV](#)

This leads to the topic of John's destiny in life. In ancient times when a king would travel somewhere, forerunners would be sent ahead of the king to fill in the potholes and smooth the road, thus reducing some of the obstacles. There would also be heralds who would announce the coming of the king so that the people could be prepared to receive and honor him when he arrived. John was called the "forerunner" of Jesus, because his life's mission was to prepare the people and announce the arrival of the Messiah. I believe Zacharias and Elizabeth did an amazing job of teaching their son not only what was expected of him but instilling in him a desire to fulfill his life's destiny.

This is not the first instance of miraculous birth in old age recorded in the Bible. The birth of Isaac, the father of Israel (Jacob) was foretold to Abraham and Sarah but did not occur until they were 100 and 90 years of age.

[Genesis 17:15](#) Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah [shall be] her name. <sup>16</sup> "And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be [a

mother of] nations; kings of peoples shall be from her." <sup>17</sup> Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Shall [a child] be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear [a child]?" <sup>18</sup> And Abraham said to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!" <sup>19</sup> Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, [and] with his descendants after him. [Genesis 17:15-19 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 21:1](#) And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. <sup>2</sup> For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. <sup>3</sup> And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him--whom Sarah bore to him--Isaac. <sup>4</sup> Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. <sup>5</sup> Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. <sup>6</sup> And Sarah said, "God has made me laugh, [and] all who hear will laugh with me." <sup>7</sup> She also said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne [him] a son in his old age." [Genesis 21:1-7 NKJV](#)

What do you believe?

- There are additional instances of miraculous births in the Bible. How do you think God chose when to use this approach and why?
- Do you feel like Zacharias was being punished by losing his voice for his understandable doubt, or do you feel this was just another miracle to help the people believe?
- If John had been unfaithful in fulfilling his mission, similar to how Sampson made bad choices [[Judges 13-16](#)], could that have altered not the outcome, but the course of Jesus' ministry?

## Birth of Jesus to the Virgin Mary

[Luke 1:26-56](#), [Luke 2:1-7](#), [Matthew 1:18-25](#)

[Matthew 1:18](#) Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: ...

[Luke 1:26](#) Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, [Matthew 1:18](#) ... After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, ... of the house of David. The virgin's name [was]

Mary. <sup>28</sup> And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored [one], the Lord [is] with you; blessed [are] you among women!"

<sup>29</sup> But when she saw [him], she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was.

<sup>30</sup> Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. <sup>32</sup> "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. <sup>33</sup> "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

<sup>34</sup> Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"

<sup>35</sup> And the angel answered and said to her, "[The] Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> "Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. <sup>37</sup> "For with God nothing will be impossible."

<sup>38</sup> Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Matthew <sup>1:18</sup> ... before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Then Joseph her husband, being a just [man], and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. <sup>20</sup> But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

<sup>22</sup> So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: <sup>23</sup> "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." [Isaiah 7:14](#) "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. [Isaiah 7:14 NKJV](#)

<sup>24</sup> Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife,

Luke <sup>1:39</sup> Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, <sup>40</sup> and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. <sup>42</sup> Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed [are] you among women, and blessed [is] the fruit of your womb! <sup>43</sup> "But why [is] this [granted] to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup> "For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. <sup>45</sup> "Blessed [is] she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said:

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

<sup>47</sup> And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

<sup>48</sup> For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant;  
For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.

<sup>49</sup> For He who is mighty has done great things for me,  
And holy [is] His name.

<sup>50</sup> And His mercy [is] on those who fear Him  
From generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with His arm;  
He has scattered [the] proud in the imagination of their hearts.

<sup>52</sup> He has put down the mighty from [their] thrones,  
And exalted [the] lowly

<sup>53</sup> He has filled [the] hungry with good things,  
And [the] rich He has sent away empty.

<sup>54</sup> He has helped His servant Israel,  
In remembrance of [His] mercy,

<sup>55</sup> As He spoke to our fathers,  
To Abraham and to his seed forever."

[Psalm 103:17](#) But the mercy of the LORD [is] from everlasting to everlasting  
On those who fear Him,  
And His righteousness to children's children, [Psalm 103:17 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 107:9](#) For He satisfies the longing soul,  
And fills the hungry soul with goodness. [Psalm 107:9  
NKJV](#)

<sup>56</sup> And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house. [Luke 1:39-56 NKJV](#)

[Luke 2:1](#) And it came to pass in those days [that] a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. <sup>3</sup> So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. <sup>4</sup> Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <sup>5</sup> to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. <sup>6</sup> So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. <sup>7</sup> And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and [Matthew 1:25](#) and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS. there was no room for them in the inn. [Luke 2:1-7 NKJV](#) [Matthew 1:25 NKJV](#)

The story in Matthew is mostly a story from Joseph's perspective, which should not be surprising because the genealogy is traced to him. Luke's account of the virgin birth is much more detailed with respect to Mary, and not surprisingly, his genealogy is traced to Mary. But Luke being the historian that he is, provides us with additional geographical and historical details. He first tells us that Joseph and Mary live in Nazareth in Galilee. Then he informs us of the census which brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem where Jesus was born. Tony Moore, in his presentations and workbooks for the video series titled, "[Tracing the footsteps of Jesus](#)," brings a unique perspective to the statement, "there was no room for them in the inn." He first suggests that as descendants of David, Joseph and Mary would most likely have had relatives that they could stay with. Next, he points out that in that culture and geography, homes usually began with a cave or below ground component. Then upper rooms or guest rooms would be built on top. The basement if you can call it that would also be the place where the family's livestock would be brought in for the night or from the cold weather. He suggests that the "inn" which had no room likely referred to the upper rooms, which were full of relatives, so they went down to the basement with the animals for some privacy when it was time for Jesus to be born.<sup>41</sup>

I find it interesting that often, other religions or mythology have parallels to what is written in the Bible. In this case specifically, Greek Mythology contains instances of heroes being born from the union of a god with a human. I can't help but feel these myths that parallel the Bible are Satan's attempt to dilute real truth.

The third of three major proposals that Talbot says Matthew makes, is that Jesus will re-live Israel's history. This is where the name, "Son of God" derives from. In the Old Testament, God called Israel His son, and now that Jesus is re-living Israel's history, He is also called the "Son of God."<sup>42</sup> These parallels begin even before Jesus is born. Joseph had a dream [[Matthew 1:20](#)], and if you will recall, before the nation of Israel came out of Egypt, another Joseph had dreams [[Genesis 37:5,9](#)].

Lastly, I can see how Matthew would point to [Isaiah 7:14](#) as a fulfillment of the virgin birth in hindsight, but I don't see how one would have read the story from that chapter and understand it to be a prophecy.

[Isaiah 7:10](#) Moreover the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying, <sup>11</sup> "Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above." <sup>12</sup> But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!" <sup>13</sup> Then he said, "Hear now, O house of David! [Is it] a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup> **"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.** <sup>15</sup> "Curds and honey He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup> "For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings. [Isaiah 7:10-16 NKJV](#)

<sup>41</sup> Moore, Tony R. *Tracing the Footsteps of Jesus – Volume 1*. Chino Hills, The Biblical World, 2011.

[http://footstepsofjesus.org/study\\_guides.html](http://footstepsofjesus.org/study_guides.html)

<sup>42</sup> Talbot. *Matthew Prophecy Fulfilled*. p33. (36:55 in the [lecture](#))



In fact Jews have refuted this claim by saying [Isaiah 7:14](#) was not a Messianic prophecy and furthermore, it doesn't necessarily imply virgin birth.<sup>43</sup> But I would say that many of the claimed prophecies fulfilled by Jesus are similar in nature. In retrospect we see things which were written in the Old Testament that occurred in the life of Christ, hence we call them fulfilled prophecy, but in fairness to the Jews many of these would not have been considered predictions in advance. But I have no problem with this since I believe the primary purpose of prophecy is assurance and confirmation and not prediction.

[John 16:4](#) "But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you. [John 16:4 NKJV](#)

[John 13:19](#) "Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am [He]. [John 13:19 NKJV](#)

As a general rule, Jesus said the scriptures which at the time were just the Old Testament, all testify of Him.

[John 5:39](#) "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. [John 5:39 NKJV](#)

So even if things written in the Old Testament didn't seem like predictions, if they were inspired by the Holy Spirit with the primary purpose being to testify of Jesus, I have no problem calling them fulfilled prophecies.

What do you believe?

- Do you feel it was necessary for both Joseph and Mary to be descendants of David for Jesus to have been considered the son of David?
- Why did the angel specifically make a point of Jesus receiving the throne of His father David, and what did he mean?
- Reading the context of the prophecy in [Isaiah 7:10-16](#), do you think this was a sign that actually happened at the time? If so, do you think that was not a virgin birth?

## Genealogy of Jesus

[Matthew 1:2-16](#), [Luke 3:23-38](#), [John 1:1-2](#)

Genealogy was very important to the Jews. For example, only descendants of Aaron could be priests. Proof of your ancestry was essentially the deed for your land. Tracing ancestry was also important in determining the closest of kin when someone was in need of a kinsman redeemer. Benham offered some other reasons genealogy was important. The fundamental law given to Adam ([Genesis 1:28](#)), Noah ([Genesis 9:7](#)), and Jacob ([Genesis 35:11](#)) was to "be fruitful and multiply." A large family gave importance to its chief ([Psalm 127:5](#)). Promises were made that all the families of the earth would be blessed through a Messiah that would be born to them.<sup>44</sup>

One of the first questions that people might have if they closely examined the genealogies in Matthew and Luke, is, why are they different? Of course, one big difference is that Matthew traces the genealogy of Jesus back to Abraham, while Luke goes all the way back to Adam. But they differ in another major way. Matthew traces the lineage from David

<sup>43</sup> <https://outreachjudaism.org/dual-prophecy-virgin-birth/>

<sup>44</sup> Benham, Daniel. Reflections on the Genealogy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. London, John Cochran, Strand., 1836, p2. <https://books.google.com/books?id=eSxBAAAACAAJ&pg=PA2>

through the entire line of Jewish kings, while Luke immediately diverges from the monarchical line beginning with Nathan, the son of David. But perhaps more importantly, how do they both seemingly end up with Joseph following different lines from David? The most common answer to this is that Eli, in [Luke 3:23](#), is the father-in-law of Joseph rather than his biological father.<sup>45</sup> Benham, agreeing with this even goes a little further, showing several other common relatives in the divergent lines.<sup>46</sup>

#### Genealogy from [Matthew 1:2-16 NKJV](#)

Abraham	Amminadab	Solomon (by Bathsheba)	Jotham	Shealtiel	Eliud
Isaac	Nahshon	Rehoboam	Ahaz	Zerubbabel	Eleazar
Jacob	Salmon	Abijah	Hezekiah	Abihud	Matthan
Judah	Boaz (by Rahab)	Asa	Manasseh	Eliakim	Jacob
Perez (by Tamar)	Obed (by Ruth)	Jehoshaphat	Amon	Azor	Joseph (Mary)
Hezron	Jesse	Joram	Josiah	Zadok	Jesus
Ram	David	Uzziah	Jeconiah	Achim	

#### Genealogy from [Luke 3:23-38 NKJV](#)

Jesus	Nahum	Zerubbabel	Jorim	Mattatha	Ram	Reu	Enoch
Joseph	Hesli	Shealtiel	Matthat	Nathan	Hezron	Peleg	Jared
Eli	Naggai	Neri	Levi	David	Perez	Heber	Mahalaleel
Matthat	Maath	Melchi	Simeon	Jesse	Judah	Shelah	Cainan
Levi	Mattathias	Addi	Judah	Obed	Jacob	Cainan	Enosh
Melchi	Semein	Cosam	Joseph	Boaz	Isaac	Arphaxad	Seth
Jannai	Josech	Elmadam	Jonam	Salmon	Abraham	Shem	Adam
Joseph	Joda	Er	Eliakim	Nahshon	Terah	Noah	God
Mattathias	Joanan	Joshua	Melea	Amminadab	Nahor	Lamech	
Amos	Rhesa	Eliezer	Menna	Admin	Serug	Methuselah	

#### Genealogy from [John 1:1-2 NKJV](#)

[John 1:1](#) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. [John 1:1-2 NKJV](#)

You could consider the first two verses of John to be a genealogy as well. Luke's begins with God and ends with Jesus, but John intends to show that Jesus (the Word), existed with God from the beginning and was in fact God.

There are several other points to be made of the genealogy in Matthew, some of which were already mentioned in the overview of his Gospel. First, I would like to make the observation that according to most biblical timelines, it was about 2000 years from Abraham to Christ [see [Appendix - The age of the world](#)]. Matthew begins the genealogy with Abraham, but also adds that Jesus was the son of David, arguably two of the most important figures in Jewish ancestry. David was their greatest king and there were numerous prophecies that the Messiah would be a son of David. The Jews were known to call Abraham their father [[John 8:39](#), [Matthew 3:9](#)], even though he was the ancestor of other nations as well. Abraham was the first and original recipient of the promise of their blessings, and through his grandson Jacob the nation was born. Matthew traces the lineage through the entire line of Jewish kings, down to Joseph, the legal father of Jesus. Though he was not the biological father, in the eyes of the law, he was considered the legal father of Jesus. In fact, in

<sup>45</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genealogy\\_of\\_Jesus#Maternal\\_ancestry\\_in\\_Luke](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genealogy_of_Jesus#Maternal_ancestry_in_Luke)

<sup>46</sup> Benham. p88. <https://books.google.com/books?id=eSxBAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA88>

Jewish law there is precedent for a legal heir to be fathered by a kinsman redeemer, in this case the Holy Spirit [see discussion on goel at the end of the chapter on [Ruth](#)].

Let's look at a few numbers. Matthew lists the genealogy in three sets of 14 generations. From Abraham to David, David to the Babylonian exile, and from the exile to Jesus. You actually need to count Jeconiah who existed right at the start of the exile in the third subdivision as well to get 14 generations. Dividing 2000 years / 41 yields 48.8 years. It seems unlikely that the average age at the birth of first-born sons would be that old. It also seems unlikely that there were exactly 14 generations in each sub-division. In fact, Luke lists 42 generations from David to Jesus. The well accepted explanation is that there are generations that were not listed, which is fine as long as the line was unbroken. Upon looking at the list of the kings of Judah, we can quickly see that there were three kings that were left out of the list [[Matthew 1:8](#), [The divided kingdom](#)]. This allowed Matthew to make a point with the numbers. The name David, in Hebrew is דָּוִד, [dāvid](#)<sup>47</sup>, which when broken down according to the number of the consonants adds up to 14. To illustrate this, see the first 6 letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

Position in the alphabet	Hebrew letter	English word for the Hebrew letter
1	א	Aleph
2	ב	Beth
3	ג	Gimel
4	ד	Daleth
5	ה	He
6	ו	Waw

6= ו, 4= ד; so 4 + 6 + 4 = 14. Talbot points out that the reason for this is to show that Jesus was the fulfillment of the prophecies regarding the One like David, who would establish the everlasting kingdom of God.<sup>48</sup>

Another point to be made of Matthew's genealogy is the inclusion of women, specifically four mothers were mentioned. Tamar [[Matthew 1:3](#), [Genesis 38](#)] posed as a prostitute so she could become pregnant by her father in law. Rahab [[Matthew 1:5](#), [Joshua 2,6](#)] was a prostitute, from Jericho, the first city overthrown when the Israelites entered Canaan. In the same verse, [Ruth](#), though a woman of noble character, came from the idolatrous nation of Moab. And finally, Bathsheba [[Matthew 1:6](#), [2 Samuel 11](#)], who committed adultery with King David. Matthew wanted his readers to understand that all nations, all people, regardless of what you have done, will be blessed through Jesus Christ.<sup>49</sup>

What do you believe?

- Does the genealogy of Jesus have significance for you or is it mostly for the benefit of the Jews?
- Why do you think Matthew and Luke traced a different genealogy?
- Do you think Luke skipped some generations as well, or do you think his was generationally complete?

## Dating the birth of Jesus

Having just mentioned the birth of Jesus, this might be a good time to ask when it occurred. It is probably worth pointing out that the year in our current widely accepted dating system was originally established to mark the years from the time Jesus was incarnated. This dating system was devised five centuries after the time of Christ by [Dionysius Exiguus](#)<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=H1732&t=NKJV>

<sup>48</sup> Talbot. *Matthew Prophecy Fulfilled*. p14. (15:00 in the [lecture](#))

<sup>49</sup> Talbot. *Matthew Prophecy Fulfilled*. p17, 21.

<sup>50</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dionysius\\_Exiguus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dionysius_Exiguus)

for the purpose of specifying Easter dates,<sup>51</sup> but it was not widely used until after A.D. 800.<sup>52 53</sup> Even then the [Julian calendar](#), which was introduced by [Julius Caesar](#)<sup>54</sup> in 46 B.C. was the predominant calendar throughout western civilization. In fact, it was not until 1582 that Pope [Gregory XIII](#)<sup>55</sup>, using the Dionysius year and a slight modification to the Julian months, introduced what is probably now the most widely used calendar ever.<sup>56 57</sup> There was no single year numbering system used in conjunction with the Julian calendar. The principal method was to specify the year or the years elapsed from when two named consuls took office.<sup>58</sup> I believe it was common throughout history to mark the passage of time in this way as well as from significant events, such as the founding of an empire or nation. In the following verse, often used to date the baptism of Jesus, Luke used the start of the reign of the Emperor Tiberius, but also added some consuls currently in office:

[Luke 3:1](#) Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, [Luke 3:1 NKJV](#)

In addition to dating from its emperors, some events were dated from the start of the Roman Empire. Dating from the start of an empire, is usually done after the fact and can at times be a bit ambiguous. It would not be surprising that Christians would consider the incarnation, conception or birth of Jesus as a significant event for dating purposes. But as mentioned above, this was done more than five centuries after the fact, and although there is no universally accepted date for the birth of Christ, the one our common dating system is based on is off by a few years.<sup>59</sup> The designation for this dating system is Anno Domini, which is Latin for: *In the year of our Lord*.

Probably the primary event that pushes birth of Jesus into the B.C. years is the death of Herod the Great, who is a key character in [Matthew 2](#). It is pretty widely accepted that Herod the Great died in the year 750 of Rome which corresponds to the year 4 B.C.<sup>60 61 62</sup> If this date is correct, then the birth of Jesus must have occurred in or before the year 4 B.C. The Bible doesn't tell us how much time elapsed between the birth of Jesus and the visit of the Magi and Herod's killing of the children in Bethlehem. Considering that he chose to kill boys up to two years of age leads many to speculate that there was up to two years between the birth of Jesus and the visit of the Magi.

Another historical event associated with the birth of Jesus is the census mentioned Luke 2, which was responsible for bringing Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem.

[Luke 2:1](#) And it came to pass in those days [that] a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.<sup>2</sup> This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.<sup>3</sup> So all went to be registered,

<sup>51</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anno\\_Domini#History](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anno_Domini#History)

<sup>52</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anno\\_Domini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anno_Domini)

<sup>53</sup> Bond, John James. *Handy-Book of Rules and Tables For Verifying Dates with the Christian Era*. London, George Bell & Sons, 1875, p10. <https://books.google.com/books?id=F3mcB6GnOtIC&pg=PR10>

<sup>54</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julius\\_Caesar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julius_Caesar)

<sup>55</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope\\_Gregory\\_XIII](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Gregory_XIII)

<sup>56</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gregorian\\_calendar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gregorian_calendar)

<sup>57</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian\\_calendar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_calendar)

<sup>58</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian\\_calendar#Year\\_numbering](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_calendar#Year_numbering)

<sup>59</sup> Gilbert, George Holly. *The Student's Life of Jesus*. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1900, p19.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=FDANAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA19>

<sup>60</sup> Gilbert. p19. <https://books.google.com/books?id=FDANAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA19>

<sup>61</sup> Morrison, William Douglas. *The Story of the Jews Under Roman Rule*. New York & London, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1895, p90.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=U18NAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA90>

<sup>62</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod\\_the\\_Great#Death](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod_the_Great#Death)

everyone to his own city. <sup>4</sup> Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, [Luke 2:1-4 NKJV](#)

In these verses two names are mentioned, the first of which, Caesar Augustus, is no problem because he was known to have lived until A.D. 15.<sup>63</sup> Quirinius as governor of Syria, however is a bit problematic.<sup>64</sup> It has been historically documented that he did not become governor of Syria until the year A.D. 6, at which time Herod was already dead.<sup>65 66</sup> So, instead of using this to reinforce the date, we need to find a way to explain the apparent contradiction. Luke actually mentions two census', this one, which he designates the first, and one in [Acts 5:37](#). The latter is supposed to be the census of A.D. 7 during the well-known governorship of Quirinius, hence the mention of "the first" in [Luke 2:2](#).<sup>67</sup> It seems that much of the writing I came across addressing this subject referenced the research and writings of William Ramsay. In a book published by him, *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*,<sup>68</sup> he mentions two of his earlier books with these comments. In the first, *The Church in the Roman Empire before A.D. 170*,<sup>69</sup> he wants to show that the book of Acts is a trustworthy historical document. In the second, *St. Paul the Traveler and the Roman Citizen*,<sup>70</sup> he aims to show that Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy; but he is possessed of the true historic sense. Ramsay's general approach to explaining this apparent contradiction seems to be to find weaknesses in the arguments. Secondly, to show that Luke is credible and accurate as a historian, implying that his writings can be treated as a historical source. Finally, to use new archaeological findings, such as the mounting evidence that Quirinius was likely a co-governor of Syria at the time of the "first census" when Herod was still alive. What all this means is that there is no undeniable evidence of the truth of Luke's statement, but neither is there undeniable proof that he was wrong.

The death of Herod places a limit on how late you can set the date of Jesus' birth. On the other side, [Luke 3](#) places a limit on how early you can set the birth of Jesus.

[Luke 3:1](#) Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, [Luke 3:1 NKJV](#)

[Luke 3:23](#) Now Jesus Himself began [His ministry at] about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) [the] son of Joseph, [the son] of Heli, [Luke 3:23 NKJV](#)

The date of the baptism which coincides with the start of the ministry of Jesus will be discussed in greater detail in, [Dating the baptism of Jesus](#), and is also scrutinized in [Appendix B in Daniel's seventy week prophecy](#). So, when Luke says Jesus was about thirty years of age, one must decide what qualifies as "about thirty." Is thirty-one about thirty? Is thirty-

<sup>63</sup> Morris, Robert. *The twelve Caesars (Julius to Domitian)*. La Grange, Kentucky, Published for the author, 1877, p 13.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=mf4VAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA13>

<sup>64</sup> Gilbert. p14-18. <http://books.google.com/books?id=FDANAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA14>

<sup>65</sup> Morrison. p121. <http://books.google.com/books?id=U18NAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA121>

<sup>66</sup> Fallows, Samuel. *The Popular and critical Bible encyclopedia*. Chicago, The Howard-Severance Company, 1911, p424.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=LLNUAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA424>

<sup>67</sup> Sweet, Louis Matthew. *The Birth and Infancy of Jesus Christ*. London, Paris, New York and Melbourne, Cassell & Company, Limited, 1907, p334-343. <https://books.google.com/books?id=P8cOAAAIAAJ&pg=PA334>

<sup>68</sup> Ramsay, Sir William Mitchell. *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*. London, New York, Toronto, Hodder & Stoughton, 1915, p222. <https://books.google.com/books?id=NC9VAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA222>

<sup>69</sup> Ramsay, Sir William Mitchell. *The Church in the Roman Empire before A.D. 170, Seventh Edition*. London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1903. <https://books.google.com/books?id=tj5AAAAAYAAJ>

<sup>70</sup> Ramsay, William Mitchell. *St. Paul the Traveler and the Roman Citizen*. New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1898.

<https://archive.org/stream/stpaultraveller01ramsgoog>

two about thirty? So, if we are able to choose the year A.D. 27 for the baptism, then thirty would place the birth at 4 B.C., thirty-one would place it at 5 B.C., etc... This is how the A.D./B.C. math works:  $27 - 30 - 1$  (because there is no year zero) = -4 which is 4 B.C. Based on this logic, I wouldn't want to go earlier than 6 B.C.

Considering what has been presented, I am comfortable placing the birth of Jesus between 6 and 4 B.C., which agrees with many scholars and historians.<sup>71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79</sup> The conversion between Julian Period (J.P.), Dionysian era (B.C./A.D.) and "ab urb condita" (A.U.C.) "founding of the city of Rome," are as follows:

Julian day 0 = January 1, 4713 B.C.<sup>80</sup>

1 A.U.C. = 753 B.C.<sup>81</sup>

Hence, 4709 J.P. would be 4 B.C. and 750 A.U.C would be 4 B.C. Of the material I referenced, I found Christopher Benson's book the most thorough and objective.

What do you believe?

- Why didn't Christians get their act together right away and document the exact birthdate of Jesus?
- In light of [Daniel 7:25](#) which speaks of one who will "intend to make alterations in time," do you find it of any significance that a Pope is responsible for the current dating system we use?
- Does the fact that our current widely accepted dating system, which counts years from the birth of Christ, add to the credibility of the Gospel or not?

## Announcement to the shepherds

[Luke 2:8-20](#)<sup>82</sup>

[Luke 2:8](#) Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. <sup>10</sup> Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. <sup>11</sup> "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is

<sup>71</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/?title=Anno\\_Domini#Historical\\_birth\\_date\\_of\\_Jesus](https://en.wikipedia.org/?title=Anno_Domini#Historical_birth_date_of_Jesus)

<sup>72</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chronology\\_of\\_Jesus#Date\\_of\\_birth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chronology_of_Jesus#Date_of_birth)

<sup>73</sup> Benson, Christopher. *The Chronology of our Saviours Life or An Inquiry into the True Time of the Birth, Baptism, and Crucifixion, of Jesus Christ*. Cambridge, University Press, 1810, p116. <https://books.google.com/books?id=SwAWAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA116>

<sup>74</sup> Strong. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n67/mode/2up>

<sup>75</sup> Wieseler, Karl. *A Chronological Synopsis of the Four Gospels*. Cambridge, Deighton, Bell & Co. 1864, p125.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=OEVVAAAACAAJ&pg=PA114>

<sup>76</sup> de Pressensé, Edmond. *Jesus Christ: His Times, Life, and Work*. London, Jackson, Walford, & Hodder, 1866, p210.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=tcYOAAAIAAJ&pg=PA210>

<sup>77</sup> Townsend, George. *The New Testament Arranged in Historical & Chronological Order*. Boston, Crocker & Brewster, 1844, p51.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=1uUsAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA51>

<sup>78</sup> Mann, Nicholas. *Of the True Years of the Birth and Death of Christ*. London, printed for J. Wilcox at Virgil's-Head, overagainst the New-Church in the Strands, 1733. <https://books.google.com/books?id=YapCAQAAMAAJ>

<sup>79</sup> Ferguson, James. *Astronomy Explained Upon Sir Isaac Newton's Principles*. Philadelphia, printed for and published by Matthew Carey, 1809, p423. <https://books.google.com/books?id=iLkNAQAIAAJ&pg=PA423>

<sup>80</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian\\_day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_day)

<sup>81</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ab\\_urb\\_condita#Relationship\\_with\\_Anno\\_Domini](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ab_urb_condita#Relationship_with_Anno_Domini)

<sup>82</sup> Strong. p18. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n73/mode/2up>

Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> "And this [will be] the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

<sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

<sup>15</sup> So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us."

<sup>16</sup> And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup> Now when they had seen [Him], they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. <sup>18</sup> And all those who heard [it] marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. <sup>19</sup> But Mary kept all these things and pondered [them] in her heart. <sup>20</sup> Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them. [Luke 2:8-20 NKJV](#)

Luke's Gospel is the only one that brings us the story of the announcement of the birth of Jesus to the shepherds. The angel announcement you just read stated that "today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior." Taking that literally, with the announcement being at night and the Jewish day beginning at sunset, Jesus should have been born in the last twelve hours. I wonder how the shepherds actually found what they were looking for considering that Bethlehem must have been quiet with most people asleep.

In her overview of the book of Luke, Talbot brought out some very interesting parallels between the emperor Caesar Augustus and the announcement of the birth of Christ to the shepherds.<sup>83</sup>

- His official name was *Imp(erator) Caesar divi f(ilius)* ("son of a god") *Augustus*. p13
- During his rule there was great peace (pax romana). He built 50,000 miles of road (common saying: all roads lead to Rome). With peace and roads, it made it easier for people to travel.
- He was venerated for his achievements and was referred to as "the savior of the world." This was the same word used in the Bible for Jesus.
- His birthday was called the gospel [[εὐαγγέλιον, euangelion](#)]<sup>84</sup>, meaning "good news."
- At the time, there were emperor cults, and sometimes big choirs would travel with him.

So, the angel announcement sounded very familiar to them, but the angel added some superlatives. This was not just good news; this was good news of great joy for all the people. This is not just the savior, but the Savior who is Christ the Lord. And it's a sure bet that after hearing the angel choir, nothing they would ever hear would measure up.

---

What do you believe?

- Why do you think the angel announcement was made to shepherds, one of the lowest of professions?
- How do you think the shepherds actually found Mary and the Baby when they went into Bethlehem?
- Can you do a word search in the Bible to discover how many times the greeting "fear not," "do not fear," or "do not be afraid," is used? And who is the speaker in most cases?

<sup>83</sup> Talbot, Elizabeth Viera. *Salvation for All*. Nampa, Idaho, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2011.

<sup>84</sup> <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G2098&t=NKJV>

## Dedication at the Temple

[Luke 2:21-39](#)<sup>85</sup>

[Luke 2:21](#) And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. <sup>22</sup> Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present [Him] to the Lord <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male [Exodus 13:2](#) "Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD" among the children of Israel, [both] of man and beast; it is Mine." [Exodus 13:2 NKJV](#)"),

<sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." <sup>25</sup> And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name [was] Simeon, and this man [was] just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, <sup>28</sup> he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

<sup>29</sup> "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace,

According to Your word;

<sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen Your salvation

<sup>31</sup> Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,

<sup>32</sup> A light to [bring] revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."

[Isaiah 42:6](#) "I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles, [Isaiah 42:6 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 49:6](#) Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.' " [Isaiah 49:6 NKJV](#)

<sup>33</sup> And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. <sup>34</sup> Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this [Child] is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against <sup>35</sup> "(yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

<sup>36</sup> Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; <sup>37</sup> and this woman [was] a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served [God] with fastings and prayers night and day. <sup>38</sup> And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

<sup>39</sup> So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their [own] city, Nazareth. [Luke 2:21-39 NKJV](#)

<sup>85</sup> Strong. p19. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n73/mode/2up>



The practice of circumcision was first given to Abraham [[Genesis 17:11](#)], then later given as a Law to Moses directly from God. At the time of Jesus, they apparently had a tradition of naming the child in the same ceremony, which many Jews still observe today. The full reading of the sacrificial law given to Moses follows:

[Leviticus 12:1](#) Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean. <sup>3</sup> 'And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. <sup>4</sup> 'She shall then continue in the blood of [her] purification thirty-three days. She shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are fulfilled.

<sup>5</sup> 'But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her customary impurity, and she shall continue in the blood of [her] purification sixty-six days.

<sup>6</sup> 'When the days of her purification are fulfilled, whether for a son or a daughter, she shall bring to the priest a lamb of the first year as a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. <sup>7</sup> 'Then he shall offer it before the LORD, and make atonement for her. And she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This [is] the law for her who has borne a male or a female.

<sup>8</sup> 'And if she is not able to bring a lamb, then she may bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons--one as a burnt offering and the other as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.'

" [Leviticus 12 NKJV](#)

At least thirty-three days after the naming and circumcision, Jesus was taken to the Temple and dedicated. We know this because Mary could not have appeared there to offer the sacrifice for her cleansing before the days of her purification were completed. The fact that they used two birds instead of a lamb and a bird showed their poverty.

Luke doesn't mention it, but the dedication of Jesus would have been accompanied by the payment of redemption money. This law had its beginnings from the time of the Exodus from Egypt.

[Exodus 13:2](#) "Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, [both] of man and beast; it is Mine." [Exodus 13:2 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 13:12](#) "that you shall set apart to the LORD all that open the womb, that is, every firstborn that comes from an animal which you have; the males [shall be] the LORD's. <sup>13</sup> "But every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem [it], then you shall break its neck. And all the firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. <sup>14</sup> "So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What [is] this?' that you shall say to him, 'By strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. <sup>15</sup> 'And it came to pass, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all males that open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.' [Exodus 13:12-15 NKJV](#)

But what did this mean that the firstborn belonged to God and that they needed to be redeemed? The firstborn of clean livestock was offered as a sacrifice, symbolizing the death the firstborn of God would suffer for our sins. Firstborn of unclean livestock would be killed as had happened in Egypt, or a substitute sacrifice could be offered in its place. I would take the latter to be a symbol of us, unclean human beings, who would either die or accept the substitute sacrifice of the Lamb of God and live.

[Numbers 3:11](#) Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: <sup>12</sup> "Now behold, I Myself have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the children of Israel. Therefore the Levites shall be Mine, <sup>13</sup> "because all the firstborn [are] Mine. On the day that I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast. They shall be Mine: I [am] the LORD." [Numbers 3:11-13 NKJV](#)

We didn't really get a chance to know what it would look like for the firstborn of every family to be dedicated to the Lord's service, because not too much later, the tribe of Levi were chosen by God instead. This is where we actually learn the redemption price for a firstborn male child. In [Numbers 3](#), the males of the tribe of Levi were counted to be 22,000 [\[Numbers 3:43\]](#) and the firstborn of Israel from the age of one month and older was 22,273.

[Numbers 3:46](#) "And for the redemption of the two hundred and seventy-three of the firstborn of the children of Israel, who are more than the number of the Levites, <sup>47</sup> "you shall take five shekels for each one individually; you shall take [them] in the currency of the shekel of the sanctuary, the shekel of twenty gerahs. [Numbers 3:46-47 NKJV](#)

I assume that Joseph and Mary must have paid the five shekel redemption price when Jesus was dedicated because in [Luke 2:39](#), it says they performed everything according to the law of the Lord. However, I believe that technically this price need not have been paid for Jesus, because not only was His life given in service to God, but he also fulfilled the substitutionary sacrifice for unclean humanity. Joseph and Mary may have wondered if they should reveal who Jesus was, or why the priest didn't realize who it was he registered and accepted the redemption money for. Had the priest known and acknowledged who Jesus was he probably should have refused the money. But there were at least two people in the temple who, in spite of His poor Galilean parents, did recognize who Jesus.

The words of Simeon must have seemed very strange to Joseph and Mary. We can't really know if his words were rehearsed or if they were spontaneously inspired by the Holy Spirit. A light of revelation to the Gentiles, was most likely a reference to the prophecies in [Isaiah 42:6](#), [49:6](#), which I included in parallel with the words of Simeon in [Luke 2:32](#). But they must have wondered why the Messiah would bring light to the Gentiles. Then, what about the statement: "a sword piercing her own soul?" Being the mother of the long looked for Messiah was something that every believing woman, beginning with Eve, longed for. If the Messiah was to sit on David's throne and make their nation prosperous and free, why would this be like a sword piercing her soul?

Then there was Anna, who was an interesting character. First, note that she was a woman prophet which was pretty uncommon in the Bible. Next, she was from the tribe of Asher which was one of the northern tribes which were dispersed. Then we are told that she was old and had been married for only seven years. Finally, that she served in the temple night and day, and never left. I wonder if the reason Luke has this much detail about her is because Mary gave him these details. I think Mary must have had a million questions, and how could she pass up on the opportunity to talk to a prophet. [Luke 2:41](#) tells us that it was the custom of Jesus' parents to go to Jerusalem for Passover every year. If there was at least one Passover trip before the flight to Egypt, I could imagine Mary going in search of her? In either case, I can envision Mary sitting down with her and getting to know her personally, and talking to her about what she might expect or do as the mother of the Messiah? She would most likely have been one of very few people Mary could truly confide in at that time.

What do you believe?

- Do you think Mary and Joseph expected some sort of reception at the Temple when they brought Jesus for dedication?
- Considering how unaware most people were, do you think Joseph and Mary ever had any doubts about who Jesus was?
- Have you ever thought about what it would be like to be the parents of baby Jesus?

## Visit of the Magi, the flight to Egypt, and the return to Nazareth

[Matthew 2](#)<sup>86</sup>

[Matthew 2:1](#) Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."

<sup>3</sup> When Herod the king heard [this], he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup> And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

<sup>5</sup> So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

<sup>6</sup> 'But you, Bethlehem, [in] the land of Judah,  
Are not the least among the rulers of Judah;  
For out of you shall come a Ruler  
Who will shepherd My people Israel.' "

[Micah 5:2](#) "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
[Though] you are little among the thousands of Judah,  
[Yet] out of you shall come forth to Me  
The One to be Ruler in Israel,  
Whose goings forth [are] from of old, From everlasting." [Micah 5:2 NKJV](#)

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. <sup>8</sup> And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found [Him], bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."

<sup>9</sup> When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. <sup>11</sup> And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

<sup>12</sup> Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

<sup>13</sup> Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."

<sup>86</sup> Strong. p21. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n75/mode/2up>

<sup>14</sup> When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, <sup>15</sup> and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, [Hosea 11:1](#) "When Israel [was] a child, I loved him, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."

And out of Egypt I called My son. [Hosea 11:1 NKJV](#)

<sup>16</sup> Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. <sup>17</sup> Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying:

<sup>18</sup> "A voice was heard in Ramah,  
Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning,  
Rachel weeping [for] her children,  
Refusing to be comforted,  
Because they are no more."

[Jeremiah 31:15](#) Thus says the LORD:

"A voice was heard in Ramah,  
Lamentation [and] bitter weeping,  
Rachel weeping for her children,  
Refusing to be comforted for her children,  
Because they [are] no more." [Jeremiah 31:15 NKJV](#)

<sup>19</sup> Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, <sup>20</sup> saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." <sup>21</sup> Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.

<sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. <sup>23</sup> And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene." [Matthew 2:1-23 NKJV](#)

Matthew is the only one of the four Gospels that gives us the story of the Magi and Herod's slaughter of the babes in Bethlehem. The inclusion of this story supports the proposal that Matthew wanted his readers to understand that Jesus was not just a Messiah for the Jews. The prophecy the Magi were most likely following was uttered by Balaam and occurred just prior to the Israelites crossing the Jordan into the Promised Land. King Balak of Moab had seen what the Israelites did to the Amorites and feared that they would do the same to him. Afraid that military might alone would not be sufficient to overcome the Israelites, he resorted to sorcery and requested the Magi, Balaam, to come curse the Israelites. Instead, Balaam uttered the following famous prophecy, which has a whole story which you can read in [Numbers 22-24](#).

[Numbers 24:17](#) "I see Him, but not now;

I behold Him, but not near;

A Star shall come out of Jacob;

A Scepter shall rise out of Israel,

And batter the brow of Moab,

And destroy all the sons of tumult. [Numbers 24:17 NKJV](#)

Perhaps having the writings of Balaam, but not the rest of the Jewish scriptures, the Magi went to the capital of Israel, which was Jerusalem. Interestingly, when they asked for the newborn King of the Jews, Herod interpreted that to mean the Messiah. When Herod asked the Jewish religious leaders where the Messiah would be born, they quoted the

prophecy from Micah which is included in parallel above. Talbot points out that Matthew purposely alters the verse from Micah, by saying "by no means least," where the original quote was "too little."

[Matthew 2:6](#) 'But you, Bethlehem, [in] the land of Judah, Are **not** the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.' " [Matthew 2:6 NKJV](#)

Now that Jesus has been born there, he will not call the birthplace least or little.<sup>87</sup> Why does Matthew also alter it to say Bethlehem of Judah, where Micah says Bethlehem Ephrathah? In the story of Rachel's death, the names are equated. The Hebrew word in both cases was the same.

[Genesis 35:19](#) So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that [is], Bethlehem). [Genesis 35:19 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 35:16](#) says that they were on their way from Bethel to Bethlehem when Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin. In the book of Ruth (the grandmother of David), the same Hebrew word is used.

[Ruth 4:11](#) And all the people who [were] at the gate, and the elders, said, "[We are] witnesses. The LORD make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel; and may you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. [Ruth 4:11 NKJV](#)

I would guess that the name Ephrathah was probably derived from the name of the person who founded the town. Bethlehem and Ephrathah were used interchangeably and simultaneously, and using the two names together was possibly done to distinguish it from any other Bethlehem. Perhaps Matthew wanted to be sure to distinguish it from the Bethlehem in Galilee<sup>88</sup>, hence he referred to it as Bethlehem in the land of Judah.

Herod felt threatened in more ways than one. A rival king would be a threat to his dynasty, and secondly, if this was the Messiah, He would be a threat to Rome, and Herod received his kingship and authority from Rome. Herod decided that he could nip this threat in the bud, by simply killing the baby, so he thought to cunningly use the Magi to help him locate the child. This leads to the next instance where the life of Jesus mirrors the experience of Israel and is also quoted by Matthew as a fulfillment of prophecy.

[Matthew 2:12](#) Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.  
<sup>13</sup> Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."<sup>14</sup> When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt,<sup>15</sup> and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son." [Matthew 2:12-15 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 45:6](#) "For these two years the famine [has been] in the land, and [there are] still five years in which [there will be] neither plowing nor harvesting.  
<sup>7</sup> "And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. <sup>8</sup> "So now [it was] not you [who] sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. <sup>9</sup> "Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph: "God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry. [Genesis 45:6-9 NKJV](#)  
[Hosea 11:1](#) "When Israel [was] a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son. [Hosea 11:1 NKJV](#)

<sup>87</sup> Talbot. *Matthew Prophecy Fulfilled*. p30. (27:21 in the <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXw9AlkeiBQ>)

<sup>88</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bethlehem\\_of\\_Galilee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bethlehem_of_Galilee)

So, in both cases, Joseph, warned by God through a dream, brought his family to Egypt. When Herod realized he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious and his action fulfilled another prophecy, this one from [Jeremiah 31:15](#), also included in parallel above.

Following the death of Herod, Joseph was instructed to bring Jesus from Egypt back to the land of Israel. Joseph assumed that meant Bethlehem, but when he learned that Archelaus had succeeded Herod the Great to the throne, he thought it safer to take Jesus back to their hometown of Nazareth.

The last two verses of the chapter included here again for reference state the fulfillment of another prophecy.

[Matthew 2:22](#) But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. <sup>23</sup> And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene." [Matthew 2:22-23 NKJV](#)

Interestingly there is no single Old Testament quotation that specifically prophesied that Jesus would come from Nazareth. So, what do we make of this statement by Matthew? There are several explanations that have been proposed.<sup>89</sup>

1. One of the prophecies of Jesus in Isaiah states:

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse,  
And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. [Isaiah 11:1 NKJV](#)

The word translated branch is [נֶשֶׁר](#), *nēser*<sup>90</sup>, which obviously sounds a little like Nazareth. Does being known as from Nazareth, declare Him to be that Branch?

2. While not strictly speaking a Nazarite because He drank wine and touched dead bodies, it might be said that they were types or figures of Jesus. Nazarites were to be holy, dedicated and set apart for a specific task. Jesus was all of these to the fullest extent. I know Nazarite and Nazarene are not the same word but this is one of the explanations people have come up with.
3. Finally, at the time, being known as from Nazareth was meant to show contempt and reproach. Philip asked, "can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" [\[John 1:46\]](#) Isaiah prophesied that He would not be desired, and that He would be despised and rejected [\[Isaiah 53:2,3\]](#).

Finally, I would add that perhaps this was a fulfillment of the writings of one of the prophets that was not included in our current Old Testament.

---

What do you believe?

- Do you think the star that led the Magi was a naturally occurring phenomena, such as a comet or conjunction of planets, or do you think it was something else? Do you think they might have started their journey, following the star, before Jesus was actually born?
- How long do you think it was between the birth of Jesus and the slaughter of the children in Bethlehem?

<sup>89</sup> [http://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat\\_002.cfm?a=931023](http://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat_002.cfm?a=931023)

<sup>90</sup> <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H5342&t=NKJV>

- What do you think Matthew meant when he said that Jesus being known as a Nazarene was a fulfillment of prophecy?

## Childhood of John and Jesus

[Luke 1:80](#), [Luke 2:40-52](#) (full text follows interspersed with comments)

It is unfortunate that so little is known of the childhood of Jesus and John. After his birth, no details of the childhood of John are known except for the brief statement in Luke.

[Luke 1:80](#) So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel. [Luke 1:80 NKJV](#)

As a child, he became strong in the spirit. And from the angel's announcement to Zacharias, we know that John was filled with the Holy Spirit even before he was born.

[Luke 1:15](#) "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. [Luke 1:15 NKJV](#)

But the statement that he became strong in the spirit tells us that he was open to allowing the Holy Spirit to influence his life and to teach him. So, as he grew in age, he grew in the spirit as well.

We don't know much more of the childhood of Jesus. Luke gives one story from the childhood of Jesus, when He was twelve years old.

[Luke 2:40](#) And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

<sup>41</sup> His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. <sup>42</sup> And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. <sup>43</sup> When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know [it]; <sup>44</sup> but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among [their] relatives and acquaintances. <sup>45</sup> So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. <sup>46</sup> Now so it was [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. <sup>47</sup> And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. <sup>48</sup> So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously."

<sup>49</sup> And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

<sup>50</sup> But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.

<sup>51</sup> Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. [Luke 2:40-51 NKJV](#)

We don't know when Jesus first became aware of who He really was. But from His use of "My Father's house," in His response to Mary, it seemed to indicate that He knew at least something at that time. With the knowledge of who He was, the fact that He went home and lived in subjection to His parents, should be an example to all young people. It must have been a little strange for Mary and Joseph to instruct and train Jesus, knowing what they knew. The chapter ends with a statement similar to the summary of John's childhood years.

[Luke 2:52](#) And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. [Luke 2:52 NKJV](#)

What do you believe?

- Why do you think so little was written of the childhood of Jesus?
- How do you think Jesus could remain perfect, even as an infant and toddler?
- Since we know so little of His childhood and even young adulthood, why did Jesus have to be born, rather than just appearing as an adult for the start of His ministry?

## Preaching of John the Baptist

[Matthew 3:1-12](#), [Mark 1:3-8](#), [Luke 3:1-23](#)<sup>91</sup>

[Luke 3:1](#) Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, <sup>2</sup> while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

<sup>3</sup> And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, <sup>4</sup> as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying:

[Matthew 3:1](#) In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, <sup>2</sup> and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" <sup>3</sup> For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying:

[Mark 1:4](#) John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.

[Matthew 3:3](#) ... "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.' "

[Mark 1:3](#) "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.' "

[Isaiah 40:3](#) The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God.

<sup>5</sup> Every valley shall be filled  
And every mountain and hill brought low;  
The crooked places shall be made straight  
And the rough ways smooth;  
<sup>6</sup> And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.' "

[Isaiah 40:4](#) Every valley shall be exalted  
And every mountain and hill brought low;  
The crooked places shall be made straight  
And the rough places smooth; <sup>5</sup> The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, And all flesh shall see [it] together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken." [Isaiah 40:3-5 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 3:4](#) Now John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.

[Mark 1:6](#) Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.

<sup>91</sup> Strong. p27. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n83/mode/2up>



Luke 3:7 Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, ...

Matthew 3:5 Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him<sup>6</sup> and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.

Mark 1:5 Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

Matthew 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, ...

Luke 3:7 ... "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"<sup>8</sup> "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as [our] father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.<sup>9</sup> "And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

Matthew 3:7 ... "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"<sup>8</sup> "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance,<sup>9</sup> and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as [our] father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.<sup>10</sup> "And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

<sup>10</sup> So the people asked him, saying, "What shall we do then?"

<sup>11</sup> He answered and said to them, "He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise."

<sup>12</sup> Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?"

<sup>13</sup> And he said to them, "Collect no more than what is appointed for you."

<sup>14</sup> Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, "And what shall we do?" So he said to them, "Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages."

<sup>15</sup> Now as the people were in expectation, and all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ [or] not,<sup>16</sup> John answered, saying to all,

"I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.<sup>17</sup> "His winnowing fan [is] in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire."

Matthew 3:11 "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.<sup>12</sup> "His winnowing fan [is] in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." [Matthew 3:11-12 NKJV](#)

Mark 1:8 "I indeed baptized you with water, ... — <sup>7</sup> ... "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose.— <sup>8</sup> ... but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." [Mark 1:3-8 NKJV](#)

<sup>18</sup> And with many other exhortations he preached to the people. [Luke 3:1-18 NKJV](#)

Right from the start, John started saying controversial things. He preached to his listeners that even though they were Jews and children of Abraham, they needed to repent of their sins and be baptized. He also rebuked the religious leaders, calling them a "brood of vipers." He implied that even though they were children of Abraham and chosen by

God, they were in danger of being rejected for not bearing good fruit. He added that they, the chosen, the only ones who could be saved as far as they were concerned, would be sorted as a farmer separates the wheat from the chaff.

Ultimately the purpose of John's mission, in fact his whole reason for existence, was to prepare people for and announce the arrival of the Messiah.

What do you believe?

- Why do you think people were drawn to John, that seemingly rough, uncivilized person, who even insulted them by implying that they needed to repent in order to be saved?
- What do you think John meant when he said, "the axe is already laid at the root of the trees?"
- Do you think John had the freedom to choose not to fulfill his life's mission?

## Baptism of Jesus

[Matthew 3:13-17](#), [Mark 1:9-11](#), [Luke 3:21-22](#)<sup>92</sup>

[Matthew 3:13](#) Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. <sup>14</sup> And John [tried to] prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" <sup>15</sup> But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit [it to be so] now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him.

<sup>16</sup> When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. <sup>17</sup> And suddenly a voice [came] from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." [Matthew 3:13-17 NKJV](#)

[Mark 1:9](#) It came to pass in those days [that] Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. [Mark 1:10](#) And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. <sup>11</sup> Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." [Mark 1:9-11 NKJV](#)

[Luke 3:21](#) When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. <sup>22</sup> And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased." [Luke 3:21-22 NKJV](#)

Strong places the baptism of Jesus in August of A.D. 25. The date I lean toward is the one argued by Benson in the next chapter, [Dating the baptism of Jesus](#), which is November A.D. 27. After thirty years of living life as a normal human being, Jesus was ready to step out of the shadow. His baptism marks the start of his public ministry.

But why did Jesus ask to be baptized? To me baptism is a symbol of washing away your sins, but also of ending your former life and being resurrected to a new life with Christ.

As Jesus was coming out of the water, two unusual things happened. I believe the Spirit of God that descended on him was the Holy Spirit. I don't think this means that the Holy Spirit was not with Jesus before this, but there was a visible manifestation which either took the form of a dove or descended on Him as a dove. The second thing that happened was that the voice of the Father was audibly heard, for the first of three times that we know of, speaking to the bystanders in the presence of Jesus. Another was at the transfiguration, when Moses and Elijah came down to talk to

<sup>92</sup> Strong. p30. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n87/mode/2up>

Jesus [[Matthew 17:5](#)]. And the third was when some Greeks (from the East) wanted to meet and speak to Jesus [[John 12:28](#)].

---

What do you believe?

- Why do you think Jesus spent so much time in obscurity, living and working as a humble carpenter in Nazareth?
- What does baptism mean to you?
- What do you think the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus as a dove meant?

## Dating the baptism of Jesus

The reason why the date of this event is interesting was mentioned when we discussed the birthdate of Jesus. The two are intertwined, and one must at the very least, not conflict with the other. The date of the baptism, which most agree is the start of the public ministry of Jesus, plays a pivotal role in [Daniel's seventy week prophecy](#). I will lean heavily on the work of Christopher Benson<sup>93</sup> which was also used in the discussion dating the birth of Jesus. Since he so thoroughly and convincingly argued the birth of Jesus to have occurred in April J.P. 4709 which is April 4 B.C., he uses that as a starting point for dating the baptism. His first step is to use the somewhat vague statement of Luke.

[Luke 3:23](#) Now Jesus Himself began [His ministry at] about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) [the] son of Joseph, [the son] of Heli, [Luke 3:23 NKJV](#)

Benson agrees that the statement is somewhat vague but argues, assuming that Luke knew exactly how old Jesus was, that he wouldn't have said thirty if he knew Jesus to be twenty-nine or thirty-one. So, he begins with the assumption that Jesus was baptized some time during his thirtieth year of life. That would be between April J.P. 4739 and April J.P. 4740, or A.D. 27 – 28.<sup>94</sup> [Recall from [Dating the birth of Jesus](#), we determined that 0 J.P. = 4713 B.C., remembering to account for the fact that there is no year zero between B.C. and A.D.] Then he proceeded check whether there were conflicts with other historical events such as:

[Luke 3:1](#) Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, [Luke 3:1 NKJV](#)

The primary date given here is the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar. The death of his predecessor, Augustus Caesar, is known to be the 19<sup>th</sup> of August, J.P. 4727. Adding fifteen years to that would yield J.P. 4741, which is a year or two past 4739-4740 that was asserted. Right away this seems like a non-starter, except for the fact that there is plenty of evidence that Tiberius was a co-regent with Augustus for a couple years before he became sole emperor.<sup>95</sup>

Providing the reference, but not repeating Benson's extensive and thorough analysis of the subject, I will state that he believed the most likely date for the baptism of Jesus was in November J.P. 4739,<sup>96</sup> also known as A.D. 27. If you are interested in reading some of the dates proposed by other scholars, see the references provided in my discussion of Daniel's [seventy week prophecy](#).

<sup>93</sup> Benson, Christopher. *The Chronology of our Saviours Life or An Inquiry into the True Time of the Birth, Baptism, and Crucifixion, of Jesus Christ*. Cambridge, University Press, 1810, p55. <https://books.google.com/books?id=SwAWAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA175>

<sup>94</sup> Benson. p178-181. <https://books.google.com/books?id=SwAWAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA178>

<sup>95</sup> Benson. p189. <https://books.google.com/books?id=SwAWAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA189>

<sup>96</sup> Benson. p188. <https://books.google.com/books?id=SwAWAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA188>

What do you believe?

- Do you think that maybe the disciples and early Christians documented some of these important dates and facts but they have been lost to us now?
- Do you think it's important to know the year Jesus was baptized?
- Do you think Jesus explained the [seventy week prophecy](#) to the disciples after His resurrection? If so why didn't one of the Gospels include it?

## Forty days fasting in the wilderness, and being tempted by Satan

[Matthew 4:1-11](#), [Luke 4:1-13](#), [Mark 1:12-13](#)<sup>97</sup>

[Matthew 4:1](#) Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup> And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.

[Luke 4:1](#) Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, <sup>2</sup> being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry.

[Mark 1:12](#) Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. <sup>13</sup> And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; ...

<sup>3</sup> Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." <sup>4</sup> But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "

[Luke 4:3](#) And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." <sup>4</sup> But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.' "

[Deuteronomy 8:3](#) ... man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every [word] that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. [Deuteronomy 8:3 NKJV](#)

<sup>5</sup> Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, <sup>6</sup> and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In [their] hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.' "

[Luke 4:9](#) Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. <sup>10</sup> "For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you,' <sup>11</sup> "and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.' "

[Psalm 91:11](#) For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways. <sup>12</sup> In [their] hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.

[Psalm 91:11-12 NKJV](#)

<sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.' "

<sup>12</sup> And Jesus answered and said to him, "It has been said, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.' "

[Deuteronomy 6:16](#) "You shall not tempt the LORD your God ... [Deuteronomy 6:16 NKJV](#)

<sup>97</sup> Strong. p32. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n91/mode/2up>

<sup>8</sup> Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. <sup>9</sup> And he said to Him,

"All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

<sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.' "

<sup>11</sup> Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

[Matthew 4:1-11 NKJV](#)

Luke 4:5 Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. <sup>6</sup> And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for [this] has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. <sup>7</sup> "Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours."

<sup>8</sup> And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.' "

Luke 4:13 Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time. [Luke 4:1-13 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 6:13](#) "You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name. [Deuteronomy 6:13 NKJV](#)

Mark 1:13 ... and the angels ministered to Him. [Mark 1:12-13 NKJV](#)

The three gospels which mentioned this all say that Jesus was led or drove by the Spirit, and that He was in the wilderness for forty days. Matthew is the only one of the three which says, "Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil." I do not literally understand it to mean that He was led by the Spirit [in order] to be tempted by the devil." The other two do not say this and I do not believe God leads us into temptation.

As I just read this today, I realized for the first time that the order of the temptations is different in Matthew and Luke. The other thing I noticed is that it doesn't really say what Jesus did when He was in the wilderness, but Matthew and Luke tell us what He didn't do, eat! I believe that along with the fasting, Jesus was praying, to prepare Himself for His ministry. I think most people have a picture of Satan showing up at the end of the forty days when Jesus is physically weak and hungry. But Mark and Luke both imply that Jesus was tempted the entire forty days, then Matthew and Luke mention that at the end of the time, the devil came to Him (in person).

Before beginning any discussion on the temptations, recall that Talbot made the assertion that Jesus would re-live the experience of Israel but would succeed where they failed.<sup>98</sup> I wanted to point out another parallel between the life of Jesus and the Israelite nation.

[Number 14:33](#) 'And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. <sup>34</sup> 'According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, [namely] forty years, and you shall know My rejection. [Numbers 14:33-34 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 8:2](#) "And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you [and] test you, to know what [was] in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. <sup>3</sup> "So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every [word] that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. [Deuteronomy 8:2-3 NKJV](#)

<sup>98</sup> Talbot, Elizabeth Viera. *Matthew Prophecy Fulfilled*. Nampa, Idaho, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2009, p33

While Jesus did not go into the wilderness because of His own failing, He was victorious over temptation, overcoming where Israel had failed. In fact, this discussion leads very nicely into the quotation from the Old Testament Jesus made as He resisted the devil's first temptation. Notice the similarity of the temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden, where Satan succeeded.

[Genesis 3:1](#) Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" <sup>2</sup> And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; <sup>3</sup> "but of the fruit of the tree which [is] in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' " <sup>4</sup> Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. <sup>5</sup> "For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." <sup>6</sup> So when the woman saw that the tree [was] good for food, that it [was] pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make [one] wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. [Genesis 3:1-6 NKJV](#)

Satan tempted Eve to eat in order to become like God, and he tempted Jesus to eat to prove He was God. I don't know whether Jesus had any doubt about who He was, but He could easily satisfy His hunger and prove His divinity at the same time. I'm pretty sure that Satan didn't appear to Jesus looking like the stereo typical images we have of the Devil. I think he did his best to make it appear as if their positions were reversed. Satan clearly is a supernatural being of great power, and Jesus, not exuding His divinity, was in extreme physical weakness after His fast. This first temptation was not only about appetite, but clearly, that aspect of it alone is something that humanity struggles with on a daily basis. From Eve's and our perspective, the other aspect of this temptation is about whether we will trust God's word, that He is who and what He claims to be and not try to put ourselves in His position. I think it is difficult to put ourselves in Eve's or Jesus' place, but we can say that where Eve failed, Jesus succeeded.

I will not debate which temptation came next. I will simply discuss the second temptation as written by Matthew. Satan quoted Psalms and Jesus quoted Moses from the time just after the Exodus before Israel was actually condemned to spend the forty years in the wilderness. Let's look at some reasons why this would have been a temptation to Jesus. I think He already realized how much of an uphill battle it was going to be to get the Jews to accept that He was their long looked for Messiah. Look at one of the arguments the people reasoned for not believing in Jesus as the Messiah.

[John 7:27](#) "However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from." [John 7:27 NKJV](#)

The idea of descending in a glorified body with angel escort into the temple courtyard must have made some sense to Jesus. Just think of the uphill battle He could avoid if he could get the belief and support of Jewish leaders from the start. Let's turn our focus to "testing the Lord." Is this the same thing as asking God for a sign? Does it show a lack of faith to ask for a sign as Gideon did [[Judges 6](#)]? Hezekiah asked for a sign that God was really going to heal him [[2 Kings 20:8-9](#)]. I think this temptation was not really about asking for a sign. I think this was partly about trusting God to accomplish things His way and not trying to force His hand to do it your way. I think it was also a temptation to do something the easy way instead of the right way. But all this is assuming you know the right way or God's way of doing something. I think in Israel's case, it was a defiant challenge to God who had already proved Himself to them.

In the last temptation according to Matthew, Satan no longer tried to mask his identity. He made the offer that he has made to many throughout the history of the world. Serve me and I will give you great power. I think this temptation was again partly about doing it the easy way, rather than the right way or God's way. I believe Jesus knew that he had come to earth to live a trying life, in fact to risk His eternal oneness with God, to redeem our world from the clutches of Satan. Here Satan is offering to simply give it back to Jesus if He will simply bow down and worship him. But with Satan, the

master deceiver and manipulator, nothing is as it seems. We may wonder how Jesus could have been tempted to bow down and worship Satan, yet most every day, each of us has our own idols that we bow down and worship. By prioritizing things above our relationship with God and doing His work, we are in a sense bowing down to those things and worshipping them.

What do you believe?

- How do you feel the temptation over appetite or the turning stones into bread relates to you?
- How does the temptation of leaping off the building or testing God relate to you?
- How does the temptation of bowing down and worshipping something other than God relate to you?

## The first disciples

### [John 1:19-51](#)

[John 1:19](#) Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup> He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." <sup>21</sup> And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." <sup>22</sup> Then they said to him, "Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup> He said: "I [am] 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Make straight the way of the LORD," ' as the prophet Isaiah said." [Isaiah 40:3](#) The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. [Isaiah 40:3 NKJV](#)

<sup>24</sup> Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup> And they asked him, saying, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" <sup>26</sup> John answered them, saying, "I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. <sup>27</sup> "It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose." <sup>28</sup> These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing. <sup>29</sup> The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! <sup>30</sup> "This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.' <sup>31</sup> "I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water." <sup>32</sup> And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. <sup>33</sup> "I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' <sup>34</sup> "And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

<sup>35</sup> Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. <sup>36</sup> And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

<sup>37</sup> The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup> Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi" (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), "where are You staying?"

<sup>39</sup> He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).

<sup>40</sup> One of the two who heard John [speak], and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. <sup>41</sup> He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ).

<sup>42</sup> And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone).

<sup>43</sup> The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." <sup>44</sup> Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. <sup>45</sup> Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

<sup>46</sup> And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

<sup>47</sup> Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!"

<sup>48</sup> Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

<sup>49</sup> Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

<sup>50</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." <sup>51</sup> And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." [John 1:19-51 NKJV](#)

As will often be the case as we go through the four Gospels, John will not just repeat the other three, but will fill in the gaps. In this case, he didn't even mention the baptism, but gives us details about how the Baptist recognized Jesus and pointed his disciples toward Him. "The next day," in verse 29 refers to the day after the Pharisees questioned why he was baptizing if he wasn't the Christ or Elijah, in [John 1:24-25](#).

We don't really know exactly when these three days took place, but we are pretty certain they were after the forty day fast and temptation in the wilderness, which was most likely in the fall, and the first Passover of Jesus' ministry, which would be in the spring. They appear to be three consecutive days, which is why we place the dialog with the Priests and Levites after the baptism and temptation.

Of the two disciples of John that followed Jesus in [verse 37](#), one is said to be Andrew and the other is not named but many speculate it was the author, John. It was his practice to not mention himself or any other family member by name in the Gospel written by him. So, I would like to believe that John and James along with Andrew and Peter who were specifically mentioned, were the first disciples of Jesus. It would not be surprising if these four were the first disciples, after all Peter, James and John were frequently mentioned as the disciples who were the closest to Jesus. Whether Jesus asked them to follow Him or not that day, we are not told. From what we are told, the distinction of being the first disciple Jesus called to follow Him probably belonged to Phillip. John says, the next day Jesus called Philip to follow Him. Whatever their status as disciples at this time, we will see later that Andrew, Peter, James and John did not quit their jobs to follow Jesus full time.

I have puzzled over the timing and geography of these verses in John. The Baptist was said to be in Bethany beyond the Jordan. I believe that means he was baptizing near a town called Bethany, but it was distinguished from the well-known Bethany near Jerusalem [where Lazarus, Martha and Mary lived,] by the description "beyond the Jordan." I also take the



wording to mean across the Jordan from Jerusalem, or the east bank of the Jordan. There are traditional sites<sup>99</sup> which have been commercialized as the location where Jesus was baptized, but through history, many factors could have altered the selection of sites attended by pilgrims. The Jordan River is a meandering river which is known to choose a different path from time to time. There were also concerns in selecting a site for pilgrims, such as the inconvenience of crossing rivers, or whether one site or another is under the control of unfriendly powers. In his doctoral dissertation, Carl Laney did a nice job of analyzing and critiquing the common or traditional sites for the baptism.<sup>100</sup> Predominantly, the sites are near the southern end of the Jordan River (red circle on the map), meaning that it could be as much as 60-80 miles from there to Bethsaida (orange ellipse) where Andrew and Phillip lived.<sup>101</sup> This presents a problem if one were to assume that Jesus met Andrew, the other disciple, Phillip and Nathanael near their home town of Bethsaida. The two most likely options I see are that at that time John had moved his preaching and baptizing up closer to the Sea of Galilee and that the “next day” occurrences all happened in the region of Galilee. Or that John was still baptizing south in the region of Judea and that the disciples mentioned had been close by because they were either disciples of John, or since the baptism, had been hanging around near John in case Jesus came back. I currently lean toward the latter because I think there was more evidence that the baptismal location is in the south. In addition to that, verse 43 says that Jesus was purposing to go to Galilee when he met Phillip. I take that to mean that He was about to start His journey to Galilee, probably to attend the wedding in Cana which had no doubt been in planning for a long time.



There is another location where John was said to be baptizing. The green circle on the map is thought to be the location mentioned in [John 3:23](#) where the Baptist relocated after the incidents in the first chapter we have been discussing. It is clearly distinguished from the other location because of the comments “He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified.”

[John 3:22](#) After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. <sup>23</sup> Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. <sup>24</sup> For John had not yet been thrown into prison.

<sup>25</sup> Then there arose a dispute between [some] of John's disciples and the Jews about purification. <sup>26</sup> And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified-- behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!" [John 3:22-26 NKJV](#)

<sup>99</sup> [https://www.google.com/maps/place/The+Baptismal+Site+\(Bethany+beyond+the+Jordan\)/@31.8375119,35.5478025,17z](https://www.google.com/maps/place/The+Baptismal+Site+(Bethany+beyond+the+Jordan)/@31.8375119,35.5478025,17z)

<sup>100</sup> Laney, J. Carl. *Selective Geographical Problems in the Life of Christ*. Dallas Theological Seminary, 1977.

[http://www.bibleplaces.com/Identification\\_of\\_Bethany\\_Beyond\\_the\\_Jordan,\\_by\\_J\\_Carl\\_Laney.pdf](http://www.bibleplaces.com/Identification_of_Bethany_Beyond_the_Jordan,_by_J_Carl_Laney.pdf) [if not available there

[http://btlb.org/Identification\\_of\\_Bethany\\_Beyond\\_the\\_Jordan,\\_by\\_J\\_Carl\\_Laney.pdf](http://btlb.org/Identification_of_Bethany_Beyond_the_Jordan,_by_J_Carl_Laney.pdf)]

<sup>101</sup> <http://www.bible-history.com/maps/images/Map-Israel-New-Testament-Times.gif>

---

What do you believe?

- Why do you think John said he was not the Elijah that was prophesied to come, when Jesus later said that he was [[Matthew 11:14](#)]?
- Do you think John really understood what it meant to call Jesus the Lamb of God?
- Why did John's disciples ask where Jesus stayed?<sup>102</sup> Whose house do you think He took them to?

## The first Miracle

[John 2:1-11](#)

[John 2:1](#) On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. <sup>2</sup> Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. <sup>3</sup> And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."

<sup>4</sup> Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."

<sup>5</sup> His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do [it]."

<sup>6</sup> Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. <sup>8</sup> And He said to them, "Draw [some] out now, and take [it] to the master of the feast." And they took [it]. <sup>9</sup> When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. <sup>10</sup> And he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the [guests] have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!"

<sup>11</sup> This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

[John 2:1-11 NKJV](#)

The usage of the phrase "on the third day," immediately begs the question, from when? Some of the possible options people have mentioned in no particular order are:

- The third day after calling Phillip to follow Him
- The third day after returning to Galilee
- The third day after leaving Judea for Galilee
- The third day of the week
- The third day of the wedding

The author of the articles on [3amthoughts.com](#) [may no longer exist] mentioned something I found very interesting regarding this third day statement. In my words, if this was referring to the third day of the week, is it coincidence that the third day of creation week involved water? He also mentioned that if it was the third day of the wedding feast, recall that he told His mother "My hour has not yet come." Then later on, in reference to His death, Jesus said that on the

---

<sup>102</sup> Strong, James. *Questions on the Gospel History*. New York, Carlton & Phillips, 1853, p 42.  
<https://books.google.com/books?id=m6kMAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA42>

third day He would be raised up [[Matthew 16:21](#), [Matthew 17:23](#), [Matthew 20:19](#), [Luke 9:22](#), [Luke 18:33](#), [Luke 24:7](#)]. The resurrection on the third day was the culmination of “His hour” which came when Jesus died on the cross.<sup>103</sup>

Since I lean toward the events of [John 1](#) occurring to the south in Judea, I believe it would have taken several days to walk all the way up to the region of Galilee. Recall in chapter 1 that it said:

[John 1:43](#) The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." [John 1:43 NKJV](#)

This verse clearly indicates that Jesus was planning on going to Galilee. I think this was most likely because He had been invited to the wedding, and probably being close family (because His mother was helping), was planning on being there. It could easily take three days of travel to reach the wedding and His newly acquired disciples went with Him. We again mention Laney, who in the same dissertation also discussed the possible locations for the wedding in Cana. He leans toward an archeological site called Khirbet Kana.<sup>104</sup> See also known as Khirbet Qana<sup>105</sup> or Khirbet Cana.<sup>106 107</sup>

It was customary for Jewish weddings to take multiple days, even as many as seven.<sup>108</sup> Based on the comments of the headwaiter when he tasted the wine, it was obviously well into the celebration when the wine had run out. If Jesus had never performed a miracle before, why would Mary have expected Him to do something at the wedding? Even though Jesus’ response to Mary seems to indicate that He wasn’t going to do anything, she must have understood it differently, because she immediately told the servants to do whatever He said. I believe His method for performing the miracle shows that He wants people to be involved in the distribution of His blessings to others.

Finally, I think something needs to be said about whether Jesus made pure fresh grape juice or the alcoholic drink we today call wine. Many have assumed that the word “wine” in the Bible refers only to the alcoholic beverage we know today. In chapter two of his book *Wine in the Bible*, Dr. Bacchiocchi goes into great depth to explain that the word wine can mean either fermented or fresh unfermented grape juice.<sup>109</sup> Furthermore in chapter five of the same book, he concludes, “The claim that Christ used and sanctioned the use of alcoholic beverages has been found to be unsubstantiated. The evidence we have submitted shows that Jesus abstained from all intoxicating substances and gave no sanction to His followers to use them.”<sup>110</sup> Personally, I believe that if Jesus lived a perfect life, He would not have taken into His body anything that would lessen or loosen His mental powers. I also believe that even though it appears that there are some who can drink moderately, there are more than enough examples of ruined lives, abused people and even death directly resulting from those who cannot drink in moderation. For these reasons, I can see no way that Jesus would have used personally or condoned the use of alcoholic beverages.

<sup>103</sup> <https://3amthoughts.com/article/people-and-places/cana-and-third-day> [website may longer exist]

<sup>104</sup> Laney. [http://www.bibleplaces.com/Identification\\_of\\_Cana\\_of\\_Galilee\\_by\\_J\\_Carl\\_Laney.pdf](http://www.bibleplaces.com/Identification_of_Cana_of_Galilee_by_J_Carl_Laney.pdf) [if not available there [http://btlb.org/Identification\\_of\\_Cana\\_of\\_Galilee\\_by\\_J\\_Carl\\_Laney.pdf](http://btlb.org/Identification_of_Cana_of_Galilee_by_J_Carl_Laney.pdf)]

<sup>105</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khirbet\\_Qana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khirbet_Qana)

<sup>106</sup> <http://www.biblewalks.com/Sites/khircanah.html>

<sup>107</sup> <https://www.google.com/maps/@32.8222403,35.3035214,1912m/data=!3m1!1e3>

<sup>108</sup> <http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/after-the-wedding-ceremony/>

<sup>109</sup> Bacchiocchi, Samuele. *Wine in the Bible: A Biblical Study on the Use of Alcoholic Beverages*. Biblical Perspectives, 2001. [https://www.amazon.com/dp/1930987072/ref=nav\\_timeline\\_asin?\\_encoding=UTF8&psc=1](https://www.amazon.com/dp/1930987072/ref=nav_timeline_asin?_encoding=UTF8&psc=1)

<sup>110</sup> Bacchiocchi. [https://www.amazon.com/dp/1930987072/ref=nav\\_timeline\\_asin?\\_encoding=UTF8&psc=1](https://www.amazon.com/dp/1930987072/ref=nav_timeline_asin?_encoding=UTF8&psc=1)

---

What do you believe?

- Why did Jesus say His hour had not yet come, if He was going to perform the miracle?
- Did Jesus' response to His mother seem abrupt or rude to you?
- Do you think Jesus made pure fresh grape juice, or wine as it is commonly referred to today?

## Jesus cleanses the Temple at the first Passover of His public ministry

[John 2:12-25](#)<sup>111</sup>

[John 2:12](#) After this He went down to Capernaum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days.

<sup>13</sup> Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. <sup>15</sup> When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. <sup>16</sup> And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" <sup>17</sup> Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."

[Psalm 69:9](#) Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, ... [Psalm 69:9 NKJV](#)

<sup>18</sup> So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?"

<sup>19</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

<sup>20</sup> Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"

<sup>21</sup> But He was speaking of the temple of His body. <sup>22</sup> Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

<sup>23</sup> Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. <sup>24</sup> But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all [men], <sup>25</sup> and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man. [John 2:12-25 NKJV](#)

After the wedding and before going back down to Jerusalem for the Passover, Jesus spent some time with his family and new disciples in Capernaum. According to Strong's harmony, none of the Gospels record any events between these few days in Capernaum and the Passover.

Several things of note took place during this first Passover of Jesus' public ministry. The cleansing of the temple is where Jesus first came out against the religious establishment of the day. This is where He began stepping on their toes, so to speak. Ellen White in the *Desire or Ages* suggests that the exchange of currency for the temple tax and the purchase of animals for the sacrifices was a great source of corruption and revenue for the priests.<sup>112</sup> The origin of the temple tax which was to be used for the upkeep and operation of the temple, was one of the laws given to Moses by God. When the Jews were numbered, they were instructed to pay a half-shekel so that a plague would not break out among the people [[Exodus 30:11-16](#)]. Based on this command, presumably every time the Jews assembled at the Temple for one of

---

<sup>111</sup> Strong. p39. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n97/mode/2up>

<sup>112</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p155.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=155>

their feasts, they were registered (counted) which required the payment of the tax. In Exodus, it states the tax should be a half shekel, with the sanctuary shekel being defined as twenty gerahs [verse 13]. According to Strong's concordance a gerah was the weight of 16 grains of barley or 4 to 5 carob beans.<sup>113</sup> I didn't have any carob beans on hand, but I did have some barley, so I painstakingly counted out 20 x 16 or 320 grains of barley and weighed them on a mail scale and it was less than half an ounce. The temple tax was half this weight, but of what material? I believe that Exodus 38 gives us a clue in mentioning the amount of silver collected when the congregation were numbered.



Figure 1 320 grains of barley

[Exodus 38:25](#) And the silver from those who were numbered of the congregation [was] one hundred talents and one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary: [Exodus 38:25 NKJV](#)

Silver half-shekel temple tax coins weighing 6.249 – 6.474 grams have actually been found and determined to be from the time of Jesus.<sup>114</sup> I believe the original command given to Moses specified the amount of silver that should be given in terms of the sanctuary shekel, but over time it seems the priests actually minted silver temple coins which were supposedly the weight of a half-shekel. My crude weight of a gerah being under a half ounce is in line with the weight of the temple tax coins mentioned above. With the contribution being required in temple coins, the people would have to exchange their silver or other currency, rather than simply giving 6.5 gm of silver. That meant that money changers were needed, who could charge exchange fees, and the people would have no choice but to pay them. Then in order to gain business, money changers would probably compete with each other by yelling out their exchange rates. The exact same corruption could be replicated for the animal sacrifices. The command of God to Moses regarding the sacrifice for the first Passover was:

[Exodus 12:5](#) 'Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take [it] from the sheep or from the goats. [Exodus 12:5 NKJV](#)

Clearly at the time, God intended for each family to inspect and select the sacrifice themselves. On occasions when the people would have to bring their sacrifice to the temple, I presume the priests took it upon themselves to inspect the animal for blemishes, which I expect can be very subjective. This clearly left room for corruption as well. Those who didn't bring their own sacrifice would have to pay the asking price for an approved animal, and those who did bring their own could be rejected for blemishes. Those same animals that were rejected were probably then sold to another at a profit. This is the corruption that White suggests was sanctioned by the priests for their own gain. This is what Jesus was opposed to. I'm sure Jesus made some very powerful enemies that day and gained some admirers among the common people as well as those who hated the corruption that went on in the Temple "marketplace."

After Jesus chased the money changers and animal sellers out of the Temple, along with those who felt guilty and fled along with them, I believe He began to heal people. I preface it with I believe because the next thing it says is, the Jews asked Him to give them a sign that he had the authority to chase them out of the Temple. I would say that the very fact that they fled from Him was itself a sign. I think some time must have passed before the Jews, some of which must have fled, had the courage to come back and face Jesus. So, if I'm right, Jesus was already performing miracles when they asked for a sign. Jesus didn't give them what they wanted, and it wouldn't have mattered anyway because He was not the Messiah they were looking for. Their response to Jesus that the Temple had taken forty-six years to build, is understood by most scholars to mean that Herod's remodel and expansion of the Temple had begun forty-six years ago. This is one of the methods used for dating the first Passover of Jesus' public ministry, as well His baptism which most

<sup>113</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=H1626&t=NKJV>

<sup>114</sup> <http://www.forumancientcoins.com/catalog/roman-and-greek-coins.asp?vpar=828>

believe happened the fall of the prior year. Benson places the baptism in J.P. 4739 or 27 A.D. [see [Dating the baptism of Jesus](#)] which would make this Passover in the year 28 A.D.. Strong's Harmony, however, chooses to place this Passover a couple years earlier, in 25 A.D..<sup>115</sup> For additional references, see my discussion on the [Seventy week prophecy](#). I lean towards Benson's dating.

I presume that the cleansing of the Temple happened on the first day of the Passover and then John says, while He was in Jerusalem for the feast, many people saw the miracles He was performing and believed.

What do you believe?

- Why do you think people fled from Jesus who was dressed as a common pilgrim, with no authority that they were aware of?
- If the priests were taking advantage of the people as White suggests, do you think they felt guilty about it or do you think they felt entitled to the monetary gain?
- John says many people saw the signs and believed in His name, but what do you think they believed?

## Nicodemus

[John 3:1-21](#)<sup>116</sup>

[John 3:1](#) There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. <sup>2</sup> This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

<sup>4</sup> Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup> "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup> "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' <sup>8</sup> "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

<sup>9</sup> Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"

<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? <sup>11</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. <sup>12</sup> "If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? <sup>13</sup> "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, [that is], the Son of Man who is in heaven. <sup>14</sup> "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> "that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. <sup>16</sup> "For God so loved the world that He

<sup>115</sup> Strong. p39. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n97/mode/2up>

<sup>116</sup> Strong. p41. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n99/mode/2up>

gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.<sup>17</sup> "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

<sup>18</sup> "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. <sup>19</sup> "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup> "For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. <sup>21</sup> "But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

[John 3:1-21 NKJV](#)

Nicodemus is mentioned on three occasions and only in the Gospel of John. This night meeting with Jesus is the first. The second being in [John 7:50](#) when he reminds his fellow leaders or rulers that Jewish law required them to give a person an opportunity to speak or to explain themselves before passing judgment on them. The third occasion was the burial of Jesus by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus [[John 19:38-42](#)].

It is a widely accepted belief that Nicodemus was a member of the Jewish ruling council called the Sanhedrin. The word Sanhedrin does not actually appear in the NKJV translation of the Bible. According to Wikipedia, the Sanhedrin was an assembly of 23 to 71 men appointed in each city. The 23 was determined as follows. The minimum size of a community is 10 men, so for voting purposes 10 vs. 10. But one more is needed to achieve a majority, but a simple majority cannot convict, so one more judge is required, but a court should not have an even number of judges, so one more is added, totaling 23 (10+10+1+1+1).<sup>117</sup> The 71 most likely had its origin from the seventy elders God told Moses to gather to help him bear the burden of judging and arbitrating between the people [[Numbers 11:16-17](#)]. According to Wikipedia, there was a single Great Sanhedrin, and many lesser Sanhedrin's.<sup>118</sup> This structure is not unlike the court system in the United States, where there are many district courts, and one Supreme Court. At times, throughout history, the role of the Sanhedrin varied. Clearly in the time of Moses, the 70 elders were to assist Moses in judging all matters. The Wikipedia article stated that the Sanhedrin only dealt with religious matters. It also claims that there was a time when the High Priest acted as the head of the Great Sanhedrin, but in 191 BC when the body lost confidence in the High Priest the office of Nasi was created.<sup>119</sup>

Nicodemus was clearly a person of influence and wealth. As a Pharisee, he was considered among the religious elite. This night meeting with Jesus seemed to have occurred within a short period of His cleansing of the Temple. It seems pretty clear that most of his peers were alarmed and outraged by the actions of Jesus. On the other hand, Nicodemus was intrigued. He had no doubt heard the report of those they had sent to question John the Baptist. He had probably spent time studying the prophecies of the Messiah. The second mention of Nicodemus in John makes it clear that he advised caution in dealing with Jesus in case He was sent of God.

Nicodemus had been taught and he had most likely taught as well, that the Jews were God's chosen. As a Pharisee, he probably thought of himself as the best of the best when it came to God's favor with humanity. However, in his secret meeting with Jesus, in spite of their differences in social standing and wealth, he seemed timid and awed. Jesus, knowing his heart didn't waste any time beating around the bush. He immediately informed Nicodemus, that in spite of how righteous he thought he was, that he needed to be born again in order to be saved. White says that Nicodemus was

<sup>117</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanhedrin>

<sup>118</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanhedrin#Great\\_and\\_Lesser\\_Sanhedrin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanhedrin#Great_and_Lesser_Sanhedrin)

<sup>119</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanhedrin#Function\\_and\\_procedures](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanhedrin#Function_and_procedures)

not unfamiliar with the concept of being born again in order to be saved. Jews had used similar language in relation to converts to Judaism.<sup>120</sup>

---

What do you believe?

- Why did Nicodemus really want to meet and talk to Jesus?
- Why do you think Nicodemus took the symbol of re-birth literally rather than spiritually?
- Do you think Nicodemus actually understood what Jesus was saying about being lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness?

## He must increase, I must decrease – John's imprisonment

[John 3:22-36](#), [Matthew 14:3-5](#), [Mark 6:17-20](#), [Luke 3:19-20](#)<sup>121</sup>

[John 3:22](#) After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. <sup>23</sup> Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. <sup>24</sup> For John had not yet been thrown into prison.

<sup>25</sup> Then there arose a dispute between [some] of John's disciples and the Jews about purification. <sup>26</sup> And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified-- behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!"

<sup>27</sup> John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. <sup>28</sup> "You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' <sup>29</sup> "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. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. <sup>30</sup> "He must increase, but I [must] decrease. <sup>31</sup> "He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. <sup>32</sup> "And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. <sup>33</sup> "He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true. <sup>34</sup> "For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. <sup>35</sup> "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. <sup>36</sup> "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." [John 3:22-36 NKJV](#)

---

<sup>120</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p171.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=171>

<sup>121</sup> Strong. p44. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n103/mode/2up>



[Mark 6:17](#) For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. <sup>18</sup> Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

[Matthew 14:3](#) For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put [him] in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.  
<sup>4</sup> Because John had said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."

[Luke 3:19](#) But Herod the tetrarch ... <sup>20</sup> ... also added this, above all, that he shut John up in prison. <sup>19</sup> ... being rebuked by him concerning Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, [Luke 3:19,20 NKJV](#)

<sup>19</sup> Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; <sup>20</sup> for Herod feared John, knowing that he [was] a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. [Mark 6:17-20 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 14:5](#) And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. [Matthew 14:3-5 NKJV](#)

It is clear that John was respected by the people and even the wicked king Herod. He was addressed as Rabbi, and even though it says that Herod feared doing anything to him because he was afraid of the reaction from the people, it also says he enjoyed listening to him. If John had been interested in popularity and power, he could have kept the attention on himself instead of directing the people to Jesus. But the statement by John that he must decrease and Jesus must increase showed his humility and character.

We don't know exactly when these events took place, and how much time passed between John's discussion and his imprisonment. Strong roughly places these events in the summer after the first Passover of Jesus' public ministry.

What do you believe?

- Why were people still coming to John to listen to him and be baptized if he had already identified the Messiah?
- Why did John still have disciples after identifying Jesus as the Messiah?
- Why do you think Herod, being as wicked as he was known to be, enjoy listening to John?

## The Samaritan woman at the well

[John 4:1-45](#), [Matthew 4:12](#), [Mark 1:14](#), [Luke 4:14](#) <sup>122</sup>

[John 4:1](#) Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John <sup>2</sup> (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples),

<sup>3</sup> He left Judea and departed again to Galilee.

[Matthew 4:12](#) Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. [Matthew 4:12 NKJV](#)

[Mark 1:14](#) Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, ... [Mark 1:14 NKJV](#)

[Luke 4:14](#) Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, ... [Luke 4:14 NKJV](#)

<sup>4</sup> But He needed to go through Samaria.

<sup>5</sup> So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from [His] journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

<sup>122</sup> Strong. p47. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n107/mode/2up>

<sup>7</sup> A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." <sup>8</sup> For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

<sup>9</sup> Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

<sup>11</sup> The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? <sup>12</sup> "Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?"

<sup>13</sup> Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, <sup>14</sup> "but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

<sup>15</sup> The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."

<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."

<sup>17</sup> The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' <sup>18</sup> "for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."

<sup>19</sup> The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. <sup>20</sup> "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you [Jews] say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

<sup>21</sup> Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. <sup>22</sup> "You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. <sup>23</sup> "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. <sup>24</sup> "God [is] Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

<sup>25</sup> The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things."

<sup>26</sup> Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am [He]."

<sup>27</sup> And at this [point] His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?"

<sup>28</sup> The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, <sup>29</sup> "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" <sup>30</sup> Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

<sup>31</sup> In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."

<sup>32</sup> But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know."

<sup>33</sup> Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him [anything] to eat?"

<sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. <sup>35</sup> "Do you not say, 'There are still four months and [then] comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! <sup>36</sup> "And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup> "For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' <sup>38</sup> "I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors."

<sup>39</sup> And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I [ever] did." <sup>40</sup> So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. <sup>41</sup> And many more believed because of His own word.

<sup>42</sup> Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard [Him] and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world." <sup>43</sup> Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee. <sup>44</sup> For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. <sup>45</sup> So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast. [John 4:1-45 NKJV](#)

Matthew, Mark & Luke tell of Jesus going back to Galilee, John's story has Him going north through Samaria. Strong put these together and proposes a time of December after the first Passover of Jesus' public ministry.

A traditional and current tourist site of Jacob's well has had a church built to house it. Because a well doesn't move around, it is considered one of the most authentic sites in the Holy Land.<sup>123 124</sup> According to John, the well was near Sychar in Samaria, and was on a parcel of land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. It is thought that this well was dug in Shechem, the place where Jacob first stayed upon his return from Paddan-aram [[Genesis 33:18](#)]. The Bible itself doesn't say that Jacob gave this land to Joseph, but when the land was divided by Joshua, Shechem lay in the middle of the territory belonging to the descendants of Joseph. Wayne Stiles has a nice biblical summary of Shechem. He points out that being at a major crossroad, the town of Shechem saw a lot of traffic and also was the location for some significant biblical events.<sup>125</sup>

Although there were times during Jesus' ministry that He instructed the disciples to only reach out to the Jews, this was not one of them. There were reasons for Jesus to instruct them to do so and it wasn't because he was racist. Here, near the start of His ministry, Jesus surprised His disciples by not only talking to the Samaritan woman, but by staying with them and offering salvation to them as well. In her booklet on John, which we mentioned in the summary of his gospel, Talbot wrote a chapter on the woman at the well. She points out that Jesus had to get through five layers to reach to woman.<sup>126</sup>

1. Prejudice. The woman said, our people hate each other, why are you talking to me? Jesus peeled back that layer by hinting at who He is and offering her a gift.
2. Heritage. The woman said, you're not greater than our father Jacob, are you? Jesus ignored that questions and stays on His theme of water, saying that whoever drinks His water will never thirst again.
3. Superficial truth. In response to Jesus' request to bring her husband, she tried to avoid the topic by claiming she wasn't married. Jesus pushed through that barrier, by telling her the truth that she didn't want to mention.

<sup>123</sup> <http://www.seetheholyland.net/jacobs-well/>

<sup>124</sup> <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/the-fourfold-gospel/by-sections/at-jacobs-well-and-at-sychar.html>

<sup>125</sup> <https://bible.org/article/geographical-historical-spiritual-significance-shechem>

<sup>126</sup> Talbot, Elizabeth Viera. *God Became Flesh*. Nampa, Idaho, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2010. p20-28.

[http://www.jesus101institute.org/transaction\\_detail.php?id=3](http://www.jesus101institute.org/transaction_detail.php?id=3)

4. Religiosity. No doubt feeling uncomfortable, and maybe a little amazed, she tried to change the subject by asking a controversial theological question. Jesus doesn't get bogged down in that debate and pushed through to what true worship will be.
5. Procrastination. Finally, she declares, I know the Messiah is coming one day and will be able to answer these difficult questions. Jesus, then tells her, I am He.

What do you believe?

- Why do you think Jews and Samaritans hated each other?
- What was it like for a woman in that culture to be divorced five times?
- Why did the Samaritans listen to the woman and come out to see Jesus?

## Jesus teaches in Galilee and heals the royal official's son

[Matthew 4:17](#), [Mark 1:14-15](#), [Luke 4:14-15](#), [John 4:46-50](#)<sup>127</sup>

[Mark 1:14](#) ... preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,<sup>15</sup> and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." [Mark 1:14,15 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 4:17](#) From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." [Matthew 4:17 NKJV](#)

[Luke 4:15](#) And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. ...<sup>14</sup> and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region [Luke 4:14,15 NKJV](#)

[John 4:46](#) So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum.<sup>47</sup> When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.<sup>48</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you [people] see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe."

<sup>49</sup> The nobleman said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies!"

<sup>50</sup> Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your son lives." So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way.<sup>51</sup> And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told [him], saying, "Your son lives!"

<sup>52</sup> Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him."<sup>53</sup> So the father knew that [it was] at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives." And he himself believed, and his whole household.

<sup>54</sup> This again [is] the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee. [John 4:46-50 NKJV](#)

After leaving Samaria, Jesus continued on to Galilee where He was widely accepted as He preached the message, the kingdom of God is at hand. Word had no doubt spread ahead of Jesus of His actions in cleansing temple of the sellers and money changes who took advantage of the people. These Galileans probably thought of Jesus as being one of their own and were probably thrilled to have someone who would stand up for the common people against the corruption in the Temple.

<sup>127</sup> Strong. p52. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n113/mode/2up>

One day when Jesus was in Cana, where He had turned water into wine, He was approached by a royal official from Capernaum. As someone serving in a royal court, it is most likely that it was a person who served in Herod's court. It has been suggested by many that this official could have been Chuza, the steward of Herod, whose wife was mentioned in Luke 8:3 as one of the women who supported Jesus financially.

[Luke 8:1](#) Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve [were] with Him, <sup>2</sup> and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities--Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, <sup>3</sup> and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance. [Luke 8:1-3 NKJV](#)

Arguments against this this royal official being Chuza, was that Luke was mentioning some women who had evil spirits cast out, Mary from Magdalene, and some who had been healed, possibly Joanna and Susanna.

What do you believe?

- Although it doesn't specifically say so, do you think Jesus was healing a lot of people as He taught and preached throughout Galilee?
- Do you think Jesus required some belief before a healing was granted?
- Why do you think Jesus initially responded to the official by saying, "Unless you see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe?"

## Jesus rejected in His home town of Nazareth

[Luke 4:16-31](#), [Mathew 4:13-16](#)<sup>128</sup>

[Luke 4:16](#) So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. <sup>17</sup> And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

<sup>18</sup> "The Spirit of the LORD [is] upon Me,  
Because He has anointed Me  
To preach the gospel to [the] poor;  
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,  
To proclaim liberty to [the] captives  
And recovery of sight to [the] blind,  
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;

<sup>19</sup> To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."

[Isaiah 61:1](#) "The Spirit of the Lord GOD [is] upon Me,  
Because the LORD has anointed Me  
To preach good tidings to the poor;  
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,  
To proclaim liberty to the captives,

And the opening of the prison to [those who are] bound;

<sup>2</sup> To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, ... [Isaiah 61:1-2 NKJV](#)

<sup>20</sup> Then He closed the book, and gave [it] back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. <sup>21</sup> And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." <sup>22</sup> So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?" <sup>23</sup> He said to them, "You will surely say this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country.' " <sup>24</sup> Then He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. <sup>25</sup> "But I tell you truly, many widows were in

<sup>128</sup> Strong. p53. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n113/mode/2up>

Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; <sup>26</sup> "but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, [in the region] of Sidon, to a woman [who was] a widow. <sup>27</sup> "And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." <sup>28</sup> So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, <sup>29</sup> and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. <sup>30</sup> Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way. [Luke 4:16-30 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 4:13](#) And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, <sup>14</sup> that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

<sup>15</sup> "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,  
[By] the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,  
Galilee of the Gentiles:

<sup>16</sup> The people who sat in darkness  
have seen a great light,  
And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death  
Light has dawned." [Matthew 4:13-16 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 9:1](#) ... The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, ...  
[By] the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,  
In Galilee of the Gentiles.

<sup>2</sup> The people who walked in darkness  
Have seen a great light;  
Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,  
Upon them a light has shined. [Isaiah 9:1-2 NKJV](#)

This is a really disturbing story. These people were in church on Sabbath and their own hometown boy, Jesus came to visit and was asked to read the scripture and teach. They became so enraged by what He said that they stood up, dragged Jesus out of church, and fully intended to murder Him. The Jews were not allowed to condemn a person to death in their courts, but this was not even a legal proceeding, this was a murderous mob. But what exactly did Jesus say that got them so riled up that they were willing to commit murder, on the Sabbath day no less? First, it should be mentioned that Jesus stopped in mid verse in His reading of Isaiah. He left unread, "And the day of vengeance of our God; ..." But this is not what upset them, nor the fact that He claimed that He was the fulfillment of this Messianic prophecy. Because after He claimed this prophecy was fulfilled in their hearing, they wondered at the gracious words that came from His lips. This is probably when they were thinking, this man grew up in our midst, we know him and his family. He didn't seem like anything special then so how is he now a fulfillment of this Messianic prophecy? But this seemed like wondering thoughts, or marveling thoughts, but not murderous thoughts. But when Jesus implied that the gifts of God would be given to heathens, foreigners, and their enemies, they snapped.

After leaving Nazareth, Matthew says that Jesus settled in Capernaum. What does that mean? I don't think it means that Jesus built a house for Himself there. I think it means that city of Capernaum became His home base. In a couple places, we read that after teaching in the Synagogue, Jesus and the disciples went to the home of Peter and Andrew.

[Mark 1:21](#) Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. ... <sup>29</sup> Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. [Mark 1:21, 29 NKJV](#)

[Luke 4:31](#) Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths. ... <sup>38</sup> Now He arose from the synagogue and entered Simon's house. But Simon's wife's mother was sick with a high fever, and they made request of Him concerning her. [Luke 4:31, 38 NKJV](#)

This raises an interesting question: was Peter from Bethsaida or Capernaum?

[John 1:44](#) Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. [John 1:44 NKJV](#)

I don't think there is any controversy here. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, was often called Jesus of Nazareth, but settled in Capernaum. It seems pretty clear that Peter and Andrew had a house in Capernaum, where Peter's mother-in-law lived as well. That doesn't prevent them from originally being from Bethsaida.

What do you believe?

- Do you think the people of Nazareth were willing to accept Jesus as the Messiah if He hadn't said the things about the widow of Zarephath or Naaman?
- Do you think Jesus' family were in the synagogue that day? If so, what do you think they were doing when the churchgoers turned into a murderous mob?
- Do you think Jesus was homeless?

## Jesus calls Peter, Andrew, James and John to follow Him full-time

[Luke 5:1-11](#), [Matthew 4:18-22](#), [Mark 1:16-17](#)<sup>129</sup>

[Luke 5:1](#) So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, [Matthew 4:18](#) And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, [Mark 1:16](#) And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, <sup>2</sup> and saw two boats standing saw ... He saw ... by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing [their] nets. <sup>3</sup> Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. <sup>4</sup> When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." <sup>5</sup> But Simon answered and said to Him, Matthew 4:18 ... two brothers, Simon "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." <sup>6</sup> And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. <sup>7</sup> So they signaled to [their] partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. <sup>8</sup> When Simon Peter saw [it], he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" <sup>9</sup> For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; <sup>10</sup> and so also [were] James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. ... Mark 1:16 ... Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Mathew 4:18 NKJV

<sup>129</sup> Strong. p56. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n117/mode/2up>

Matthew 4:19 Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." <sup>20</sup> They immediately left [their] nets and followed Him. <sup>21</sup> 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. He called them, <sup>22</sup> and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him. [Matthew 4:18-22 NKJV](#)

Mark 1:17 Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." <sup>18</sup> They immediately left their nets and followed Him. <sup>19</sup> When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the [son] of Zebedee,

Luke 5:10 ... And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." <sup>11</sup> So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him. [Luke 5:1-11 NKJV](#)

Mark 1:19 ... and John his brother, who also [were] in the boat mending their nets. <sup>20</sup> And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him. [Mark 1:16-20 NKJV](#)

Strong places the calling of Peter, Andrew, James and John to fulltime discipleship around January, more than a year after the Baptism which marked the start of Jesus' public ministry. I wonder what their relationship was with Jesus between the time they met Him shortly after the Baptism and now. There is at least one verse later which tells us there were disciples following Jesus full time from the time of His baptism.

[Acts 1:21](#) "Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, <sup>22</sup> "beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection." <sup>23</sup> And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. <sup>24</sup> And they prayed and said, "You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen <sup>25</sup> "to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." <sup>26</sup> And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles. [Acts 1:22-26 NKJV](#)

All three accounts mention cleaning or mending nets, two sets of brothers, and the call to leave their jobs to follow Jesus full time. Luke is the only one of the four Gospels that mentions the details of the teaching from the boat, and the miracle catch. Matthew and Mark mention that James and John were there with their father Zebedee. Luke was obviously not an eyewitness, but most likely neither were Matthew or Mark. Although if Mark as many think was the Gospel according to Peter, his would have been a second hand telling of the events. I think that based on many of the details in Luke about Mary, I think his account would have been influenced by John who was Mary's caretaker after Jesus went to heaven. Luke would also no doubt have had access to John, as a firsthand witness of these particular events. I think the story in Mark was short and to the point, and Matthew copied it and added some details toward the end.

I believe the miracle, was Jesus' way of letting them know that their needs could be met if they quit their jobs to do what God called them to do.

---

What do you believe?

- Do you think Jesus had any fulltime followers before He called these four prominent disciples to quit their jobs and follow Him?
- How do you think the needs of their families were met after they stopped fishing?
- Why do you think the father of James and John was mentioned as being present, but nothing is said of Peter and Andrew's father?



## Jesus casts out an evil spirit in the synagogue on Sabbath

[Mark 1:21-28](#), [Matthew 7:28-29](#), [Luke 4:31-37](#)<sup>130</sup>

[Mark 1:21](#) Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. <sup>22</sup> And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

<sup>23</sup> Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, <sup>24</sup> saying, "Let [us] alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are--the Holy One of God!"

<sup>25</sup> But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" <sup>26</sup> And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him.

<sup>27</sup> Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? What new doctrine [is] this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him." <sup>28</sup> And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee. [Mark 1:21-28 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 7:28](#) And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, <sup>29</sup> for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. [Matthew 7:28-29 NKJV](#)

[Luke 4:33](#) Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice, <sup>34</sup> saying, "Let [us] alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are--the Holy One of God!"

<sup>35</sup> But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown him in [their] midst, it came out of him and did not hurt him.

<sup>36</sup> Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, "What a word this [is]! For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out." <sup>37</sup> And the report about Him went out into every place in the surrounding region. [Luke 4:31-37 NKJV](#)

Leaning on Strong again for chronology and the merging of the Gospel accounts, he has this healing occurring within the same month of calling Peter, Andrew, James & John to fulltime ministry.

Jesus has been traveling around preaching and healing for over a year now. People were already amazed by His ability to heal sickness. Now they are amazed again and consider the ability to command and cast out evil spirits a new teaching. Obviously, the fact that Jesus had power to heal sickness, did not automatically lead the people to believe He had power to do any and everything. We will see this again when the disciples, no less, were amazed by His ability to command nature.

---

What do you believe?

- Why do you think Jesus didn't want the demons revealing who He was?
- Do you think the people had ever encountered someone with power to heal sickness before Jesus? (in some future dialog, He implied that some people had the ability to cast out evil spirits [\[Matthew 12:27\]](#))
- Do you think demon possession was more common then than it is today?

<sup>130</sup> Strong. p58. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n119/mode/2up>

## Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law

[Mark 1:29-34](#), [Matthew 8:14-16](#), [Luke 4:38-41](#)<sup>131</sup>

[Mark 1:29](#) Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

<sup>30</sup> But Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once.

<sup>31</sup> So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them.

<sup>32</sup> At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. <sup>33</sup> And the whole city was gathered together at the door. <sup>34</sup> Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him. [Mark 1:29-34 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 8:14](#) Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever. <sup>15</sup> So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them.

<sup>16</sup> When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, [Matthew 8:14-16 NKJV](#)

[Luke 4:38](#) Then He got up and [left] the synagogue, and entered Simon's home. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Him to help her. <sup>39</sup> And standing over her, He rebuked the fever, and it left her; and she immediately got up and served them.

<sup>40</sup> Now while the sun was setting, all those who had [any who were] sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He was laying His hands on each one of them and healing them.

<sup>41</sup> Demons also were coming out of many, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" And [yet] He was rebuking them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that He was the Christ. [Luke 4:38-41 NKJV](#)

This story tells us several things. Peter and Andrew lived in the same house along with Peter's mother-in-law. That is one of the clues we have that Peter is married, but the Bible doesn't tell us anything about his wife or children. Another reference to his married status was written by Paul.

[1 Corinthians 9:5](#) Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as [do] also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? [1 Corinthians 9:5 NKJV](#)

The Bible doesn't mention Andrew's family either, so we will not make any assumptions. If this story occurred on the same day that Jesus healed the demon possessed man in the synagogue in Capernaum, then we must assume that Peter's home was also in Capernaum, since Jesus would most likely not have traveled between towns on Sabbath. Jesus didn't wait until after the Sabbath to heal Peter's mother-in-law, but the rest of the people waited until sunset to bring their friends and family for healing. Here again, we have demons shouting out who Jesus really was as they were being cast out, and Jesus telling them not to speak. Several interesting questions arise out of this, which are listed in the wrap-up for this section.

---

What do you believe?

- What did the demons have to gain by revealing Jesus' true identity?
- Why did Jesus not want them to reveal His true identity?
- I have to assume Jesus actually had the power to silence the demons if He really wanted, so why was He telling them to be silent, but they were still saying things as they left?

---

<sup>131</sup> Strong. p59. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n119/mode/2up>

## Jesus teaches and heals throughout Galilee, and touches a leper in healing him

[Mark 1:35-45](#), [Matthew 4:23-25](#), [Matthew 8:2-4](#), [Luke 4:42-44](#), [Luke 5:12-15](#)<sup>132</sup>

[Mark 1:35](#) Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.

<sup>36</sup> And Simon and those [who were] with Him searched for Him.

<sup>37</sup> When they found Him, they said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You." <sup>38</sup> But He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth."

[Luke 4:42](#) Now when it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them; <sup>43</sup> but He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent."

[Matthew 4:23](#) And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds

of disease among the people. <sup>24</sup> Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. <sup>25</sup> Great multitudes followed Him--from Galilee, and [from] Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan. [Matthew 4:23-25 NKJV](#)

[Mark 1:39](#) And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.

[Luke 4:44](#) And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee. [Luke 4:44 NKJV](#)

[Luke 5:12](#) And it happened when He was in a certain city, that behold, a man who was full of leprosy saw Jesus; and he fell on [his] face and implored Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

[Matthew 8:2](#) And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

[Mark 1:40](#) Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "If You are willing, You can make me clean."

[Mark 1:41](#) Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out [His] hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." <sup>42</sup> As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed. <sup>43</sup> And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once, <sup>44</sup> and said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." <sup>45</sup> However, he went out and began to proclaim [it] freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction. [Mark 1:35-45 NKJV](#)

<sup>3</sup> Then Jesus put out [His] hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. <sup>4</sup> And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." [Matthew 8:2-4 NKJV](#)

[Luke 5:13](#) Then He put out [His] hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately the leprosy left him.

[Luke 5:14](#) And He charged him to tell no one, "But go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as a testimony to them, just as Moses commanded."

<sup>15</sup> However, the report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. [Luke 5:12-15](#)

As usual, I credit the alignment of these Gospels to Strong. I have found it interesting that the first chapter of Mark covers such a wide span of time, according to Strong.

<sup>132</sup> Strong. p60. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n121/mode/2up>

[Mark 1:35](#) tells us that before the sun even came up, Jesus went to a secluded place and prayed. I think this is an example to each of us who want to be like Jesus. I believe that this was a consistent practice of His and as Christians, should be ours as well. In the *Desire of Ages*, White suggests that it would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ.<sup>133</sup> I believe that spending time every single day, studying the Bible and praying is a necessary part of living a Christ-like life.

When Jesus healed the leper, He told him not to tell anyone but to immediately go to a priest and offer the sacrifice for being cured of leprosy. I don't know how people were cured of leprosy in those days but God actually gave the Israelites a law describing what they should do when someone was cured of leprosy in [Leviticus 14](#). The curious thing about this is that to the best of our knowledge, leprosy has until very recently been seen as an incurable disease. It wasn't until the 1940's that an effective treatment for leprosy became available with the currently used Multidrug therapy (MDT) being recommended to the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1981.<sup>134</sup> In addition to being seen as a terminal illness, in Bible times, it often carried the additional stigma that the infected were sinners and cursed by God. If leprosy were that incurable, why would God bother to give Moses a procedure for what to do when someone is healed of leprosy? My own personal opinion is that there were other skin conditions that might appear like leprosy and were quarantined the same way, which could go away on their own or be cured. I believe that knowing their feelings about Him, Jesus wanted the man to get his inspection without the priests knowing how he was cured. Furthermore, I think the reason Jesus told him not to tell anyone was born out in the story. After this Jesus was overwhelmed by sick people whenever He entered any town, forcing Him to stay in remote places where people could come to Him to hear Him preach. It's not that Jesus didn't want to heal people, but I think He wanted a balance between teaching and healing, and I suspect that many people that were healed did not become followers and did not use the gift of healing to glorify God.

---

What do you believe?

- How do you envision Jesus' private prayer time?
- Why do you think Jesus physically touched the leper when He healed him?
- Why do you think Jesus didn't want the leper to tell anyone that Jesus healed him?

---

<sup>133</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p83.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=83>

<sup>134</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leprosy#History>

## Jesus offers forgiveness for sin

[Luke 5:17-26](#), [Matthew 9:2-8](#), [Mark 2:1-12](#)<sup>135</sup>

[Luke 5:17](#) Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was [present] to heal them.<sup>18</sup> Then behold, men brought on a bed a man who [Matthew 9:2](#) Then behold, they brought to Him was paralyzed, whom they a paralytic lying on a bed. ... sought to bring in and lay before Him.<sup>19</sup> And when they could not find how they might bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and let him down with [his] bed through the tiling into the midst before Jesus.

<sup>20</sup> When He saw their faith, He said to him, "Man, your sins are forgiven you."<sup>21</sup> And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"<sup>22</sup> But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts?"<sup>23</sup> "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise up and walk'?"<sup>24</sup> "But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"--He said to the man who was paralyzed, "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."<sup>25</sup> Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.<sup>26</sup> And they were all amazed, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen strange things today!" [Luke 5:17-26 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 9:2](#) ... When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you."<sup>3</sup> And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!"<sup>4</sup> But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?"<sup>5</sup> "For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'?"<sup>6</sup> "But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."<sup>7</sup> And he arose and departed to his house.<sup>8</sup> Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men. [Matthew 9:2-8 NKJV](#)

[Mark 2:1](#) And again He entered Capernaum after [some] days, and it was heard that He was in the house.<sup>2</sup> Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive [them], not even near the door. And He preached the word to them.<sup>3</sup> Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four [men].<sup>4</sup> And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.

[Mark 2:5](#) When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."<sup>6</sup> And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts,<sup>7</sup> "Why does this [Man] speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"<sup>8</sup> But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts?"<sup>9</sup> "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, '[Your] sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'?"<sup>10</sup> "But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"--He said to the paralytic,<sup>11</sup> "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."<sup>12</sup> Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw [anything] like this!" [Mark 2:1-12 NKJV](#)

Strong places these events in April, just before the second Passover of Jesus' public ministry. This appears to be the first record we have of Jesus forgiving sin. For any who did not believe He was God, I could easily see how they would be

<sup>135</sup> Strong. p63. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n123/mode/2up>

alarmed, and think Him blasphemous. I believe that Jesus knew the paralytic's heart and knew that what he longed for even more than healing, was the assurance that his sins were forgiven. These sentiments were written by White, probably influencing my belief.<sup>136</sup> We are told that some scribes, Pharisees, and teachers of the law were there. Most of them were probably present for the purpose of finding fault with Jesus rather than because they believed. Jesus knew this and addressed them directly, knowing what they were thinking. He tried to use some logic on them by asking which they thought was easier, to utter the words "your sins are forgiven," or to actually perform a miraculous healing? I believe Jesus meant to say, if I have power to perform this miracle, that proves I have the ability to forgive sin as well. This logic worked for Him but there were others, including the disciples that were given the power to heal, but not to forgive sin. So, I do not believe Jesus meant as a general principle that those who were given the power to heal, could forgive sins as well.

I believe there is another lesson in this story, as well as many other of Jesus's healings. The man's healing was in large part, made possible because of the faith of his friends. This was obviously not the only instance that we are told that sick were brought to Jesus. In fact, if you search for the word, "brought," depending on the translation, you could probably count eight times in Matthew alone, that it says people were brought to Jesus for healing. I think the lesson here is that we can play an important and maybe even crucial role in helping others to receive the blessings of God.

What do you believe?

- Do you think that more often than not, people were brought to Jesus for healing as opposed to coming themselves?
- Not to imply that the paralysis was a punishment from God, do you think that the paralytic's sickness was related to the sin's that he received forgiveness for?
- Can you think of some sin's that may have some kind of sickness as a natural consequence?

## Jesus calls Matthew

[Mark 2:13-14](#), [Matthew 9:9](#), [Luke 5:27-28](#)<sup>137</sup>

[Mark 2:13](#) Then He went out again by the sea; and all the multitude came to Him, and He taught them.

<p><sup>14</sup> As He passed by, He saw Levi the [son] of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him. <a href="#">Mark 2:13-14 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Matthew 9:9</a> As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him. <a href="#">Matthew 9:9 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 5:27</a> After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." <sup>28</sup> So he left all, rose up, and followed Him. <a href="#">Luke 5:27-28 NKJV</a></p>
---	---	--

It is interesting that Strong chose to put a gap of about half a year between the call of Matthew and the feast which he threw for Jesus, which immediately follows in all three accounts. I don't really know why he did that, but we'll go with it because he clearly has studied the chronology in much greater depth than I have.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>136</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p267.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=267>

<sup>137</sup> Strong. p65. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n125/mode/2up>

<sup>138</sup> Strong. p127. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/126/mode/2up>

Levi Matthew was a tax collector, and as such, he was despised by the Jews as one of the worst kind of sinners. Not only were tax collectors considered collaborators with the occupying force, they were also looked on as thieves. With the power of Rome behind them, they were allowed to collect above and beyond what was required and keep the surplus for themselves. Apparently, this was Rome's way of attracting people to perform this despised task. The Holy Spirit must have been working on Matthew's heart, and he may have been having guilt for over collecting. Whatever the case, when Jesus called, Matthew was willing to walk away from his occupation, and give up what was most likely a considerable income. Matthew became a fulltime disciple, and one of the twelve apostles, and later authored what eventually became the first book of the New Testament.

What do you believe?

- If Jesus intended to reach the Jews, why did He choose a tax collector as one of the twelve apostles?
- Why do you think Matthew was so willing to walk away from his high paying occupation?
- Would you be willing to walk away from your job if you felt Jesus calling you to full time ministry?

## Jesus heals a lame man at the pool of Bethesda on Sabbath

[John 5](#)<sup>139</sup>

[John 5:1](#) After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep [Gate] a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. <sup>3</sup> In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. <sup>4</sup> For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. <sup>5</sup> Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. <sup>6</sup> When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been [in that condition] a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?"

<sup>7</sup> The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me."

<sup>8</sup> Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." <sup>9</sup> And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath. <sup>10</sup> The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed."

<sup>11</sup> He answered them, "He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.' "

<sup>12</sup> Then they asked him, "Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" <sup>13</sup> But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in [that] place. <sup>14</sup> Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."

<sup>15</sup> The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

<sup>16</sup> For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. <sup>17</sup> But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."

<sup>139</sup> Strong. p66. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n127/mode/2up>

<sup>18</sup> Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. <sup>19</sup> Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. <sup>20</sup> "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. <sup>21</sup> "For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to [them], even so the Son gives life to whom He will. <sup>22</sup> "For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, <sup>23</sup> "that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

<sup>24</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. <sup>25</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. <sup>26</sup> "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, <sup>27</sup> "and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. <sup>28</sup> "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice <sup>29</sup> "and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. <sup>30</sup> "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

<sup>31</sup> "If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. <sup>32</sup> "There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true. <sup>33</sup> "You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. <sup>34</sup> "Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. <sup>35</sup> "He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light. <sup>36</sup> "But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish--the very works that I do--bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. <sup>37</sup> "And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. <sup>38</sup> "But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. <sup>39</sup> "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. <sup>40</sup> "But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

<sup>41</sup> "I do not receive honor from men. <sup>42</sup> "But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. <sup>43</sup> "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. <sup>44</sup> "How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that [comes] from the only God? <sup>45</sup> "Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is [one] who accuses you--Moses, in whom you trust. <sup>46</sup> "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. <sup>47</sup> "But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" [John 5:1-47 NKJV](#)

Before getting into the healing, I wanted to say that I believe along with Strong, that this feast mentioned in the first verse of the chapter was a Passover. There is some debate over this, but if you choose to believe the ministry of Jesus was three and a half years, this is probably the most logical conclusion to make of this feast. That would make this the second Passover in the public ministry of Jesus, and about a year and a half after His baptism.

The first part of this chapter is about the healing, and the remainder is Jesus' response to the Jews' desire to kill Him because He healed on the Sabbath and called God His Father. Jesus didn't have to heal this man on Sabbath. The man had probably been at the pool every day for years and would no doubt have been there on the next day. Furthermore, Jesus did not have to tell him to pick up his mat after he was healed. I believe Jesus was making a statement about what He intended as proper Sabbath keeping principles. Many of these Sabbath laws that the Jews were trying to enforce



were not in the Ten Commandments, or even in the other laws given to Moses. They were laws that their religious leaders had added over time in an attempt to keep people from breaking the true laws. A simple example is to think of a law as a fence. If you put a fence around a tree to keep people from touching it, then the spirit of the law is to not touch the tree. But what the Jews did was in effect to add more fences to keep people from touching the original fence. In doing so, they also lost sight of the true spirit of the original law. In fact, later on in another encounter, Jesus pointed out to them how they were stricter about keeping and enforcing their laws than the Ten Commandments. In fairness to these Jews who wished to kill Jesus, there were laws that blasphemers should be stoned. In calling God His Father, the Jews took Jesus literally, hence they accused Him of blasphemy. But a blasphemer who demonstrated god-like abilities, and one who callously took God's name in vain should have been easily distinguishable. He was literally being accused of breaking the Sabbath for doing something miraculous, something human beings were not even capable of doing.

In response to their desire to kill Him, Jesus launched into a monologue, to describe how they could know that He was sent by God and was the Son of God. These are the highlights:

- He will do marvelous works
- He can give life to the dead
- He doesn't do His own will but does the will of God (this would be difficult to identify if you don't study the scriptures to understand the character of God)
- John, whom many believed to be a prophet, pointed Jesus out as the Messiah and Lamb of God
- He fulfills what was predicted of Him in the Old Testament scriptures
- He doesn't seek glory for Himself, but wants to glorify God

---

What do you believe?

- If people didn't have power to miraculously heal, how could there be a law against performing miracles to heal people on the Sabbath?
- Do you think that people were really healed by jumping in the pool? If so, by what power?
- Why were so many of the Jewish rulers not willing to see Jesus for who He really was?

## The disciples accused of harvesting and threshing on the Sabbath

[Matthew 12:1-8](#), [Matthew 9:13](#), [Mark 2:23-28](#), [Luke 6:1-5](#)<sup>140</sup>

[Luke 6:1](#) Now it happened on the second Sabbath after the first that He went through the grainfields. And His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate [them], rubbing [them] in [their] hands. <sup>2</sup> And some of the Pharisees said to them, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?"

<sup>3</sup> But Jesus answering them said, "Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: <sup>4</sup> "how he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and also gave some to those with him, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat?"

<sup>5</sup> "Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? <sup>6</sup> "Yet I say to you that in this place there is [One] greater than the temple. <sup>7</sup> "But if you had known what [this] means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless.

<sup>8</sup> "For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." [Matthew 12:1-8 NKJV](#)

[Mark2:23](#) Now it happened that He went through the grainfields on the Sabbath; and as they went His disciples began to pluck the heads of grain. <sup>24</sup> And the Pharisees said to Him, "Look, why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"

<sup>25</sup> But He said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him: <sup>26</sup> "how he went into the house of God [in the days] of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the showbread, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and also gave some to those who were with him?"

[Matthew 12:1](#) At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. <sup>2</sup> And when the Pharisees saw [it], they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!"

<sup>3</sup> But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: <sup>4</sup> "how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests?"

[Matthew 9:13](#) "But go and learn what [this] means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' ... [Matthew 9:13 NKJV](#)

[Hosea 6:6](#) For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, ... [Hosea 6:6 NKJV](#)

[Mark 2:27](#) And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the

Sabbath. <sup>28</sup> "Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath." [Mark 2:23-28 NKJV](#)

[Luke 6:5](#) And He said to them, "The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath." [Luke 6:1-5 NKJV](#)

Strong places this on the very next Sabbath after healing the lame man at the pool of Bethesda.

I find it somewhat amusing that there are Pharisees, either following Jesus and His disciples closely or lurking behind, as they walk through the field. Their purpose of course was to discredit Jesus. These Pharisees were not accusing the disciples of stealing because the Law of Moses allowed anyone walking through a field to satisfy their own hunger.

[Deuteronomy 23:25](#) "When you come into your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not use a sickle on your neighbor's standing grain. [Deuteronomy 23:25 NKJV](#)

<sup>140</sup> Strong. p71. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n131/mode/2up>

But what did David's actions have to do with keeping or breaking the Sabbath? First, we probably should assume that the Pharisees agreed that David was justified in eating the consecrated bread in this extreme case of need. Let's read from the Old Testament about this incident. A tiny bit of back story for those not familiar with it. Saul, the king of Israel was jealous of David because he believed David was chosen by God to be the next king instead of his son, Jonathan. Saul was insane and was trying to kill David. This was David's first major flight from Saul, and it seems he had to leave in such a hurry, he didn't even have food or a weapon. He thought he was protecting the Priests from choosing sides by lying to them, but in the end it didn't save them.

[1 Samuel 21:1](#) Now David came to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. And Ahimelech was afraid when he met David, and said to him, "Why [are] you alone, and no one is with you?" <sup>2</sup> So David said to Ahimelech the priest, "The king has ordered me on some business, and said to me, 'Do not let anyone know anything about the business on which I send you, or what I have commanded you.' And I have directed [my] young men to such and such a place." <sup>3</sup> "Now therefore, what have you on hand? Give [me] five [loaves of] bread in my hand, or whatever can be found." <sup>4</sup> And the priest answered David and said, "[There is] no common bread on hand; but there is holy bread, if the young men have at least kept themselves from women." <sup>5</sup> Then David answered the priest, and said to him, "Truly, women [have been] kept from us about three days since I came out. And the vessels of the young men are holy, and [the bread is] in effect common, even though it was consecrated in the vessel this day." <sup>6</sup> So the priest gave him holy [bread]; for there was no bread there but the showbread which had been taken from before the LORD, in order to put hot bread [in its place] on the day when it was taken away. [1 Samuel 21:1-6 NKJV](#)

This is how the Law of Moses describes the bread of the Presence.

[Leviticus 24:5](#) "And you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it. Two-tenths [of an ephah] shall be in each cake. <sup>6</sup> "You shall set them in two rows, six in a row, on the pure [gold] table before the LORD. <sup>7</sup> "And you shall put pure frankincense on [each] row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, an offering made by fire to the LORD. <sup>8</sup> "Every Sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, [being taken] from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. <sup>9</sup> "And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place; for it [is] most holy to him from the offerings of the LORD made by fire, by a perpetual statute." [Leviticus 24:5-9 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 29:33](#) "They shall eat those things with which the atonement was made, to consecrate [and] to sanctify them; but an outsider shall not eat [them], because they [are] holy. [Exodus 29:33 NKJV](#)

God had instructed the Israelites to build a sanctuary and He had given them procedures or laws associated with its use. In this particular instance, there was a table of showbread in the sanctuary upon which this bread was to be placed. This bread was to be replaced weekly, on the Sabbath, and was only to be eaten by the priests. One interesting question which is probably impossible to answer is, was the bread just removed that day? If so, it was the Sabbath. The High Priest at the time, under the circumstances, thought it ok to give the bread that had been removed to David to satisfy his hunger even though he was not a descendant of Aaron. The common denominator in these two cases is hunger, so is Jesus is saying, at least under certain circumstances, that it is ok to break the law to satisfy hunger? I'm pretty sure He didn't consider the plucking grain and rubbing it breaking the Sabbath, but the Pharisees did. So rather than try to explain why that act wasn't breaking the Sabbath, like a lawyer, He quoted well known incident from the past.

Since we're discussing satisfying hunger on the Sabbath, let's wander a little to the topic of buying food on the Sabbath, either prepared or unprepared. The general rule for a Biblical Sabbath keeper is to not buy and sell on the Sabbath, based on the reading of Nehemiah.

[Nehemiah 13:15](#) In those days I saw [people] in Judah treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and loading donkeys with wine, grapes, figs, and all [kinds of] burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I warned [them] about the day on which they were selling provisions. <sup>16</sup> Men of Tyre dwelt there also, who brought in fish and all kinds of goods, and sold [them] on the Sabbath to the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. <sup>17</sup> Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, "What evil thing [is] this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath day? <sup>18</sup> "Did not your fathers do thus, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you bring added wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath." [Nehemiah 13:15-18 NKJV](#)

Many will argue that it is less work to pay for the food than to work at preparing it on the Sabbath. I would propose looking at it another way.

1. If we choose as a Sabbath keeper to not work in a restaurant on that day,
2. Then, if everyone were converted, and became Sabbath keepers, which should be our goal,
3. Then there would be no body to work in restaurants on Sabbath
4. Then, if we choose to go out to a restaurant on Sabbath, are we indirectly saying that we need some people to not be converted so we can do this?

I would say that last question is not what most people would be thinking, but it does give you something to think about. Obviously, there are certain jobs that must be performed on the Sabbath, at least at some level. Jesus inferred this when He pointed out that the Priests work hard on the Sabbath and are blameless.

The next part of Jesus' response to the Pharisees, is another statement that helps clarify. Jesus says that He desires compassion more than sacrifice. Now offering sacrifices was required by the Law of Moses, but it seems that Jesus prioritized compassion over sacrifices. God also said through the prophet Samuel to King Saul, that He preferred obedience over sacrifices.

[1 Samuel 15:22](#) So Samuel said:

"Has the LORD [as great] delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,  
As in obeying the voice of the LORD?  
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,  
[And] to heed than the fat of rams. [1 Samuel 15:22 NKJV](#)

This may seem pretty broad to some, but I infer from all of this, that most any type of activity is acceptable on the Sabbath if it is done solely for the benefit of or to be compassionate to others, and not for our own benefit or gratification. A few examples of this principle in my opinion are:

- Even though I wouldn't schedule moving myself on Sabbath, if a neighbor needs help moving on Sabbath, help them.
- While I would not rake my leaves on Sabbath, if the need arose to rake the leaves of a neighbor in need on the Sabbath, I have no problem with that.
- If something had to be bought on Sabbath to meet someone's needs, by all means do so.

- This can seem like rationalizing which I hate to do, but if you are in a position where you would be seen as heartless and uncompassionate for choosing not to do something on Sabbath, or would make someone think poorly of Christianity and Christ as a result, then do it. I realize the value of having and upholding principles, but think about the point Jesus is making here.

The last part of Jesus' response to the Pharisees doesn't seem like it would do much for them. He essentially said I'm Lord of the Sabbath, so I will be the judge of what is right and what is wrong to do on the Sabbath.

What do you believe?

- Do you believe it is ok to buy food on the Sabbath day? If you don't have a stance, did this discussion influence you to make a decision one way or the other?
- The Seventh-Day Adventist Church has a general principle of providing emergency medical care at its hospitals but discouraging elective care on the Sabbath.<sup>141</sup> Is this in line with Christ's example of healing people who were not in medical emergencies?
- How far do you believe in stretching traditional rules or laws in order to show compassion?

## Jesus heals a withered hand on the Sabbath

[Matthew 12:9-14](#), [Mark 3:1-6](#), [Luke 6:6-11](#),<sup>142</sup>

[Luke 6:6](#) Now it happened on another Sabbath, also, that He entered the synagogue and taught. And a man was there whose right hand was withered. <sup>7</sup> So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him. <sup>8</sup> But He knew their thoughts,

and said to the man who had the withered hand, "Arise and stand here." And he arose and stood. <sup>9</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?"

[Matthew 12:11](#) Then He said to them, "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift [it] out? <sup>12</sup> "Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." [Matthew 12:11-12 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 12:9](#) Now when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue. <sup>10</sup> And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"--that they might accuse Him. [Matthew 12:9-10 NKJV](#)

[Mark 3:1](#) And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. <sup>2</sup> So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him.

[Mark 3:3](#) And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward."

<sup>4</sup> Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they kept silent.

<sup>141</sup> <https://www.adventist.org/en/information/official-statements/documents/article/go/0/sabbath-observance/>

<sup>142</sup> Strong. p73. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n133/mode/2up>

Mark 3:5 And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched [it] out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other. <sup>6</sup> Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.

[Mark 3:1-6 NKJV](#)

Luke 6:10 And when He had looked around at them all, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored as whole as the other. <sup>11</sup> But they were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus. [Luke 6:6-11](#)

[NKJV](#)

[Matthew 12:13](#) Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched [it] out, and it was restored as whole as the other. <sup>14</sup> Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

[Matthew 12:13-14 NKJV](#)

Strong proposes placing this next Sabbath healing a week after the grain harvesting encounter with the Pharisees. This time it seems that Jesus is actually provoking an incident. The expression, "picking a fight," is what comes to mind. He is still trying to get his point across that having mercy and compassion is more important than observing their super strict Sabbath Laws. In fact, Jesus pointed out to them the hypocrisy of their practices, in that they would do for an animal on the Sabbath, what they would not do for a person. White proposed in *Desire of Ages*, that the motivation for this was financial. She said, "This illustrates the working of all false religions. They originate in man's desire to exalt himself above God, but they result in degrading man below the brute."<sup>143</sup>

Here again, Jesus is trying to teach a Sabbath keeping principle. Doing good (relieving suffering) on the Sabbath is in accordance with God's intent for the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment.

The Pharisees were so blinded by their opposition to Jesus, that not only would they plot how they could kill Him on the Sabbath, but they collaborated with their enemies. Most scholars describe the Herodians as a political party or religious sect who were supporters of King Herod, and opponents of the Pharisees. Some possibly even supported Herod as the Messiah. The Jewish Encyclopedia says they were adherents of the family of Boethus whose daughter was a wife of Herod and whose sons had been made High Priest. They were generally aligned with the Sadducees against the Pharisees.<sup>144</sup> Here we see the idea of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend," at work.

What do you believe?

- When Mark says Jesus looked at them with anger, how is that not sin?
- Is healing on the Sabbath different for Jesus than it is for us because He used miraculous power to do it?
- Is the Sabbath keeping principle the same from this incident as it was for the previous ones?

## Jesus names the twelve apostles

[Luke 6:12-19](#), [Mark 3:13-19](#), [Matthew 10:2-4](#)<sup>145</sup>

[Luke 6:12](#) Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

[Mark 3:13](#) And He went up on the mountain ... —

<sup>143</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p286. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=286>

<sup>144</sup> <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/7605-herodians>

<sup>145</sup> Strong, p76. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n137/mode/2up>

Mark 3:14 Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach,  
 15 and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons: —

Luke 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; and James and John; and Philip and Bartholomew;  
 15 and 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. [Luke 6:12-16 NKJV](#)

Mark 3:13 ... and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him. — 16 And He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter), 17 James the [son] of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to them He gave the name Boanerges, which means, "Sons of Thunder"); 18 and Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot; 19 and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. [Mark 3:13-19 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 10:2](#) Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the [son] of Zebedee, and John his brother;  
 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the [son] of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus,  
 4 Simon the Cananite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. [Matthew 10:2-4 NKJV](#)

Strong dates the selection of the twelve Apostles around May after the second Passover, which would be just a little over a year and a half after Jesus' baptism. There were obviously more than twelve disciples or regular followers from whom Jesus chose the Apostles. We know this for certain because of what was written in Acts:

[Acts 1:21](#) "Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 "beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection." 23 And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed and said, "You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen 25 "to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." 26 And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles. [Acts 1:21-26 NKJV](#)

This is a strange question, but I wonder what Joseph thought when Matthias was chosen over him? So, what criteria do you think Jesus used to choose the twelve? Most would probably not have been considered the type to be religious leaders. Most of them would probably not have been chosen to be heads of big enterprises. We don't know very much about most of the apostles, but here is some of what we know.

- Most of the disciples were from the region of Galilee, which was looked down upon by the pious Jews from Judea.
- At least four were fishermen – a useful and necessary occupation but by no means glamorous or respected.
- One was a tax collector – an absolutely despised occupation.
- One was a zealot – which could probably be considered the Jewish equivalent to Islamic terrorists of today.
- Clear through His ministry, Jesus was constantly disappointed by their bickering for the highest place in His kingdom.

The word "apostle" is defined in the online Merriam Webster dictionary, with the first three definitions being relevant to our discussion:<sup>146</sup>

1. one sent on a mission: as

<sup>146</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/apostle>

- a. one of an authoritative New Testament group sent out to preach the gospel and made up especially of Christ's 12 original disciples and Paul
  - b. the first prominent Christian missionary to a region or group
- 2.
- a. a person who initiates a great moral reform or who first advocates an important belief or system
  - b. an ardent supporter : adherent
3. the highest ecclesiastical official in some church organizations

Since the Bible doesn't really give us very much information about most of the Apostles, especially after Jesus left, most of what we think we know is from church tradition and speculation. As such there is room for differences of opinion and conclusions. I intend to write something about each of the twelve Apostles, starting with what we know from scripture, then following that with other sources.<sup>147</sup> The book, *Lives of the Apostles of Jesus Christ*, by L. H. Young was a great resource. The light he shed on some of the tradition, and the motivation for much of it, gave me a healthy skepticism for the things so many recall as fact today.<sup>148</sup> In fact it seems he had a general rule for these "writings of the fathers," and I quote, "the voice of antiquity has already been shown to be worth very little, when it is not heard within three centuries of the events on which it offers testimony."<sup>149</sup>

## Peter

In all four lists of the twelve Apostles, from Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts, Peter is named first. In a word search in the NKJV, Peter occurs 152 times in the first five books of the New Testament. Of the three most named, John occurs less than thirty times and two thirds of them were with Peter. James is named about 20 times, half of them with Peter. In spite of the quarrels among the disciples over who was number one, I think it was pretty clear and mostly accepted that Peter was it. Statements of Jesus that supported this were:

[Matthew 16:18](#) "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. [Matthew 16:18 NKJV](#)

[John 21:15](#) So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, [son] of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." <sup>16</sup> He said to him again a second time, "Simon, [son] of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." <sup>17</sup> He said to him the third time, "Simon, [son] of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. [John 21:15-17 NKJV](#)

There are also the numerous times in Acts, after Jesus had left, that Peter spoke for the group, or made recommendations that were accepted without question from the others. None of this is to imply that Peter lorded it over the others or made himself out to be the leader of the church. In fact, a James, who seemed to not be the Apostle, who some have supposed to be the brother of Jesus, spoke out as a leader in the following case:

[Acts 15:13](#) And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, "Men [and] brethren, listen to me: <sup>14</sup> "Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. <sup>15</sup> "And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:

<sup>147</sup> <http://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/who-were-twelve-disciples>

<sup>148</sup> Young, L H. *Lives of the Apostles of Jesus Christ*. New Haven, 1836, p5.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA5#v=onepage&q&f=false>

<sup>149</sup> Young. p288. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA288>



<sup>16</sup> 'After this I will return  
And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down;  
I will rebuild its ruins,  
And I will set it up;

<sup>17</sup> So that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD,  
Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name,  
Says the LORD who does all these things.'

<sup>18</sup> "Known to God from eternity are all His works. <sup>19</sup> "Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, <sup>20</sup> "but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, [from] sexual immorality, [from] things strangled, and [from] blood. <sup>21</sup> "For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

<sup>22</sup> Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, [namely], Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren. [Acts 15:13-22 NKJV](#)

It is not my purpose to cover everything the New Testament said regarding Peter because much of it will be covered in the following pages. Very little is said of Peter after his imprisonment by Herod and miraculous release, after which he went to an unknown place. It seems that as the spread of the Gospel shifted from the Jews to the Gentiles, the focus of the storyline shifted to Paul and his missionary companions. The last mention of Peter aside from His letters is in the council mentioned above where the Apostles and Elders made a decision about the minimum set of Jewish ceremonial laws that would be required of the Gentile Christians. It is pretty widely accepted that at some point Peter ended up in Babylon (the one associated with king Nebuchadnezzar). This is based on his first letter, in [1 Peter 5:13](#), where he sends greetings from those who are in Babylon. In Papal literature, there are many detailed stories of the travels of Peter and the bishops he appointed. Many of these stories show him as the head bishop in Rome, (which Young called absurd and completely unscriptural<sup>150</sup>) supporting of course the lineage of Popes descended from Peter the first Pope. Young referred to many of the writings of these papal historians as fables, absurd, and amusing.<sup>151 152</sup>

The death of Peter by crucifixion is mostly based on the statement of Jesus from John.

[John 21:18](#) "Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry [you] where you do not wish." <sup>19</sup> This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me." [John 21:18-19 NKJV](#)

<sup>150</sup> Young. p224. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA224>

<sup>151</sup> Young. p216. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA216>

<sup>152</sup> Young. p254. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA254>

Crucifixion is implied but is by no means the only way to interpret the statement by Jesus. It seems that the popular tradition is almost unanimous in its claim that Peter was crucified upside down because he felt unworthy to die in the same way Jesus did. However Young states that one of the earliest reliable Christian writers from the first century, Clemens Romanus said, "Peter, on account of unrighteous hatred, underwent not one, or two, but many labors, and having borne his testimony, he departed to the place of glory, which was his due,"<sup>153</sup> One might think that soon after the event, if there were anything unusual about Peter's death, it would have been mentioned. I am not trying to say that Peter was not crucified upside-down, but merely that non-Biblical sources should not be treated with the same trustworthiness as the Bible.

## John

The disciple that is mentioned the next most is John. We know a lot about John from the Bible as he is mentioned more than thirty times in Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts. He mentions himself indirectly but never by name in the Gospel of John, supposedly written by him. He singled himself out among the Apostles as the one Jesus loved, and he was one of the three, along with Peter and his brother James, that Jesus at times called out from among the twelve. We know that his parents were named Zebedee and Salome. John along with Andrew were the first of the twelve to approach Jesus after John the Baptist pointed Him out, and they each called their brothers to meet Jesus. He and his brother were fishermen who worked with their father on the family trade, when Jesus called them to follow Him. John and his brother were nicknamed the sons of thunder for reasons illustrated by their desire to call fire down from heaven to destroy a Samaritan town who refused to allow Jesus to lodging for the night. They also drew the displeasure of the other ten, when their mother had the gall to ask Jesus for the top two positions in His kingdom for her two sons. John's temper must have been mellowed by his close association with Jesus as evidenced by his use of the word love in his alleged writings, which are responsible for 72 of the 361 times the word occurs in the NKJV.<sup>154</sup>

John doesn't give us any clue as to how or why, but he informs us that he was on friendly terms with the gate keeper of the High Priest's compound. He used this connection to gain entrance for himself and Peter to watch the pre-trial of Jesus. John was the only one of the twelve who was said to be at the foot of the cross when Jesus died, and he was given the privilege of caring for Mary the mother of Jesus, even though she had other sons.

After the resurrection, John is specifically mentioned in Acts as collaborating with Peter in the healing of a lame man and is subsequently arrested and questioned by the High Priest. He also accompanied Peter on a trip to pray for the Holy Spirit to be poured out on the Samaritans who had been baptized. Finally, the last mention of John, other than the books he wrote, is by Paul who names Him with Peter and James as pillars of the church.

Now for the things we think we know about John from tradition and the writings of the church fathers and historians. It has generally been believed that John was the youngest of the twelve. One supporting factor in this belief is that their father was young enough to still be participating the rigorous occupation of a fisherman.<sup>155</sup> It is very widely accepted, though not as much by modern scholars, that he is the author of the Gospel account and the three letters bearing his name, as well as the book of Revelation. The primary thing of geographical significance that we can derive from these writings is that he spent some time, presumably in exile, on the island of Patmos.

---

<sup>153</sup> Young. p255. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA255>

<sup>154</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/search.cfm?Criteria=love&t=NASB#s=s\\_primary\\_0\\_1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/search.cfm?Criteria=love&t=NASB#s=s_primary_0_1)

<sup>155</sup> Young. p287. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA287>

[Revelation 1:9](#) I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. [Revelation 1:9 NKJV](#)

Going back as far as my childhood, I recall hearing that on one occasion, John was placed in pot of hot oil, obviously for the purpose of executing him. Young, however says, “the whole story is so completely covered over with gross blunders and contradictions about times and places, that it cannot receive any place among the details of serious and well authorized history.”<sup>156</sup> One thing that tradition is pretty unanimous and seemingly reliable on is that John spent time in Ephesus toward the end of his life. Some believe that John died in exile on Patmos, but others believe that he was recalled from exile, and returned to Ephesus. In support of the latter is that the reign of Domitian, under whose reign John was supposed to have been exiled, ended in AD 96. He was succeeded by Cocceius Nerva, who himself having suffered banishment under Domitian, restored all who had suffered the same fate, including those guilty of religious offenses.<sup>157 158 159</sup>

The book of Revelation itself tells us it was written by John on the island of Patmos. The other writings of John, the Gospel and the three letters also bearing his name, were almost certainly all written late in his life. The question being whether before, during or after his exile on Patmos. Some modern scholars have claimed because of its great differences from Matthew, Mark, and Luke, that the book of John was not written by the Apostle. Others, that it was not written by him because of its style differences from Revelation. I along with others believe the content was so different because he was writing it for a different purpose than the other three and possibly even to fill in some of their gaps. Young believes the greatest probability is that the book of John was written in Ephesus after his return from exile on Patmos.<sup>160</sup>

There is virtually no disagreement that John did not suffer martyrdom, but instead died at an old age as the last of the Apostles. There is respectable ancient authority which claims that he survived to the reign of Trajan in AD 98.<sup>161 162 163</sup>

## James

James the brother of John was the third-most mentioned disciple after Peter and his brother. The three of them were on multiple occasions called out by Jesus from among the twelve. And the same three are named in the top four each time the Apostles are listed in the New Testament. In spite of him being mentioned so many times in the Gospels, we really know very little about James. Mark says that Jesus nicknamed the brothers James and John, Boanerges, which means sons of thunder. Perhaps the name was used at times to distinguish him from the other disciple James. He was also mentioned in connection with the incident where his mother requested the highest places in the kingdom for her two sons. Other than that, the next and last thing mentioned specifically about him in the Bible, was that he was the first of the disciples to be martyred.

An observation from the Gospels is that James is named before John when they are called out together in Matthew and Mark, which has led some to say it supports the idea that James was the older, but Luke always names them in the

<sup>156</sup> Young. p316. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA345>

<sup>157</sup> Young. p340. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA340>

<sup>158</sup> Briscoe, Richard. *History of the Acts of the Apostles*. Oxford, University Press, 1840, p313. <https://books.google.com/books?id=50tVAAAACAAJ&pg=PA312>

<sup>159</sup> Goodrich, Charles A. *History of the Church*. Hartford, F. J. Huntington, 1835, p32. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA32>

<sup>160</sup> Young. p346. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA346>

<sup>161</sup> Young. p352. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA352>

<sup>162</sup> Briscoe. P312. <https://books.google.com/books?id=50tVAAAACAAJ&pg=PA312>

<sup>163</sup> Zahn, T. *John the Apostle*, in Schaff, Philip. *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. VI: Innocents - Liudger*, p.203. <http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/encyc/encyc06/htm/iii.lvii.lviii.htm>

reverse order. Nevertheless, I believe there is probably near universal consensus that James was the older of the two brothers.

[Acts 12](#), where we read about the beheading of James, doesn't identify which Herod it was who ordered it. But later in the chapter we learn that he was angry with Tyre and Sidon, and when they, trying to win back his favor began crying out, "the voice of a god and not a man!" the Lord struck him and he died [[Acts 12:22-23](#)]. History identifies him as Agrippa, the son of Aristobulus, who was the son of Mariamne and Herod the Great. Mariamne was a Jew, the daughter of the last remnants of the Asmonean line.<sup>164 165</sup> This was the blood line of the dynasty that was established by Simon Maccabaeus in 110 BC, two decades after Judas the Maccabee defeated the Selucid army during the Maccabean revolt.<sup>166</sup> Agrippa was actually the first of the descendants of Herod the great to actually be given the title king. Because of his blood line and his favorable regard for the Jewish faith, he was received with joy and hope as their king. Anxious to please the Jews, he ordered the execution of James and intended to follow that up by killing Peter as well.<sup>167 168</sup>

There is not really much for tradition to fill in regarding the life and death of James because he died so soon. The way the story is written in Acts 12, it is reasonable to assume that James was executed right after the ascension of Agrippa to the throne in 41 AD. By my reckoning, that would be about ten years after the crucifixion of Jesus. In a footnote, Young mentions what he calls fables and absurd fiction, created by the Spanish to claim one of the Apostles as their patron saint. These stories tell of a voyage by James, over the whole length of the Mediterranean, into Spain, where he remained several years, preaching, founding churches and performing miracles.<sup>169</sup> I am not saying such a voyage never occurred, or that James didn't found churches and perform miracles. I simply believe that if the sources and origins of these stories are not reliable, they should not be presented as historical fact.

## Andrew

Andrew is names among the top four in all the lists of Apostles given in the New Testament, although he is only mentioned eight times outside of that. But at least there are some individual mentions to speak of. Andrew and John were originally disciples of Jesus and as we already mentioned were the first of the twelve to make contact with Jesus. They understood that John the Baptist's mission was not about himself, but about the Messiah whom all Israel was waiting for. So, when their master identified Jesus as the Lamb of God, they went to talk to Him.

[John 1:35](#) Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. <sup>36</sup> And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

<sup>37</sup> The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup> Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi" (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), "where are You staying?"

<sup>39</sup> He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).

<sup>164</sup> Goodrich. p19. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA19>

<sup>165</sup> Young. p181. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA181>

<sup>166</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasmonean\\_dynasty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasmonean_dynasty)

<sup>167</sup> Young. p184-185. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA184>

<sup>168</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod\\_Agrippa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod_Agrippa)

<sup>169</sup> Young. p285. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA285>

<sup>40</sup> One of the two who heard John [speak], and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. <sup>41</sup> He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ).

<sup>42</sup> And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone). [John 1:35-42 NKJV](#)

The next incident where Andrew is mentioned on his own merit is when he brought the child who was willing to share his lunch with Jesus. This seems to imply that Andrew had taken interest and talked to the lad enough to learn that he had brought a lunch with him.

[John 6:8](#) One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, <sup>9</sup> "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?" [John 6:8-9 NKJV](#)

The last incident in the Gospels where Andrew is mentioned for something he did was when he brought some Greeks to Jesus.

[John 12:20](#) Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. <sup>21</sup> Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." <sup>22</sup> Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus. [John 12:20-22 NKJV](#)

One generality that people read into these few verses is that Andrew brought people to Jesus. In fact, in each of the three incidents where Andrew is specifically mentioned for something, he brought someone to Jesus. A few other things that that might be read into these actions of Andrew is that he didn't think himself to important or busy to talk to a lad. Perhaps he was not among the disciples who tried to prevent mothers with their children from coming to Jesus, or maybe he learned a lesson from that incident. Another is that he thought that Jesus would want to meet these "Gentile" Greeks, where it seems Phillip was not so sure. Finally, it might be said of Andrew from lack of evidence to the contrary, that he was not a jealous person, considering the fact that he introduced Peter to Jesus, who after which seemed to monopolize the relationship.

Anything else we have heard or think we know about Andrew should be treated with a degree of skepticism, depending on the reliability of the source. Young states,

The earliest mention made of the apostle Andrew by any writer whatever, after the evangelists, is by Origen, (about AD 230 or 240,) who speaks of him as having been sent to the Scythians. (Com. in Genes. 1. 3.)<sup>170</sup>

He goes on to say:

By following these droll stories through all their details, the life of Andrew might easily be made longer than that of Peter; but the character of this work would be much degraded from its true historical dignity by such contents.<sup>171</sup>

I think it is safe to say that detailed stories, including intimate conversations, written of the American Revolution, 240 years after the fact, without reliable sources would be considered a novel.

The tradition of Andrew's death by crucifixion in Patras in Achaia were probably the most frequently occurring story. There are slightly different details that I encountered. An X shaped cross was mentioned because he felt unworthy to suffer the same way Jesus did. Some mentioned being tied to the cross to prolong suffering, during which time he

<sup>170</sup> Young. p268. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA268>

<sup>171</sup> Young. p272. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA272>

preached to by passers for two days as he suffered. Some included the detail that he was crucified on the charge of converting the Roman Proconsul's wife to Christianity after healing her.<sup>172 173 174 175 176</sup>

## Philip

In the three lists of the Apostles in the Gospels, Philip is named fifth, but nothing else is said of him in those three books. John however gives us a few additional details of Philip, including being the first disciple to whom Jesus said "follow Me" [[John 1:43](#)]. In the same paragraph, we are told that Philip was from the same town as Andrew and Peter, and that the first thing he did on being called was to go tell his friend Nathanael and bring him to Jesus. In fact, in the book of John, the mentions of Philip nearly parallel those of Andrew. Before Jesus fed the 5000 with the loaves and fish brought to Jesus by Andrew, Philip exclaimed, two hundred days' worth of wages is not enough to buy bread for all these people [[John 6:7](#)]. When Andrew brought the Greeks to Jesus, it was Philip whom they approached first, who brought them to Andrew [[John 12:22](#)]. Finally, not mentioned with Andrew, in the upper room during the Last Supper, Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father, to which Jesus answered, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" [[John 14:8,9](#)].

When we come to Acts things get a little less clear regarding the life of Philip, because there is a deacon by the same name mentioned in [Acts 6:5](#). In [Acts 8](#), there is a story about Philip, who the church has called the evangelist. [Acts 21:8](#) adds some clarity by identifying Philip the evangelist as being one of the seven, who by the way had four daughters who were prophets [[Acts 21:9](#)]. There are several possibilities for the person called Philip in the book of Acts:

1. Philip the Apostle and Philip the evangelist are two different people
  - a. All mention of Philip except for the list of seven deacons is about the Apostle
  - b. All mention of Philip except for the list of Apostles is about the deacon
2. Philip the Apostle was willing to serve in the capacity of deacon and hence they are the same person

1.a can immediately be dismissed because [Acts 21](#) tells of the Apostle Paul visiting Phillip the evangelist who is identified as one of the seven. Young wrote that the early church Fathers seemed to not have any distinction between the Philips mentioned in Acts, but that there were inconsistencies in identifying him as one of the twelve or one of the seven, and also about whether his daughters remained virgins or married.<sup>177</sup> I think I am probably in the majority by identifying with #1.b, in believing that the only mention of Philip in Acts is in the list of Apostles and all remaining mentions of Philip in the book are about the deacon. Part of my reason is that when Philip went to Samaria, he only baptized with water, after which the Apostles were summoned to baptize with the Holy Spirit. I think the Apostle should have received the gift of baptizing with the Holy Spirit along with the rest in the upper room. I realize this is not a super strong argument, because other's who were not Apostles must have received the gift as well. In addition, since this apparently occurred before Peter's vision of the unclean animals, Philip may have sought validation from Peter in baptizing Samaritans. The stronger argument is that since the same author of the book of Acts writes of a Philip that was preaching and evangelizing in one chapter, then in another speaks of a Philip the evangelist, it would seem he is speaking of the same person.

<sup>172</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew\\_the\\_Apostle#Life](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_the_Apostle#Life)

<sup>173</sup> <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/killing-jesus/articles/how-did-the-apostles-die/>

<sup>174</sup> Goodrich. p28. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Z4UBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA28>

<sup>175</sup> Young. p269. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA269>

<sup>176</sup> <http://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/who-were-twelve-disciples#andrew>

<sup>177</sup> Young. p357. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA357>

If we cannot distinguish from tradition the difference between the two Philips, then either the events of the two have been intermingled, or one has been eclipsed by the other. Tradition holds that a Philip was crucified in Heliopolis in Egypt,<sup>178 179</sup> but ultimately which if either, we do not know.

### Bartholomew or Nathanael

There is no statement in the Bible that tells us that Nathanael and Bartholomew were the same person, but there doesn't seem to be much dispute that the two names refer to the same person. The name Bartholomew is used in Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts, while John uses the name Nathanael. Bartholomew is listed immediately after Phillip in the Gospel lists of the Apostles, and Philip introduced Nathanael to Jesus in John. Another point to be made is that when someone was called Bar-anything, that was not necessarily their given name, because it really meant "son of" followed by the father's given name. This could be somewhat like calling someone by their last name today. So it is highly possible that Nathanael was his given name and Bartholomew meant that he was the son of Tholomew, or Tholomai.<sup>180</sup> Some have extrapolated this name to Tolmai, and then to Talmi, to suggest that he was a descendant of Talmi (2 Samuel 3:3). Talmi was king of Geshur whose daughter, Maacah, was the wife of David, mother of Absalom.<sup>181</sup> I haven't viewed the sources for this connection, but I would be highly skeptical if it were only based on the similarities in the names.

The Bible tells us nothing about Bartholomew except that he was listed as one of the twelve. John on the other hand give us some details of Nathanael including a conversation between him and Jesus. It is all contained in one paragraph, so let's just read it next.

[John 1:43](#) The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." <sup>44</sup> Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. <sup>45</sup> Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

<sup>46</sup> And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

<sup>47</sup> Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!"

<sup>48</sup> Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

<sup>49</sup> Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

<sup>50</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." <sup>51</sup> And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." [John 1:43-51 NKJV](#)

Jesus called Nathanael a man in whom there is no deceit, which is translated from the Greek word [δόλος, dolos](#).<sup>182</sup> The word is associated with guile, lure and bait. So, I presume this to mean that Nathanael was a very genuine person, not being someone different in private, than he was in public. The Jews had an idea that their Messiah, the Christ, would be a king like David, and a prophet like Moses. But did they also believe Him to be the God who spoke to Moses, the One who led them out of Egypt, and performed miraculous works during the Exodus? Perhaps that's what Nathanael was confessing, that their Messiah and their God were one and the same. So, when did Nathanael see angels of God

<sup>178</sup> <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/killing-jesus/articles/how-did-the-apostles-die/>

<sup>179</sup> <http://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/who-were-twelve-disciples#philip>

<sup>180</sup> Young. p359. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA359>

<sup>181</sup> <http://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/who-were-twelve-disciples#bartholomew-nathanael>

<sup>182</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G1388&t=NKJV>

ascending and descending on the Son of Man? Maybe Jesus was saying to Nathanael, that he would see many varied and more impressive miracles than this.

The only other mention of him in scripture other than the lists is where he is said to have gone fishing with Peter, James, John and Thomas after the resurrection.

[John 21:1](#) After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed [Himself]: <sup>2</sup> Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the [sons] of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. <sup>3</sup> Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. [John 21:1-3 NKJV](#)

Tradition, for whatever its worth tells us that Nathanael is claimed by Armenia as the Apostle who brought the Gospel to them. However, a different source says that he was flayed alive and then beheaded in India.<sup>183</sup> There is an account of him being beat and then crucified by "impatient idolaters."<sup>184</sup> Yet another tells of him going to Arabia and preaching there until his death.<sup>185</sup>

### Thomas or Didymus

Apparently, this disciple was a twin based on his name. Thomas is translated from his Hebrew name, and Didymus from Greek, both meaning twin. John's Gospel is the only one that used the name Didymus, and he used it three times together with the name Thomas leaving no question that the two names were used for the same person. The Bible, however, tells us nothing about his twin or his parents. Matthew, Mark and Luke do not mention Thomas aside from their list of the Apostles. John as we have come to appreciate has provided us with at least a few other details.

Probably the most well-known story of Thomas is the one which gives him the modern nickname "doubting Thomas," that he is probably best known for.

[John 20:24](#) Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

<sup>26</sup> And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" <sup>27</sup> Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand [here], and put [it] into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

<sup>28</sup> And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" <sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed [are] those who have not seen and [yet] have believed." [John 20:24-29 NKJV](#)

Earlier in John are a couple very brief mentions of Thomas. Toward the end of Jesus' ministry, it was becoming very clear that the religious leaders were looking for a way to get rid of Him. It seemed that there were only two possible outcomes, Jesus becoming King and putting them in their place, or them getting their way which was to kill Jesus. It seemed that the two sides had reached a tipping point, and something was going to happen the next time Jesus entered Jerusalem. In this case, Jesus was talking about going to Bethany, which was not in Jerusalem, but it was so close that

<sup>183</sup> <http://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/who-were-twelve-disciples#bartholomew-nathanael>

<sup>184</sup> <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/killing-jesus/articles/how-did-the-apostles-die/>

<sup>185</sup> Young. p362. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA362>



Thomas feared that Jesus was putting himself within their grasp. I guess Thomas had decided in his mind that Jesus was not taking the route of claiming the throne and putting the leaders in their place, so his assumption was that the leaders would arrest Jesus and kill Him at their next opportunity.

[John 11:16](#) Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him." [John 11:16 NKJV](#)

Whether he was a pessimist in general or a realist, Thomas was showing his loyalty to his master. Would you go ahead and follow your leader if you thought that they were leading your group to death? The only other incident where Thomas is mentioned, he asked the question that everyone wanted to ask but was afraid to ask. Have you even been in a situation where everyone is wondering the same thing, but they are all afraid to show their ignorance by asking? Jesus had just told His disciples that that He was going to go away and prepare a place for them in His Father's house. He even said, "you know the way where I am going." [[John 14:4](#)]

[John 14:1](#) "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. <sup>2</sup> "In My Father's house are many mansions; if [it were] not [so], I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, [there] you may be also. <sup>4</sup> "And where I go you know, and the way you know."

<sup>5</sup> Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"

<sup>6</sup> Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. [John 14:1-6 NKJV](#)

Tradition on Thomas is similar to the other disciples, which is at times, suspiciously too much detail for stories that don't seem to have earlier sources. In spite of this there is a lot of consensus and evidence that Thomas ended up in India, starting the Christian church there and eventually dying a martyr's death there.<sup>186 187 188 189</sup>

## Matthew

The Apostle Matthew is another one who is thought to be known by more than one name although we do not have the benefit of John's additional details, as he doesn't mention either name. The name is used twice in Matthew, once in his call to follow Jesus, and once in the list of Apostles.

[Matthew 9:9](#) As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him. [Matthew 9:9 NKJV](#)

Mark, Luke and Acts also mention Matthew as one of the twelve. The name Levi is used in the calling of a tax collector to follow Jesus in Mark and Luke, which sounds suspiciously similar to the calling of Matthew in the book of Matthew.

[Mark 2:14](#) As He passed by, He saw Levi the [son] of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him. [Mark 2:14 NKJV](#)

[Luke 5:27](#) After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." [Luke 5:27 NKJV](#)

<sup>186</sup> Young. p385. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA385>

<sup>187</sup> <http://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/who-were-twelve-disciples#thomas>

<sup>188</sup> <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/killing-jesus/articles/how-did-the-apostles-die/>

<sup>189</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_the\\_Apostle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_the_Apostle)

Since Levi is not used in any of the lists of Apostles, it is assumed that the tax collector in Matthew, Mark and Luke are the same person. If you are willing to accept this conclusion, then you can add one more piece of information to what we know of Matthew, that being the name of his father, Alphaeus. The last specific mention of this disciple in the Bible is of a reception he gave for Jesus at his house, presumably to invite many of his friends and former colleagues to meet Jesus.

[Luke 5:29](#) Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them. [Luke 5:29 NKJV](#)

If we put all of this together, we have a picture of a tax collector named Levi or Matthew, the son of Alphaeus, who was despised by the Jews, but selected by Jesus to be one of the twelve, and the author of one of the four Gospels. We can quite easily infer that he was wealthy, and that he gave up a lucrative occupation to follow Jesus. The name of his father brings up one other interesting possibility, as it is mentioned four other times in the New Testament, all of them as the father of one of the other Apostles. It seems like more than coincidence, that in the small circle of the twelve Apostles, that the same father's name would appear without any disclaimer that they were different people. Hence, some assume it was the same, inferring that Levi or Matthew and the disciple called James the less were brothers.

Though the Gospel record doesn't give us anymore details of the Apostle named Matthew or Levi, the first book of the New Testament, written by him can tell us something. His target audience is widely accepted to be the Jews.<sup>190 191 192 193</sup> The testimony of the Fathers from the very earliest times, is that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew.<sup>194 195</sup> One of his goals was to prove to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah that was prophesied about in their holy scriptures, which for the most part is our Old Testament.<sup>196</sup> In fact he included up to 67 Old Testament sources<sup>197</sup>, in 56 different statements, most of which were quotes by Jesus.<sup>198</sup> I would say this paints a pretty good picture of Matthew as a writer and scholar, who had a burden for bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to his own people.

Finally, there is the question of if and where Matthew went from Jerusalem. Young says there is no reliable record that can answer this question for us. He wrote that the earliest testimony on this point is by Socrates in the year 425 A.D., that when the disciples cast lots to divide the heathen world among themselves, Matthew drew Ethiopia. Even less reliable would be the long and fanciful accounts of monks from the fourteenth century, detailing the miracles performed by Matthew, and culminating with his martyrdom.<sup>199</sup> Several other modern sources went with Ethiopia without citing references.<sup>200 201</sup>

<sup>190</sup> Monser, Harold E (Editor). *Cross=Reference Bible*. New York, Chicago, Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1901, p1751.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=It7AAAAMAAJ&pg=PA1751>

<sup>191</sup> Bland, Rev. M. *Annotations on the Gospel of St. Matthew*. Cambridge, J. Smith, 1878, p5.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=X8LM165r68oC&pg=PA5>

<sup>192</sup> Tarbell, Martha. *Tarbell's Teacher's Guide*. New York, Chicago, Fleming H. Revell Company, 1919, p32.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=qZJVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA32>

<sup>193</sup> Robertson, A.T. *Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew*. New York, Macmillian Company, 1911, p27.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=1dKsbMPkOhwC&pg=PA27>

<sup>194</sup> Young. p367. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA367>

<sup>195</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew\\_the\\_Apostle#Notes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_the_Apostle#Notes)

<sup>196</sup> Young. p376. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA376>

<sup>197</sup> <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Matthew-OTQuotations.htm>

<sup>198</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/intros/matthew.cfm>

<sup>199</sup> Young. p380. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA380>

<sup>200</sup> <http://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/who-were-twelve-disciples#matthew-levi>

<sup>201</sup> <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/killing-jesus/articles/how-did-the-apostles-die/>

## James the son of Alphaeus

In all the lists of the twelve Apostles, this disciple was identified as James the son of Alphaeus, presumably to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee. Other than that, the only other time I believe this James is mentioned in the Gospel record is to identify his mother as being one of the women at the crucifixion. I say this because he is identified differently than he is in the lists.

[Mark 15:40](#) There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of **James the Less** and of Joses, and Salome, [Mark 15:40 NKJV](#)

[Mark 16:1](#) Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary [the mother] of **James**, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. [Mark 16:1 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 27:56](#) among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of **James** and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons. [Matthew 27:56 NKJV](#)

[Luke 24:10](#) It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary [the mother] of **James**, and the other [women] with them, who told these things to the apostles. [Luke 24:10 NKJV](#)

[John 19:25](#) Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the [wife] of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. [John 19:25 NKJV](#)

These four verses had to do with the women who were at the cross, the tomb, or telling the disciples that Jesus was risen. Only once, in the presumed three times his name is mentioned, he is identified as James the Less, which literally means "little," whether in age or stature we do not know. In the other two verses, he is just called James, but it is assumed to be the same James because of the names of the women mentioned. I wrote a chapter entirely on the subject of the women who were at the cross and the tomb that crucifixion weekend titled, [Women at the Cross and Tomb](#). Correlating all the accounts, it seems the women were:

- Mary the mother of Jesus
- Mary Magdalene
- The other Mary
- Joanna
- Salome the mother of the other James and John the sons of Zebedee

There is a fairly clear picture of three Mary's at the cross and the tomb. Two of them are unquestionably identified. If we assume the third Mary mentioned in the different accounts are the same person, and that John was describing His mother's sister and the wife of Clopas as this same person, then this is what we can say:

- She was the mother of the James the Less and Joses (Joseph)
- She is the sister (or sister-in-law) of Mary the mother of Jesus
- She is the wife of Clopas
- James was a first cousin of Jesus

The fact that we already know that Salome was the mother of the other Apostle James, leads us to conclude that Mary the Mother of James the Less is the mother of the other Apostle by the same name. But we can only do that if we can somehow reconcile that James is called the son of Alphaeus in Matthew, Mark and Luke, but his mother is called the wife of Clopas in John, which it seems many have been willing to accept. Young says one way to look at it is to notice the similarity of the consonants of both names in Hebrew. The differences, by reference to the original Hebrew word, can be

shown to be only the result of the different modes of expressing the same Hebrew letters.<sup>202</sup> I believe most share the opinion that James the Less and the son of Alphaeus are the same person.<sup>203</sup> Because both women were named Mary, some think maybe she was the sister-in-law of Mary the mother of Jesus, rather than a sibling.<sup>204</sup>

But wait, there's more. There are two other verses naming James and Joses (Joseph) (sound familiar?), but as brothers of Jesus.

[Matthew 13:55](#) "Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers **James, Joses**, Simon, and Judas? [Matthew 13:55 NKJV](#)

[Mark 6:3](#) "Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of **James, Joses**, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" So they were offended at Him. [Mark 6:3 NKJV](#)

Are these the same James and Joses as the ones mentioned with the other Mary at the cross and the tomb? If so, why are Judas and Simon not mentioned there as well? Why are they called brothers of Jesus here? In the past, the Western Church used to identify him with James the Lord's brother ("James the Just").<sup>205</sup> <sup>206</sup> Personally, I feel that the assumptions are starting to get stretched a little thin.

Michaelis in his introduction to the Epistle of James, states five different suppositions:

1. They were sons of Joseph by a former wife
2. They were sons of Joseph by Mary the mother of Jesus
3. They were sons of Joseph by the widow of a brother, to whom he was obliged to raise according to the Law of Moses
4. This deceased brother of Joseph, to whom the laws required him to raise up issue, was Alphaeus
5. That they were brothers of Christ, not in the strict sense but in a more lax sense, namely cousins

Michaelis clearly refutes 2-4. He was taught to respect 5 from early on, which was the opinion of many after it was first advanced by Jerome, but he has since become more favorable of the first.<sup>207</sup> The discussion of who these four are, who are said to be brothers of Jesus, has been kind of merged with the discussion of who this outspoken James in the book of Acts is. He has been called James the Just and pretty widely accepted to be the author of the Epistle James and the brother of the Jude.

I am of the opinion that the Apostle James the Less and James the son of Alphaeus were the same person. I am on the fence about whether he is a brother of Levi Matthew the son of Alphaeus. I also believe that James the Just, the author of the book of James was a brother of Jesus by being a son of Joseph by a wife prior to Mary. I believe that the four, James, Joses, Judas and Simon were older brothers, sons of Joseph, who did not believe in Christ during his ministry.

[John 7:5](#) For even His brothers did not believe in Him. [John 7:5 NKJV](#)

I believe that they must have come around after the resurrection. I also do not believe that an older brother of Jesus would be nicknamed "the little," especially after the prominent role he assumed in the early church. So ultimately since,

<sup>202</sup> Young. p389. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA389>

<sup>203</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\\_the\\_Less](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_the_Less)

<sup>204</sup> Young. p391. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA391>

<sup>205</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\\_the\\_Less](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_the_Less)

<sup>206</sup> Young. p391. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA391>

<sup>207</sup> Young. p392. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA392>

I differentiate the Apostle James the son of Alphaeus from the prominent James in the book of Acts, the tradition of what became of him is even more uncertain than usual. I think most of the tradition of the James who was not the son of Zebedee, were about James called the Just, the brother of Jesus.

### Simon the Zealot

This Apostle is one we know hardly anything about from the Bible. His name is only mentioned the four times the Apostles are listed, in Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts. In Matthew and Mark in the KJV, he is distinguished from Simon Peter as Simon the Canaanite. This is apparently an incorrect translation<sup>208</sup> which was corrected in the NKJV to Cananite, possibly implying his home being the town of Cana. The NASB even departs from that simply using the same distinguishing term as Luke and Acts, which is the Zealot, but their footnote offers the alternative Cananaean. Young offers what I believe to be the correct explanation for the use of the words, "Canaanite" (not "Canaanite") or "Zealot." He says that in the vernacular language of Palestine, the word from which Cananite is derived, has a meaning identical with that of the root of the Greek word Zelotes.<sup>209</sup> In this case, the word "Canaanite," would have nothing to do with the town, but would be associated with the more common designation used to distinguish this Simon, "the Zealot." If you stop for a moment to think about what a Jewish Zealot is, you would realize that it wouldn't make any sense for a Canaanite to be a Zealot. That being said, there is some debate over whether the term Zealot, simply implies that he was zealous, or was part of the radical, political, movement called Zealots, who were violently anti-Roman, to the point of employing terrorist tactics against the Romans and even Jews who disagreed with them. Having said all of that, there is some doubt that this movement, by that name existed at the time of Christ's ministry and selection of Apostles.<sup>210</sup> According to some, the movement was founded by Judas of Galilee in the year 6, but the Jewish Encyclopedia on Zealots, says there is not a clear identification in original sources. There is much support for the existence of the Zealot's in during first Jewish War (66-73).<sup>211 212</sup>

There is one more supposition that is made by some, since this Apostle is listed with James and Judas (Jude?), that he is their brother and relative to Jesus.

[Matthew 13:55](#) "Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, **Simon**, and Judas? [Matthew 13:55 NKJV](#)

[Mark 6:3](#) "Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and **Simon**? And are not His sisters here with us?" So they were offended at Him. [Mark 6:3 NKJV](#)

I have leaned away from identification of brothers of Jesus with Apostles mainly because the Bible says His brothers did not believe in Him.

[John 7:5](#) For even His brothers did not believe in Him. [John 7:5 NKJV](#)

It almost seems that if you accept that His "brothers," (cousins) were His disciples, then you almost have to accept all three together, James, Simon and Judas? If three of his brothers were disciples, how could John say that even His brothers didn't believe in Him?

<sup>208</sup> Young. p412. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA412>

<sup>209</sup> Young. p411. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA411>

<sup>210</sup> Young. p412. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA412>

<sup>211</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zealots\\_\(Judea\)#History](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zealots_(Judea)#History)

<sup>212</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon\\_the\\_Zealot#Identity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon_the_Zealot#Identity)

Regarding Simon, as with all the disciples, there are many questionable traditions. Some say he went to Egypt, Persia, Armenia, Beirut and Lebanon where he was martyred. Others, that he was crucified as Bishop of Jerusalem. Ethiopians claim he was crucified in Samaria, while Justus Lipsius writes that he was sawn in half at Saunir, Persia.<sup>213 214 215</sup>

### Judas or Thaddaeus<sup>216 217 218 219</sup>

As we have seen before, Matthew and Mark used a designation for this Apostle that differed from that used by Luke. It is by process of elimination that we identify the two names as referring to the same person. Thaddaeus is listed by Matthew and Mark, but they do not list a Jude, Juda or Judas aside from the betrayer. Luke on the other hand, does not list Thaddaeus as one of the twelve, but he lists a Juda son of James. Interestingly, in the [KJV/NKJV](#) of Matthew 10:3, the name Lebbaeus is also used with Thaddaeus as the surname, although the [NASB](#) does not include the first name. Another discrepancy between the KJV, NKJV and the NASB is that in [Acts 1:3 KJV](#), and [NKJV](#) he is called Judas the son of James, whereas in the [NASB](#) there is a footnote that offers brother instead of son. Once again I will quote the two verses that list brothers of Jesus who many traditionally associate with two or three of the Apostles, in this case Judas.

[Matthew 13:55](#) "Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and **Judas**? [Matthew 13:55 NKJV](#)

[Mark 6:3](#) "Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, **Judas**, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" So they were offended at Him. [Mark 6:3 NKJV](#)

With all the references in the New Testament, we have the following different identities, including translations.

1. Thaddaeus [[Matthew 10:3 NASB](#); [Mark 3:18](#)]
2. Lebbaeus Thaddaeus [[Matthew 10:3 NKJV](#)]
3. Judas the brother or cousin of Jesus [[Matthew 13:55](#), [Mark 6:3](#)]
4. Judas the brother of James [[Acts 1:13 KJV](#)]
5. Judas the son of James [[Acts 1:13 NASB](#)]
6. Judas (not Iscariot) [[John 14:22](#)]
7. Judas the brother of James and author of Jude [[Jude 1:1](#)]

If I'm not mistaken, I believe Catholic tradition treats, all seven as the same person. I do not share these views for some of the reasons that I have mentioned for James the Less and Simon the Zealot, and will now add one more. Both Matthew and Mark called him Thaddaeus in their lists. If they knew him as the same person as Judas the brother (cousin) of Jesus, why would they use different names for him. I lean toward 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 as being the same person, and 3, 7 being the same person.

There are probably more traditions than there are possible identities for this person. Preached in Judea, Samaria, Idumea, Syria, Mesopotamia, Libya, Beirut, Edessa and more. Venerated as the patron saint of the Armenian Apostolic Church. He was a vegetarian. Crucified in Edessa. Killed by arrows in Ararat. Killed in 65 AD in Beirut. Killed with an axe.

<sup>213</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon\\_the\\_Zealot#Later\\_tradition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon_the_Zealot#Later_tradition)

<sup>214</sup> <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/killing-jesus/articles/how-did-the-apostles-die/>

<sup>215</sup> <http://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/who-were-twelve-disciples#simon-zealot>

<sup>216</sup> Young. p414. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA414>

<sup>217</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude\\_the\\_Apostle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude_the_Apostle)

<sup>218</sup> <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/killing-jesus/articles/how-did-the-apostles-die/>

<sup>219</sup> <http://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/who-were-twelve-disciples#jude-thaddeus>

Ultimately I am skeptical of all of these traditions.

## Judas

Judas is among the few Apostles that we know the most about from his mentions in the Bible. I found his name 23 times, used in the following ways.

1. Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him [[Matthew 10:4](#), [Mark 3:19](#)]
2. Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor [[Luke 6:16](#)]
3. Judas Iscariot, who stole money [[John 12:4-6](#)]
4. Judas Iscariot, son of Simon [[John 13:2](#), [John 6:71](#), [John 13:26](#)]
5. Judas and Judas Iscariot, in the story of his betrayal [[Matthew 26,27](#), [Mark 14](#), [Luke 22](#), [John 18](#)]

For obvious reasons, it's not a pretty picture that is painted of Judas in the Bible. 1 and 2 are just the lists of the twelve Apostles, but even there Judas cannot escape the mention of his legacy of betrayal. 4-6 are in relation to the Last Supper and the arrest and trial of Jesus. The context for 3 is a feast or a reception, supposedly in honor of Jesus and Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. This took place in Bethany, which was very near to Jerusalem, just prior to the last Passover of Christ's ministry. It says that a large crowd was there, because they wanted to see Lazarus, the man who had been resurrected from the dead.

[John 12:1](#) Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup> There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. <sup>3</sup> Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

<sup>4</sup> But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's [son], who would betray Him, said, <sup>5</sup> "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" <sup>6</sup> This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

<sup>7</sup> But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. <sup>8</sup> "For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always." [John 12:1-8 NKJV](#)

This was an open rebuke that must have not sat well with Judas. I found it interesting that John would even add that he used to pilfer money from the group's treasury. Ellen White put's it a little more diplomatically by saying he used to pay himself out of their meager fund.<sup>220</sup> It is thought that on leaving this reception, after the rebuke, Judas went about putting his betrayal plan in effect.<sup>221 222</sup>

Beyond the mentions of Judas as a betrayer and thief, we have two other pieces of information. He was often called Judas Iscariot and was also called the son of Simon Iscariot. There are many Simon's in the New Testament, but no other mention of a Simon Iscariot, and I don't believe there is any reason to assume he was identified with any of them. But what can we draw from the name Iscariot? Obviously, the use of surnames back then was not universal as it is in many cultures today. The practice back then, if needed, seemed to be to identify the person as being the son of someone, or from some place or city. There are many surnames today that probably had their origins in identifying someone by their

<sup>220</sup> White. p718. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=718>

<sup>221</sup> Young. p431. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA431>

<sup>222</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p563-564.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=563>

father's name, such as Adamson, Davidson, Johnson, to name a few. Young presented six options that have been suggested by different scholars over time.<sup>223</sup>

1. Dropping the vowel 'I' at the beginning of the name leaves you with a word similar to the Syriac (sckharyut) which has the meanings "bag" or "purse." This would make the name descriptive of his duties and could be seen as Judas the Steward.
2. Again, with the first vowel dropped, the Syriac (sakar) has the meaning strangle. This explanation attempts to associate the name with his fate, which was hanging.
3. The third attempts to analyze Iscariot into (seker), meaning "wages" or "reward," alluding to the fact that for money he betrayed his master.
4. Then there is the explanation to derive it from (Ish Issachar), "man of Issacar."
5. The next is to associate the name with the Talmudic Hebrew (sekurti), leather apron. Again, attempting to make an association with his responsibilities in the group.
6. Finally, there is the (Ish-Qerioth or Kerioth) meaning "man of Kerioth," which was a town in Judah.

I would argue against 1, 2, 3, 5 because the surname is also used for his father, naming him Simon Iscariot, but also because they seem kind of weak. So, unless the father was known for all these same actions or occupations, it seems unlikely that the same name would be used for both of them. Young doesn't give much credit to 4 because, he says, most of the distinctions of the ten tribes must have been lost by that time. Wikipedia presents another list of six possibilities for the meaning of the name which, except for 2 and 6 were all different.<sup>224</sup> I lean heavily toward 6 and I don't have a source for this, but I believe many others do as well.

I have always wondered about a few things regarding the betrayal and arrest of Jesus. First, I find it hard to believe that the Jews with as much motivation as they seemed to have, could not have tracked the movements of Jesus and known where He was whenever they wanted to. Secondly, why did Judas make a point of the signal to identify Jesus for them? How could anyone not know who He was and what He looked like? White wrote a whole chapter on Judas which gives some plausible answers to the second question.

Judas reasoned that if Jesus was to be crucified, the event must come to pass. His own act in betraying the Saviour would not change the result. If Jesus was not to die, it would only force Him to deliver Himself. At all events, Judas would gain something by his treachery. He counted that he had made a sharp bargain in betraying his Lord.

Judas did not, however, believe that Christ would permit Himself to be arrested. In betraying Him, it was his purpose to teach Him a lesson. He intended to play a part that would make the Saviour careful thenceforth to treat him with due respect. But Judas knew not that he was giving Christ up to death. How often, as the Saviour taught in parables, the scribes and Pharisees had been carried away with His striking illustrations! How often they had pronounced judgment against themselves! Often when the truth was brought home to their hearts, they had been filled with rage, and had taken up stones to cast at Him; but again and again He had made His escape. Since He had escaped so many snares, thought Judas, He certainly would not now allow Himself to be taken.

<sup>223</sup> Young. p423. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA423>

<sup>224</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judas\\_Iscariot#Etymology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judas_Iscariot#Etymology)



Judas decided to put the matter to the test. If Jesus really was the Messiah, the people, for whom He had done so much, would rally about Him, and would proclaim Him king. This would forever settle many minds that were now in uncertainty. Judas would have the credit of having placed the king on David's throne. And this act would secure to him the first position, next to Christ, in the new kingdom.

The false disciple acted his part in betraying Jesus. In the garden, when he said to the leaders of the mob, "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He: hold Him fast" (Matthew 26:48), he fully believed that Christ would escape out of their hands. Then if they should blame him, he could say, Did I not tell you to hold Him fast?

[White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p720](#)<sup>225</sup>

I think the remorse Judas showed just before his death and the fact that he took his own life lead many to believe what White suggested, that he didn't believe Jesus would allow Himself to be taken and killed.

[Matthew 27:3](#) Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, <sup>4</sup> saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What [is that] to us? You see [to it]!" <sup>5</sup> Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself. [Matthew 27:3-5 NKJV](#)

Finally, it doesn't seem we should end our discussion of Judas without some mention of the prophecies regarding the betrayal of Jesus, of which I believe there to be two.

[Zechariah 11:12](#) Then I said to them, "If it is agreeable to you, give [me] my wages; and if not, refrain." So they weighed out for my wages thirty [pieces] of silver. <sup>13</sup> And the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter"--that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty [pieces] of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter. [Zechariah 11:12-13 NKJV](#)

Then there is the one quoted by Peter which motivated the selection of a replacement for Judas.

[Psalm 109:8](#) Let his days be few, [And] let another take his office. [Psalm 109:8 NKJV](#)

When I read the context of these two "prophecies," I didn't see any way they would have served to predict the actions of the betrayer. However, I do believe that in retrospect, or after the events occurred, that one could look back on them and see that they could have been inspired by One who knew the future events. After all, Jesus Himself told His disciples that He was predicting things so that after they happened, it would strengthen their belief in Him. The one from the Psalms, is thought to be David writing about his betrayal by Ahithopel, who also hanged himself. I wrote a little more about the one from Zechariah in a later chapter titled [Judas agrees to betray Jesus](#).

[John 13:19](#) "Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am [He]. [John 13:19 NKJV](#)

I will close the book on Judas by saying that I don't think he was more flawed, than any of the other disciples at first. In fact, right at the end, when Judas betrayed, his master, Peter very publicly denied his association with Jesus. The difference was in what they did after that. I believe that if Judas had truly repented, Jesus would have taken him back just as readily as he accepted Peter back after the resurrection. If that had happened, then David's Psalm about the betrayal by Ahithopel, would have remained just that and would never have been considered a prophecy of Judas.

---

<sup>225</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p720.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=720>

## Matthias

In the end there was a thirteenth Apostle, named Matthias, who was chosen to replace Judas.

[Acts 1:15](#) And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said, <sup>16</sup> "Men [and] brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; <sup>17</sup> "for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry."

<sup>18</sup> (Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out. <sup>19</sup> And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.)

<sup>20</sup> "For it is written in the Book of Psalms:

'Let his dwelling place be desolate,  
And let no one live in it';

and,

'Let another take his office.'

<sup>21</sup> "Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, <sup>22</sup> "beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection."

<sup>23</sup> And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. <sup>24</sup> And they prayed and said, "You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen <sup>25</sup> "to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." <sup>26</sup> And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles. [Acts 1:15-25 NKJV](#)

The only thing said of him is that he was a disciple, who had been a follower of Jesus for His entire ministry. I take that to mean that he had been a disciple as long as the other eleven. This was an interesting concept to me because I envisioned Jesus and the twelve often being alone, well maybe not often, but just the thirteen of them. But this along with the mention of the women who used to support them paints a picture of more than just thirteen.

According to Young, fanciful stories of his life and death exist, but they are not accepted by the writers of the Catholic Church.<sup>226</sup>

---

What do you believe?

- Do you think Jesus exercised His knowledge of the future in choosing the twelve, so that He knew how they would all turn out?
- Why do you think He chose twelve and not more or less?
- Do you think the disciples ever used the fact that they were chosen to exercise their authority over people?

---

<sup>226</sup> Young. p442. <https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA442>

- In choosing the replacement for Judas, do you think the eleven should have let God choose from among all instead of just two?

## Jesus heals a multitude of people

[Mark 3:7-12](#), [Matthew 12:15-21](#), [Luke 6:17-19](#)

According to Strong, there are two different times when Jesus healed multitudes, including people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and even the region of Tyre and Sidon. He placed one between the encounter with the Pharisees in the grain fields and the naming of the twelve apostles<sup>227</sup>, and the other after He came down the mountain where He named the twelve.<sup>228</sup> So even though the first occasion may be a little out of chronological order, because there were so many similarities, I choose to combine them into the same discussion. I wonder if they were really the same.

The first:

[Mark 3:7](#) But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea <sup>8</sup> and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him. <sup>9</sup> So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him. <sup>10</sup> For He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him. <sup>11</sup> And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, "You are the Son of God." <sup>12</sup> But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known. [Mark 3:7-12 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 12:15](#) But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there. And great multitudes followed Him,

and He healed them all.

<sup>16</sup> Yet He warned them not to make Him known,

[Matthew 12:15-16 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 12:17](#) that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

<sup>18</sup> "Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen,  
My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased!  
I will put My Spirit upon Him,  
And He will declare justice to the Gentiles.

<sup>19</sup> He will not quarrel nor cry out,  
Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.

<sup>20</sup> A bruised reed He will not break,  
And smoking flax He will not quench,  
Till He sends forth justice to victory;

<sup>21</sup> And in His name Gentiles will trust." [Matthew 12:17-21 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 42:1](#) "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold,  
My Elect One [in whom] My soul delights!

I have put My Spirit upon Him;  
He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.

<sup>2</sup> He will not cry out, nor raise [His voice],  
Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.

<sup>3</sup> A bruised reed He will not break,  
And smoking flax He will not quench;  
He will bring forth justice for truth.

<sup>4</sup> He will not fail nor be discouraged,  
Till He has established justice in the earth;

And the coastlands shall wait for His law." [Isaiah 42:1-4 NKJV](#)

<sup>227</sup> Strong. p74. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n135/mode/2up>

<sup>228</sup> Strong. p77. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n137/mode/2up>

The second:

[Luke 6:17](#) And He came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases,<sup>18</sup> as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits. And they were healed.<sup>19</sup> And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed [them] all.

[Luke 6:17-19 NKJV](#)

If you recall, when Jesus named the twelve apostles, He had been up on a mountain. The event recorded by Luke, immediately follows the naming of the twelve and hence, the “came down,” in [verse 17](#) would refer to coming down from the mountain spoken of in the prior verses.

I found the verses in Luke interesting because generally Jesus healed people one-on-one, often asking for some show of faith. In this instance, Luke writes that people were all pressing in on Him trying to touch Him. Depending on how many were in this great throng, this could have turned into a disaster with people trampling down others in their eagerness to touch Jesus. Can you imagine, thinking that this might be your one-and-only chance to be healed. To avoid people getting hurt by a trampling mob, Jesus may have decided to simultaneously heal everyone in the crowd. The [KJV](#) says “for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.”

---

What do you believe?

- What other times did Jesus heal someone without being face-to-face with them? Did someone else exhibit faith on their behalf?
- Do you think there were people in this multitude who were healed who didn't believe Jesus was the Messiah?
- Did Jesus make any distinction between Jews and Gentiles in this mass healing?

## The Sermon on the Mount

[Matthew 5 \(except 25,26\)](#), [Matthew 6:1-18 \(excluding 9-15\)](#), [Matthew 7:1-27 \(excluding 6-11, 13, 14\)](#), [Matthew 8:1, Matthew 18:8-9, Matthew 23:22, Mark 9:43,47, Luke 6:20-49 \(except 39,40\), Luke 16:17](#)<sup>229</sup>

I know this looks a little chopped up, but for the most part, this is Strong's harmony. I took a few liberties by not re-arranging verses on the left column as much as he did. All of Matthew 5 is included except for verses [25, 26](#), which will be incorporated later on. The Lord's Prayer is in the middle of Matthew 6, and will be brought in later. And [Luke 6:20-49](#) is all included except for verses [39, 40](#) which will also be brought in later on.

[Matthew 5:1](#) And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. <sup>2</sup> Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

<sup>3</sup> "Blessed [are] the poor in spirit,  
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup> Blessed [are] those who mourn,  
For they shall be comforted.

<sup>5</sup> Blessed [are] the meek,  
For they shall inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup> Blessed [are] those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
For they shall be filled.

<sup>7</sup> Blessed [are] the merciful,  
For they shall obtain mercy.

<sup>8</sup> Blessed [are] the pure in heart,  
For they shall see God.

<sup>9</sup> Blessed [are] the peacemakers,  
For they shall be called sons of God.

<sup>10</sup> Blessed [are] those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,  
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>11</sup> "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

<sup>12</sup> "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great [is] your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. [Matthew 5:1-12 NKJV](#)

[Luke 6:24](#) "But woe to you who are rich,  
For you have received your consolation.

<sup>25</sup> Woe to you who are full,  
For you shall hunger.

Woe to you who laugh now,  
For you shall mourn and weep.

[Luke 6:20](#) Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said:

"Blessed are you poor,  
For yours is the kingdom of God.

<sup>21b</sup> Blessed are you who weep now,  
For you shall laugh.

<sup>21a</sup> Blessed are you who hunger now,  
For you shall be filled.

<sup>22</sup> Blessed are you when men hate you, And when they exclude you, And revile [you], and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man's sake.

<sup>23</sup> Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward [is] great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets. [Luke 6:20-23 NKJV](#)

<sup>229</sup> Strong. p78. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n139/mode/2up>

<sup>26</sup> Woe to you when all men speak well of you,  
For so did their fathers to the false prophets. [Luke 6:24-26 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 5:13](#) "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

<sup>14</sup> "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all [who are] in the house. <sup>16</sup> "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

<sup>17</sup> "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. <sup>18</sup> "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, [Luke 16:17](#) "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till one tittle of the law to fail. [Luke 16:17 NKJV](#)  
all is fulfilled. <sup>19</sup> "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches [them], he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>20</sup> "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds [the righteousness] of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>21</sup> "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' [Exodus 20:13](#) "You shall not murder. [Deuteronomy 5:17](#) 'You shall not murder. [Exodus 20:13 NKJV](#) [Deuteronomy 5:17 NKJV](#)

<sup>22</sup> "But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. <sup>23</sup> "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup> "leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. [Matthew 5:13-24 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 5:27](#) "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' [Exodus 20:14](#) "You shall not commit adultery. [Deuteronomy 5:18](#) 'You shall not commit adultery. [Exodus 20:14 NKJV](#) [Deuteronomy 5:18 NKJV](#)  
<sup>28</sup> "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

<sup>29</sup> "If your right eye causes you to sin, [Matthew 18:9](#) "And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast [it] from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. <sup>30</sup> "And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast [it] from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. [Matthew 18:9, 8 NKJV](#)  
[Mark 9:47](#) "And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire—  
<sup>43</sup> "If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched-- [Mark 9:47, 43 NKJV](#)

<sup>31</sup> "Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.'  
<sup>32</sup> "But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

[Deuteronomy 24:1](#) "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts [it] in her hand, and sends her out of his house, [Deuteronomy 24:1 NKJV](#)

<sup>33</sup> "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.'  
<sup>34</sup> "But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne;

[Numbers 30:2](#) "If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.  
[Numbers 30:2 NKJV](#)

<sup>35</sup> "nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.  
<sup>36</sup> "Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black.  
<sup>37</sup> "But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

[Matthew 23:22](#) "And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it. [Matthew 23:22 NKJV](#)

<sup>38</sup> "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'  
<sup>39</sup> "But I tell you not to resist an evil person.

[Exodus 21:24](#) "eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, [Exodus 21:24 NKJV](#)

But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.  
<sup>40</sup> "If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have [your] cloak also.  
<sup>41</sup> "And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.

[Luke 6:29](#) "To him who strikes you on the [one] cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold [your] tunic either.

<sup>42</sup> "Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

<sup>30</sup> "Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask [them] back. [Luke 6:29-30 NKJV](#)

<sup>43</sup> "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

[Leviticus 19:18](#) 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I [am] the LORD. [Leviticus 19:18 NKJV](#)

<sup>44</sup> "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,  
<sup>45</sup> "that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

[Luke 6:27](#) "But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup> "bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. [Luke 6:27-28 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 5:27-45 NKJV](#)

[Luke 6:32](#) "But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

[Matthew 5:46](#) "For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

<sup>33</sup> "And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.  
<sup>34</sup> "And if you lend [to those] from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back.  
<sup>35</sup> "But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.  
<sup>36</sup> "Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

<sup>47</sup> "And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more [than others]? Do not even the tax collectors do so? [Matthew 5:46-47 NKJV](#)

[Luke 6:32-36 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 6:1](#) "Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. [Matthew 6:1 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 5:48](#) "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. [Matthew 5:48 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 6:2](#) "Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. <sup>3</sup> "But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> "that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.

<sup>5</sup> "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

<sup>6</sup> "But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who [is] in the secret [place]; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. <sup>7</sup> "And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen [do]. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

<sup>8</sup> "Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

[Matthew 6:2-8 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 6:16](#) "Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. <sup>17</sup> "But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> "so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who [is] in the secret [place]; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

[Matthew 6:16-18 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 7:1](#) "Judge not, that you be not judged. <sup>2</sup> "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

[Mark 4:24](#) ...  
NKJV

... With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; ... [Mark 4:24](#) you use, it will be measured back to you."

[Luke 6:37](#) "Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. ...

[Luke 6:37](#) ... Forgive, and you will be forgiven. <sup>38</sup> "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. ... [Luke 6:37-38 NKJV](#)

<sup>3</sup> "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?

<sup>4</sup> "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank [is] in your own eye? <sup>5</sup> "Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. [Matthew 7:1-5 NKJV](#)

[Luke 6:41](#) "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye? <sup>42</sup> "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove the speck that [is] in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the plank that [is] in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother's eye. [Luke 6:41-42 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 7:12](#) "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. [Matthew 7:12 NKJV](#)

[Luke 6:31](#) "And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. [Luke 6:31 NKJV](#)



[Matthew 7:15](#) "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. <sup>16</sup> "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather [Luke 6:44](#) ... For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup> "Even so, do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. [Luke 6:44](#) every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

<sup>18</sup> "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor [can] a bad [Luke 6:43](#) "For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. <sup>19</sup> "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

<sup>20</sup> "Therefore by their fruits you will know them. <sup>44</sup> "For every tree is known by its own fruit. ... [Luke 6:43-44 NKJV](#)

<sup>21</sup> "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the [Luke 6:46](#) "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in the things which I say? [Luke 6:46 NKJV](#) heaven. <sup>22</sup> "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' <sup>23</sup> "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' [Psalm 6:8](#) Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity; ... [Psalm 6:8 NKJV](#)

<sup>24</sup> "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does [Luke 6:47](#) "Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: <sup>48</sup> "He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. <sup>49</sup> "But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great." [Luke 6:47-49 NKJV](#) them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: <sup>25</sup> "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. <sup>26</sup> "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: <sup>27</sup> "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall." [Matthew 7:15-27 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 8:1](#) When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. [Matthew 8:1 NKJV](#)

The "Sermon on the Mount," which occupies almost all of Matthew 5 and large portions from 6 and 7, is the longest recorded teaching session by Jesus that we have.<sup>230</sup> If I recall correctly, it is the evangelist Peter Gregory, known for his seminars on how to study the Bible, who suggested the following. The words of the Bible can be classified at three levels:

1. Words written by God's own hand (or finger). The Ten Commandments.
2. Words which were spoken by God, in most cases Jesus. Many Bibles conveniently print these in red letters.
3. Words written by men inspired by the Holy Spirit. This category could possibly be subdivided.

According to Peter, it is right to give higher weight to the words written by God's own hand than the rest of the Bible. And it is right to give higher weight to direct quotes by Jesus, although written by human beings, than the words of man inspired by God. If you agree with this hierarchy, this sermon by Jesus is one of the biggest treasures in the whole Bible.

Beginning in Matthew 5, Jesus turned the whole theology of the day upside-down. The religious teachers among the Jews would teach that health and wealth were gifts from God and signs that those individuals were pleasing Him.

<sup>230</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sermon\\_on\\_the\\_Mount](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sermon_on_the_Mount)

Conversely, those who did not have as much health and wealth were not as pleasing to God, or depending on the degree of misfortune, were being punished by Him.

I would summarize the first part of this sermon, also known as the beatitudes, as “your reward will be in heaven.” All those who love God and choose to be with Him in heaven will be blessed and rewarded beyond measure when they get there. You may or may not suffer hunger, sorrow, misfortune, persecution, or all manner of evil here on this earth. But your reward in heaven will be so much bigger and better, that it will far outweigh the evil suffered here. This all makes sense to me, but the troubling thing is the wrap up of this first section which I draw from [Luke 6:24-26](#), which sort of says the opposite. Those who are rich, and well fed, and have a good life in general, have already received their reward. Is Jesus saying, they won't get to heaven? Is He saying heaven won't be any better? If that is the case, then these good things on earth would really be a curse. I believe Jesus wants people to use the abilities God has given them, which may result in some being successful. In fact, I believe there are people in this world who are more gifted than others in leading, influencing, and making a difference on a large scale. I think if they use these gifts to only benefit themselves, then they are receiving their reward in full. I also know there are people who are receiving these good things in this life, even though they did nothing to deserve them. Many of them are worse off for it and for them it is a curse. Ultimately, I do not believe that having wealth, food or comfort are a bad thing, but if you do not use those blessings to help those in need, they might end up being a curse.

The verses immediately following, in [Matthew 5:13-16](#), are essentially saying that everything we do, should be for the purpose of making God look good. People should always be able to look at our words and actions and think to themselves that they would like the God we serve and love. We should never leave people thinking, if God is like them, I want nothing to do with Him. I think this fits perfectly with one of the main themes of the Bible, and with the example of Jesus' life, which is to love your neighbor as yourself. Show compassion to all people, especially those less fortunate, and you will be a light to the world, salt to add good flavor to food, and a good ambassador for your Father in heaven.

Next Jesus clarifies that He has not come to do away with the Law, but to fulfill it. But what law was He talking about? As we mentioned above, the Ten Commandments, written by God's own hand should be given highest esteem. In this sermon, Jesus gave several examples of what it meant to truly keep the Law of God. He explained how the Law should not just govern our outward actions, but our thoughts and motives as well. He gave the examples that anger at someone is actually breaking the Commandment to not murder, and that looking lustfully at someone who is not your spouse is committing adultery. I believe He intended that this principle apply to all Ten Commandments. I also believe that the way Jesus lived His life was an example to us of how to keep the Law of God. I think this was one of the ways He fulfilled the Law. But what about the rest of the thousands of laws the Jews had? In verses [21](#), [38](#), Jesus gives examples of how the remainder of their laws should take a back seat to the Ten Commandments. Their problem was that in many cases, they had the priorities reversed. The laws of Moses could be divided into two parts, the ceremonial law and the civil law. The civil laws were like the laws our governments make and enforce, and should be obeyed, unless they contradict the Law of God. The ceremonial law were practices and procedures mainly having to do with the sanctuary and the various sacrifices which were all in fact given to point forward to His coming. When He actually came, many of these “laws” or practices and procedures, no longer needed to be performed, because the purpose for them was in fact fulfilled.

Next starting with [Luke 6:32-36](#), and [Matthew 5:46](#) and continuing on into [Matthew 6](#), Jesus teaches that we should not do our good deeds or practice righteousness to be praised by men, but do them secretly.

In [Matthew 7:12](#), and [Luke 6:31](#) Jesus teaches what has become known as the Golden Rule.

Jesus closes out His sermon with three warnings.

1. In [Matthew 7:15-20](#), Jesus says, beware of false prophets. They are like wolves in sheep's clothing. There are people who can put on a good outward show of holiness but have no good intentions and will be like devouring wolves if you follow them.
2. Then in [Matthew 7:21-23](#), He says, just putting on an outward show of holiness will not save you. Even preaching and healing and casting out demons doesn't mean you are truly converted and doing God's will.
3. Finally in [Matthew 7:24-27](#), Jesus says that whoever hears His words and obeys them will be building on a solid foundation. But those who hear them and don't obey them will be like someone who is building without a foundation.

I think these warnings can even be summarized in one sentence. An outward show of holiness and good works is not an adequate sign that one is truly doing God's will, and if that's all it is, they will come to ruin in the end.

What do you believe?

- Do you think Jesus actually gave this talk the way it has been assembled, or do you think it has been compiled from many sittings?
- We usually hear about Jesus sitting down and teaching a large multitude, but do you think He ever spent the time teaching just a few (aside from His chosen disciples)?
- Do you think you understand what Jesus is saying and can put it into practice in your own life?

## Jesus heals the Centurion's servant

[Luke 7:1-10](#), [Matthew 8:5-13](#)<sup>231</sup>

[Luke 7:1](#) Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum. <sup>2</sup> And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. <sup>3</sup> So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant.

<sup>4</sup> And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving,

[Mathew 8:5](#) Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, <sup>6</sup> saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented." [Matthew 8:5-6 NKJV](#)

<sup>231</sup> Strong. p88. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/88/mode/2up>

<sup>5</sup> "for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue." <sup>6</sup> Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof. <sup>7</sup> "Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>8</sup> "For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does [it]."

<sup>9</sup> When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, "I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!"

<sup>10</sup> And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick. [Luke 7:1-10 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 8:7](#) And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

<sup>8</sup> The centurion answered and said,

"Lord, I am not worthy that

You should come under my roof.

But only speak a word,

and my servant will be healed. <sup>9</sup> "For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this [one], 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does [it]."

<sup>10</sup> When Jesus heard [it], He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! [Matthew 8:7-10 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 8:13](#) Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, [so] let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour. [Matthew 8:13 NKJV](#)

The harmony just presented is from Strong. The first thing to note are the differences in the stories as told by Luke and Matthew. At a high level, it appears that Luke has the centurion not meeting Jesus face to face but sending messengers because of his own perceived unworthiness. Matthew doesn't mention the Jewish elders, or the synagogue, and has the centurion presenting his request in person. Jack Shaffer gives a good analysis of the problem and proposes a solution which I tend to agree with.<sup>232</sup> I will present these verses again using his proposed harmony.

[Luke 7:1-8](#) Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum. <sup>2</sup> And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. <sup>3</sup> So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant. <sup>4</sup> And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving, <sup>5</sup> "for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue." <sup>6</sup> Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof. <sup>7</sup> "Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>8</sup> "For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does [it]." [Luke 7:1-8 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 8:5a](#) Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, ...

[Jesus continues to the house even after this second delegation gives Him the message, so the centurion finally comes out to give his message in person.]

[Matthew 8:5b-9](#) a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, <sup>6</sup> saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented." <sup>7</sup> And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." <sup>8</sup> The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>9</sup> "For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this [one], 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does [it]." [Matthew 8:5-9 NKJV](#)

<sup>232</sup> Shaffer, Jack Russel. *A Harmonization of Matt 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10*. p48. <https://www.tms.edu/m/17c.pdf> (if the original link doesn't work <http://btlib.org/17c.pdf>)

[Luke 7:9a](#) When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, [Matthew 8:10a](#) When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed,

[Luke 7:9b](#) "I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" [Luke 7:9 NKJV](#)

[Shaffer says Jesus restates Himself for emphasis. First, He says He hasn't seen this kind of faith in Israel. Then He says He has not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.]

[Matthew 8:10b-13](#) "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!"<sup>11</sup> "And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven."<sup>12</sup> "But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, [so] let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour. [Matthew 8:10-13 NKJV](#)

[Luke 7:10](#) And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick. [Luke 7:10 NKJV](#)

Shaffer explains that the authors of Matthew and Luke had different objectives. Luke wanted to emphasize the character of the centurion and contrast it with the works-oriented Jews. Matthew picks up with the faith of the centurion in contrast to Israel and showed that even a Gentile recognized the King of the Jews while His own people rejected Him.<sup>233</sup>

What do you believe?

- Do you think the centurion believed Jesus was a god, or just a miracle worker?
- Do you think the centurion had been converted to Judaism or was merely kind to the Jews?
- Do you think this miracle converted him to eventually following Christ?

## Jesus brings a widow's son back to life

[Luke 7:11-17](#)<sup>234</sup>

[Luke 7:11](#) Now it happened, the day after, [that] He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd.<sup>12</sup> And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her.<sup>13</sup> When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep."<sup>14</sup> Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried [him] stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise."<sup>15</sup> So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother.

<sup>16</sup> Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen up among us"; and, "God has visited His people."<sup>17</sup> And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region.

[Luke 7:11-17 NKJV](#)

Strong places this incident right after the healing of the centurion's servant. According to his harmony, this is the first recorded instance of Jesus giving life to a dead person. According to Wikipedia, Edward Robinson and Eli Smith,

<sup>233</sup> Shaffer. p49. <https://www.tms.edu/m/17c.pdf> (if the original link doesn't work <http://btlb.org/17c.pdf>)

<sup>234</sup> Strong. p90. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/90/mode/2up>

who visited Palestine in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, identified Nein as the Nain of this story.<sup>235</sup> The distance from Capernaum is estimated to be 22 miles<sup>236</sup> or approximately 28 miles on modern roads.<sup>237</sup>

Jesus is stepping up the evidence that He is more than human. Even though many of His healings were beyond the abilities of the physicians of the day, there were doctors who could heal. Verse 16 says fear gripped them all, and they said a great prophet has risen, but some said God has visited His people.

It really shouldn't need to be said, but I will say it anyway. In that male dominated culture, women were very dependent on men for their sustenance. A woman without husband or sons was at the mercy of relatives, or worse yet reduced to begging or selling herself as a prostitute. Jesus understood this and had compassion on her.

What do you believe?

- Why do you think Jesus waited this long into His ministry to bring someone back to life?
- Do you think this increased the faith of the twelve disciples?
- Bringing someone back to life was no more difficult for Jesus than healing someone, so why do you think so few received this miracle?

## John the Baptist asks Jesus for confirmation of His identity

[Luke 7:18-35](#), [Matthew 11:2-24](#)<sup>238</sup>

[Luke 7:18](#) Then the disciples of John reported to him concerning all these things.<sup>19</sup> And John, calling two of his disciples to [him], sent [them] to Jesus, saying, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"<sup>20</sup> When the men had come to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?'"<sup>21</sup> And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight.

<sup>22</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard:

that [the] blind see,  
[the] lame walk,  
[the] lepers are cleansed,  
[the] deaf hear,  
[the] dead are raised,  
[the] poor have the gospel  
preached to them.

<sup>23</sup> "And blessed is he who is not  
offended because of Me."

[Isaiah 35:5](#) Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, ...

<sup>6</sup> Then the lame shall leap like a deer,

And the tongue of the dumb sing. ...

<sup>5</sup> ... And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

[Isaiah 35:5-6 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 61:1](#) ... To preach good tidings to the  
poor; ... [Isaiah 61:1 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 11:2](#) Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished  
commanding His twelve disciples,

[Matthew 11:3](#) and said to Him,

"Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

<sup>4</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the  
things which you hear and see: [Matthew 11:3-4 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 11:5](#) "[The] blind see and

[the] lame walk;

[the] lepers are cleansed and

[the] deaf hear;

[the] dead are raised up and

[the] poor have the gospel preached to  
them.

<sup>6</sup> "And blessed is he who is not offended  
because of Me." [Matthew 11:5-6 NKJV](#)

<sup>235</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nein#Biblical\\_associations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nein#Biblical_associations)

<sup>236</sup> [http://www.bible-history.com/map\\_jesus/MAPJESUSNew\\_Testament\\_Cities\\_Distances.htm](http://www.bible-history.com/map_jesus/MAPJESUSNew_Testament_Cities_Distances.htm)

<sup>237</sup> <https://www.google.com/#q=distance+from+nain+to+capernaum>

<sup>238</sup> Strong. p90. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n153/mode/2up>

<sup>24</sup> When the messengers of John had departed, He began to speak to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>25</sup> "But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed those who are gorgeously appareled and live in luxury are in kings' courts. <sup>26</sup> "But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. [Luke 7:18-26 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 11:7](#) As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>8</sup> "But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft [clothing] are in kings' houses. <sup>9</sup> "But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. [Matthew 11:7-9 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 11:14](#) "And if you are willing to receive [it], he is Elijah who is to come. <sup>15</sup> "He who has ears to hear, let him hear! [Matthew 11:14-15 NKJV](#)

[Malachi 4:5](#) Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. <sup>6</sup> And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse." [Malachi 4:5-6 NKJV](#)

[Luke 7:27](#) "This is [he] of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.'

[Matthew 11:10](#) "For this is [he] of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.'  
[Matthew 11:10 NKJV](#)

[Mark 1:2](#) As it is written in the Prophets: "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You." [Mark 1:2 NKJV](#)

[Malachi 3:1](#) "Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. ...  
[Isaiah 40:3](#) ... Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. [Malachi 3:1 NKJV](#)  
[Isaiah 40:3 NKJV](#)

<sup>28</sup> "For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." [Luke 7:27-28 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 11:11](#) "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. [Matthew 11:11 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 11:12](#) "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. <sup>13</sup> "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. [Matthew 11:12-13 NKJV](#)

[Luke 16:16](#) "The law and the prophets [were] until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it. [Luke 16:16 NKJV](#)

[Luke 7:29](#) And when all the people heard [Him], even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. <sup>30</sup> But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.

<sup>31</sup> And the Lord said, "To what then shall I liken the men of this generation, and what are they like? <sup>32</sup> "They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, saying: 'We played the flute for you, And you did not dance; We mourned to you, And you did not weep.'

<sup>33</sup> "For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' <sup>34</sup> "The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' <sup>35</sup> "But wisdom is justified by all her children." [Luke 7:29-35 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 11:20](#) Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: <sup>21</sup> "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>22</sup> "But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. <sup>23</sup> "And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

<sup>24</sup> "But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you." [Matthew 11:20-24 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 10:15](#) "Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!" [Matthew 10:15 NKJV](#)

[Luke 10:12](#) "But I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city." [Luke 10:12 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 11:16](#) "But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions, <sup>17</sup> "and saying: 'We played the flute for you, And you did not dance; We mourned to you, And you did not lament.'

<sup>18</sup> "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' <sup>19</sup> "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her children." [Matthew 11:16-19](#)

[Luke 10:13](#) "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>14</sup> "But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. <sup>15</sup> "And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades." [Luke 10:13-15 NKJV](#)

Strong places this event in June almost two years from when John had baptized Jesus and later introduced Him as the Lamb of God. Some of John's own disciples took that announcement to mean Jesus was the Messiah. During this time, Jesus has been travelling around the country teaching, healing and gathering followers but He had not made any noticeable move toward assuming the crown of Israel or overthrowing the Roman occupiers. Even though John, probably by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, called Jesus the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world, he still did not have a clear picture of the Messiah's mission. There are so many prophecies in the Bible that speak of the Messiah as a conquering king that it would be understandable to expect it. If such were the case, it would be completely reasonable for John to expect Jesus to get him out of prison so he could be part of the movement and the new kingdom. In fact, regardless of the exact nature of Jesus' mission, humanly it would seem reasonable for Him to try to get John out of prison. But God's plans are often not in line with man's plans.

It was nice that John had some loyal friends who continued to visit him in prison, but unfortunately, they were probably enforcing doubts and questions in his mind about Jesus. John sent some of these friends for his sake but possibly more for theirs, to try to gain more insight into Jesus' mission. The question was very straight forward but as He often did, Jesus did not give a direct answer. He told them to stay and watch, then go and report to John what they had observed. What Jesus showed them that day was a side of the Messiah's mission that most Jews had probably overlooked.



[Isaiah 35:5](#) Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
 And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.  
<sup>6</sup> Then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
 And the tongue of the dumb sing.  
 For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness,  
 And streams in the desert. [Isaiah 35:5-6 NKJV](#)

When John's disciples described Jesus' response and what they observed, this prophecy must have come to John's mind, and I imagine that he must have been satisfied that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. At that point, he must have become content to suffer any fate that Jesus saw fit for him. Perhaps John also recalled [Isaiah 53](#) about the despised, rejected, and suffering Messiah and realized that he was suffering no more than Jesus Himself would.

Now we come to [Matthew 11:12-13](#) and [Luke 16:16](#) which I found truly puzzling. So, I searched for some commentary these verses. I found an interesting web page by Avram Yehoshua which presented a very believable explanation. He quotes [Micah 2:12-13](#) as the background for properly understanding these verses. He says if you translate the Greek back to Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament, you can get a very different picture. The Hebrew word means to forcibly enter, which comes from פָּרַץ, pāras.<sup>239</sup> This has the meanings, 'to break or tear down...e.g. a wall...to break asunder, to break forth, as a child from the womb, [Genesis 38:29](#); of water, to burst forth...a torrent bursts forth...also to break out, act with violence, [Hosea 4:2](#).' He gives the example of a shepherd breaching the wall of the fold and the sheep following him out. So, the kingdom is not suffering violence, but the shepherd is tearing open, making a hole in the heavenly fence that separates man and God.<sup>240</sup> In his commentary, Matthew Henry likens rapid widespread interest in the Gospel, started by John and continued by Jesus, to the violence of an army taking a city by storm. He also describes the improbable multitude including harlots, tax collectors, and sinners who stormed the kingdom, while the so-called children of the kingdom, stayed out. He also describes the strength, earnestness and vigor with which one must strive for the kingdom of heaven.<sup>241</sup>

---

What do you believe?

- Why didn't Jesus free John from prison?
- Why do you think Jesus waited until after John's disciples left to say good things about him?
- Do you have any additional ideas about the violence done to the kingdom in [Matthew 11:12](#)?

<sup>239</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H6555&t=NKJV>

<sup>240</sup> <http://www.seedofabraham.net/kingdomv.html>

<sup>241</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat\\_011.cfm?a=940012](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat_011.cfm?a=940012)

## Simon the Pharisee invites Jesus to his house

[Luke 7:36-50](#)<sup>242</sup>

[Luke 7:36](#) Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. <sup>37</sup> And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that [Jesus] sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, <sup>38</sup> and stood at His feet behind [Him] weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped [them] with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed [them] with the fragrant oil. <sup>39</sup> Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw [this], he spoke to himself, saying, "This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman [this is] who is touching Him, for she is a sinner."

<sup>40</sup> And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." So he said, "Teacher, say it."

<sup>41</sup> "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.

<sup>42</sup> "And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?"

<sup>43</sup> Simon answered and said, "I suppose the [one] whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged." <sup>44</sup> Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped [them] with the hair of her head. <sup>45</sup> "You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. <sup>46</sup> "You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. <sup>47</sup> "Therefore I say to you, her sins, which [are] many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, [the same] loves little."

<sup>48</sup> Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

<sup>49</sup> And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

<sup>50</sup> Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace." [Luke 7:36-50 NKJV](#)

I am really torn about whether to place this story here or at the start of the last week of Jesus' ministry. The other three Gospel writers have recorded an incident that has the following similarities and differences.

Similarities	Differences
Host named Simon	Simon is referred to as a Pharisee by Luke but a leper by Matthew and Mark, and is not named as host in John
Woman anoints Jesus with costly ointment from an alabaster container	Luke places this story much earlier where the other writers place theirs in the last week of Jesus' life
	This incident appears in the midst of events around Capernaum and Galilee, the other one is said to be in Bethany

While I think the similarities are more than coincidental and the differences can be easily explained I will still present them separately, as other scholars have, including Strong. This doesn't mean that I personally don't believe they are

<sup>242</sup> Strong. p95. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/94/mode/2up>

the same incident, or at least the same person anointing in both cases, but I don't believe there is enough evidence based on the Bible alone to do so. Ellen White, in the *Desire of Ages* combines the incidents. She makes the assumption that some others have, that Mary Magdalene is the Sister of Lazarus and Martha. A compelling argument made by others for identifying the Mary of Bethany, the anointer in [John 12](#), with Mary Magdalene, is that after Jesus' comments about her anointing Him for burial, it seems very logical that she would have been at His crucifixion [[Matthew 27:56](#), [Mark 15:40](#), [John 19:25](#)].<sup>243 244 245</sup> White also claims that it was Simon who had originally led her into sin.<sup>246</sup> The unsaid assumption taken up by some, being that he sexually abused her as a child.

Identifying Mary of Bethany, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, with the woman who anointed Jesus is clearly Biblical fact as stated in [John 11:1-2](#). But since this association is mentioned before the incident in [John 12](#), some wonder whether he refers to an earlier event as recorded in Luke, or the later one which he related in [chapter 12](#). It is also Biblical fact that Mary Magdalene had seven demons cast out of her by Jesus [[Mark 16:9](#), [Luke 8:2](#)]. I think it is ok to believe the other associations about Mary, but we should not state them all as if they were Biblical fact. In other words, I don't think you should make these claims when discussing these stories without making a disclaimer.

What do you believe?

- When Jesus said, "for this reason," her sins are forgiven, what reason do you think He was referring to?
- Why do you think Simon, didn't follow custom and have his servants wash Jesus' feet?
- Do you believe this event and the ones recorded in the other Gospels are the same?

## Women who financially supported Jesus' ministry

[Luke 8:1-3](#)<sup>247</sup>

[Luke 8:1](#) Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve [were] with Him,<sup>2</sup> and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities--Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons,<sup>3</sup> and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance. [Luke 8:1-3 NKJV](#)

There is no mention of Jesus ever charging for healing people, even though it would have been customary to do so. I think Jesus wanted to make a point that the gifts of God are free to all, regardless of social or financial status. In the Old Testament, the example of Elisha made it pretty clear that there is to be no charge for God's gift of healing [[2 Kings 5:15-27](#)]. So, if Jesus and the twelve were constantly on the road, they would not have had time to earn money. As a result of this, they would have been dependent on the hospitality of people in the cities they visited. But what would they do when the cities weren't able or didn't step up and provide for their needs, or how would they get food on the road? As is always the case in the work of spreading the Gospel, money is provided by people who choose to give. Throughout the Bible giving a tithe or a tenth has been recommended or possibly even required, but God wants us to give cheerfully and

<sup>243</sup> <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09761a.htm>

<sup>244</sup> <http://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/mary-magdalene.html>

<sup>245</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary\\_of\\_Bethany#Medieval\\_Western\\_identification\\_with\\_Mary\\_Magdalene](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_of_Bethany#Medieval_Western_identification_with_Mary_Magdalene)

<sup>246</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p557.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=557>

<sup>247</sup> Strong. p97. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/96/mode/2up>

willingly. In return He promises that His blessings will be more than we can receive. The following verses from Malachi written to the Jews illustrated that failing to return a tenth to God is like stealing from Him.

[Malachi 3:8](#) "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. <sup>9</sup> You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, [Even] this whole nation. <sup>10</sup> Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you [such] blessing That [there will] not [be room] enough [to receive it]. [Malachi 3:8-10 NKJV](#)

I think it is healthy to view everything as being God's, and He asks us to return a tenth for His work on earth. If you look at it this way, it is even good to give more than a tenth. In the case of these women and the other unnamed donors, I believe they gave freely.

To me the interesting thing is that in that male dominated society, it was probably not the norm for women to have much money at their disposal. Let's take a brief look at who these women were that were called out by name.

**Mary Magdalene** I have already discussed at some length in the chapter on [Simon the Pharisee invites Jesus to his house](#). She could very well have been the one who anointed Jesus with the expensive ointment once or twice [[Luke 7:37-38](#), [John 12:3](#)]. She could also have been the Mary who sat at Jesus' feet listening to Him [[Luke 10:39](#)]. What the Bible tells us for certain about her is that Jesus has cast seven demons out of her [[Luke 8:2](#), [Mark 16:9](#)]. She was present during the crucifixion [[Matthew 27:56](#), [Mark 15:40](#), [John 19:25](#)]. She was present during the burial [[Matthew 27:61](#), [Mark 15:47](#)]. She was with the first group going to the tomb on resurrection morning [[Matthew 28:1](#), [Mark 16:1](#), [John 20:1](#)]. She was the first to announce to the disciples that Jesus was risen [[Luke 24:10](#)]. She was the first to see and talk to Jesus after He was resurrected [[Mark 16:9](#), [John 20:14-18](#)]. A picture begins to emerge of an independent woman, who was most likely wealthy, who had been saved from demon possession by Jesus and had become maybe the most devoted disciple, sticking with Him when most of twelve apostles abandoned Him.

**Joanna** is only mentioned twice in the Bible, the other time being with Mary Magdalene and the other women who went to the tomb and found it empty on resurrection morning [[Luke 8:3](#), [Luke 24:10](#)]. This passage tells us that she was the wife of Chuza Herod's steward. We speculated in our chapter where we discussed the [healing of the royal official's son](#), that maybe Chuza was that royal official. However, the arrangement of the wording in this passage, "some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sickness," with names following tends to suggest an association. When this association is confirmed in Mary's case, it seems likely that Joanna was also cured of some sickness or had demons cast out of her as well. The source of Joanna's wealth seems obvious, with her husband being King Herod's steward, but the fact that he allowed her to follow Jesus and spend their money freely in support of His ministry suggests that Chuza was also a believer. This is not much of a stretch if Joanna was indeed the recipient of one of Jesus' miracles. The only other mention of Joanna by name is in the group of women who went to the tomb to apply their embalming spices to the body of Jesus. Instead, they found the tomb empty, and spoke to two angels who said Jesus was risen. So, they promptly went and reported what they saw and heard to the eleven disciples, who refused to believe them [[Luke 24:1-11](#)].

**Susanna**, we know even less about because this is the only mention of her by name in the entire Bible. She was probably healed by Jesus of some sickness. These women were mentioned by name, even years later when this Gospel was written by Luke, who was mostly likely not present himself at the time. I had speculated earlier that Luke probably knew Mary and had interviewed her before writing his version of the Gospel. These women were probably mentioned by name because they were memorable to Mary or the young church at the time. Mary must have been grateful for the ministry of these women to Jesus because it seems that she was most likely not always able to

accompany her son. In addition to sitting at the feet of Jesus, I can envision these women going to the market to buy food with their own money, cooking, and maybe even washing clothes for the group.

What do you believe?

- Why do you think Jesus didn't name any women among the twelve apostles?
- Why do you think there were no men mentioned as financially supporting the ministry?
- When [Luke 8:3](#) says there were many others who supported the group out of their private means, do you think that meant many other women or people?

## Jesus heals a blind and mute demon possessed man

[Matthew 12:22-30](#), [Mark 3:20-27](#), [Luke 11:14-23](#)<sup>248</sup>

[Mark 3:20](#) Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. <sup>21</sup> But when His own people heard [about this], they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind." [Mark 3:20-21 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 12:22](#) Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. <sup>23</sup> And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

[Luke 11:14](#) And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. So it was, when the demon had gone out, that the mute spoke; and the multitudes marveled.

<sup>24</sup> Now when the Pharisees heard [it] they said, "This [fellow] does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."

[Mark 3:22](#) And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and, "By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons."

<sup>15</sup> But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons." <sup>16</sup> Others, testing [Him], sought from Him a

<sup>25</sup> And knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand.

and said to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? <sup>24</sup> "If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

sign from heaven. <sup>17</sup> But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house [divided] against a house falls. <sup>18</sup> "If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Because you say

<sup>26</sup> If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand?

<sup>25</sup> "And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

<sup>26</sup> "And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. [Mark 3:22-26 NKJV](#)

<sup>27</sup> If I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? For this reason they will be your judges. <sup>28</sup> But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

I cast out demons by Beelzebub. <sup>19</sup> "And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast [them] out? Therefore they will be your judges. <sup>20</sup> "But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.

<sup>248</sup> Strong. p97. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/96/mode/2up>

<sup>29</sup> "Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. [Mark 3:27](#) NKJV

<sup>21</sup> "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. <sup>22</sup> "But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils.

<sup>3</sup> "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad. [Matthew 12:22-30](#) NKJV

<sup>23</sup> "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters. [Luke 11:14-23](#) NKJV

There seemed to be a lot of demon possession at the time of Jesus' ministry, but I wonder if some of the cases identified as demon possession were because people were suffering seizures or other illness. On the other hand, I imagine that there is probably more demon possession today than we recognize.

It seems that people were continually being amazed by the miracles performed by Jesus. Was this simply a case of different people observing His miraculous power, or was it things the observers considered different from what they had seen before?

Next, knowing what his accusers were thinking before they even had the chance to voice it, Jesus uses a logic argument on them. Now I have always been skeptical of modern-day healers, or maybe I should clarify, those who do it on the big stage with bright lights shining on them. In my mind, I have thought these healings could be the work of the Devil, to deceive people. Is this skepticism valid or am I guilty of doing the same thing as the Scribes and Pharisees in Jesus day? First of all, I want to clarify that I believe the Devil can probably heal certain types of illness, but I don't believe he has the same creative healing power that God does. He probably has the ability to make people seem sick, and then withdraw his influence, making them appear to be healed. Is this not exactly what the Scribes and Pharisees were thinking? Does this make me guilty of being a hypocrite if I condemn them for rejecting Jesus, ascribing His miraculous power to the Devil? There are several things to consider when trying to decide if something comes from God or the Devil. Can a motive be determined for the person doing the healing? Is the motive financial or fame? Next, are their other actions and their words, both on the stage and off, in accordance with the Bible? I think the process for determining this is much the same as that for deciding if someone is a true or a false prophet. We discussed this in greater detail with additional Bible texts in [Distinguishing a true from a false prophet](#).

The analogy of the strong man is the same in Matthew and Mark, but it is different in Luke. I was puzzled over the point Jesus was trying to make in this context. Matthew Henry says that Satan is the strong man and souls of some are his property. Jesus is invading Satan's house plundering it by releasing souls from his captivity. As for the differences in the analogies, I have mentioned before that Jesus probably repeated His teachings and varied them according to His audience. Jesus may well have used this illustration many times in different forms and perhaps Luke wished to convey the message that Jesus was stronger than the Devil. In any case, I believe the message pointed out by Matthew Hendry remains the same.<sup>249</sup>

Finally, Jesus makes the point that if you don't make an active choice to follow Him, you are against Him. Ultimately there is no fence to sit on, and you will be either on God's or Satan's side.

<sup>249</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat\\_012.cfm?a=941029](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat_012.cfm?a=941029)

---

What do you believe?

- Who do you think “His own people” were who had thought Jesus had lost His sense?
- Why were the people so amazed by the ability to cast out demons if this was something other people of the day could do as is implied by Jesus’ question?
- In light of this story, is it possible today that there are cases that we diagnose as some kind of disease which are really demon possession?

## The unpardonable sin

[Matthew 12:31](#), [Mark 3:28-30](#), [Luke 12:10](#)<sup>250</sup>

[Matthew 12:31](#) "Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy [against] the Spirit will not be forgiven men. <sup>32</sup> "Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the [age] to come. [Matthew 12:31-32 NKJV](#)

[Mark 3:28](#) "Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; <sup>29</sup> "but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation"—<sup>30</sup> because they said, "He has an unclean spirit." [Mark 3:28-30 NKJV](#)

[Luke 12:10](#) "And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven. [Luke 12:10 NKJV](#)

For some reason, as a child I had heard that there was an unpardonable sin, and the thought frightened me. What I learned or concluded eventually was that there really is no sin that cannot be forgiven except the sin that we do not repent of, and ask forgiveness for. Matthew and Mark make it pretty clear that we can be forgiven of any and all sins. The way I understand this now is that since it is the Holy Spirit that prompts us to seek forgiveness, if we continually ignore our conscience when we feel guilty, we will eventually become deaf to the Holy Spirit and will not repent of our sins. A good illustration of this is the callous. A callous forms because are receiving repeated minor injury to the same spot on our skin. Over time, as the skin keeps healing, it naturally builds up a callous which protects us from suffering the pain from that minor injury. Think of the Holy Spirit’s promptings as the discomfort caused by those minor injuries. If we keep ignoring the uncomfortable feeling when we sin, we will eventually become calloused and not feel bad about it, then we will not feel the need to repent or ask forgiveness.

I think it is no coincidence that this topic immediately follows the incident where the scribes and Pharisees were claiming that Jesus was possessed by the Devil and using his power to cast out demons. I believe that Jesus was implying was that by continually attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan and refusing to believe what they were hearing and seeing, they were on the path to committing the unpardonable sin.

---

<sup>250</sup> Strong. p99. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/98/mode/2up>

What do you believe?

- How would you distinguish blasphemy against Jesus vs. the Holy Spirit since they are both God?
- Why do you think Jesus made it so clear that even sins committed against Him could be forgiven?
- Why do you think Matthew made a point of saying sin against the Holy Spirit would not be forgiven in this age or the age to come?

## We will be judged by the words we speak

[Matthew 12:34-37](#), [Luke 6:45](#)<sup>251</sup>

[Matthew 12:34](#) "Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. <sup>35</sup> "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

<sup>36</sup> "But I say to you that for every idle word men may

speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. <sup>37</sup> "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

<sup>38</sup> Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."

[Matthew 12:34-38 NKJV](#)

[Luke 6:45](#) ... For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.—<sup>45</sup> "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. ... [Luke 6:45 NKJV](#)

A society that promotes freedom of speech, would for the most part not make laws regarding what people can and can't say. Although, even in such a society, there are ways for a vocal minority to persecute others for what they say. Having said that, laws generally prohibit actions, with one major exception being perjury in a court of law. That one came straight from the ninth commandment in the Law of God which states:

[Exodus 20:16](#) "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. [Exodus 20:16 NKJV](#)

In this statement, I don't think Jesus is taking the commandment prohibiting perjury deeper, as He did for murder and adultery in the [Sermon on the Mount](#). But I think He's making a similar point, which is that we will be judged by what is in our heart or mind, and that what we say is a reflection of what is in there.

What do you believe?

- Considering the fact that some people talk a lot and some very little, is it fair for God to judge us by our words?
- What do you think Jesus means when He mentions good and evil treasure?
- How would you define a careless word from [verse 36](#)?

<sup>251</sup> Strong. p100. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/100/mode/2up>



## The scribes and Pharisees ask for a sign

[Matthew 12:38-42](#), [Luke 11:16, 29-32](#)<sup>252</sup>

[Matthew 12:38](#) Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." <sup>39</sup> But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. <sup>40</sup> "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. <sup>41</sup> "The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah [is] here. <sup>42</sup> "The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon [is] here. [Matthew 12:38-42 NKJV](#)

[Luke 11:16](#) Others, testing Him, sought from Him a sign from heaven.—[Luke 11:29](#) And while the crowds were thickly gathered together, He began to say, "This is an evil generation. It seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. <sup>30</sup> "For as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation.—

<sup>32</sup> "The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah [is] here.—<sup>31</sup> "The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon [is] here. [Luke 11:16, 29-32 NKJV](#)

Why does Jesus say that a wicked and adulterous generation craves a sign? Gideon asked God for three signs and they were all given to him [[Judges 6:17-23](#), [Judges 6:36-38](#), [Judges 6:39-40](#)], and yet he was listed in Hebrews as a man of faith [[Hebrews 11:32](#)]. King Hezekiah asked for a sign and received one [[2 Kings 20:8-11](#)]. On the other hand, Jesus' response to one of Satan's temptations was 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.' [[Matthew 4:7](#), [Luke 4:12](#), [Deuteronomy 6:16](#), [Exodus 17:1-7](#)]. This statement was from the time of the Exodus from Egypt, when God had performed many miracles on their behalf, but when confronted with the need for water, the Israelites complained to Moses and said, "is the LORD among us or not?" The Israelites had possibly more evidence of the existence of God than at any time in history other than when Jesus was on earth. I feel like they were giving God an ultimatum, give us water or else.

So, can we determine from these stories when it is ok to ask for a sign and when it is not? I would say that up to that point in Gideon's life, he had not been accustomed to seeing miraculous signs from God. In Hezekiah's case, Israel had been faithful to God and had also been prospering during his reign. Hezekiah had prophets of God at his disposal and had been the recipient and witness to amazing miracles when the kingdom of Judah was saved from Assyria [[2 Kings 19:35](#), [2 Chronicles 32:20-21](#), [Isaiah 37:36](#)]. I believe he should not have been asking for a sign. I think it goes back to a way of thinking that if they were faithful to God, bad things should not happen to them. In this particular case, he may have thought he should not be dying from some terminal sickness?

I believe these scribes and Pharisees had been witness to many miracles and may even have witnessed Jesus giving life to a dead person. I suspect, they were looking for a particular kind of sign, such as a move toward taking the throne of Israel or rising up against the Romans. That is after all what they were expecting from the Messiah, but certainly not what they were seeing from Jesus.

<sup>252</sup> Strong. p100. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/100/mode/2up>

---

What do you believe?

- Do you believe it is ok to ask God for a sign?
- Does asking for a sign show a lack of faith?
- How would you describe it as being wicked and adulterous to ask for a sign from God?

## Evil must be replaced by good

[Matthew 12:43-45](#), [Luke 11:24-26](#)<sup>253</sup>

[Matthew 12:43](#) "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. <sup>44</sup> "Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds [it] empty, swept, and put in order. <sup>45</sup> "Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last [state] of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation." [Matthew 12:43-45 NKJV](#)

[Luke 11:24](#) "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' <sup>25</sup> "And when he comes, he finds [it] swept and put in order. <sup>26</sup> "Then he goes and takes with [him] seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last [state] of that man is worse than the first." [Luke 11:24-26 NKJV](#)

I don't know if this is a parable or an actual occurrence that Jesus knew of, but I believe this is a principle to live by. Stated another way, if there is some harmful behavior that you are trying to get rid of in your life, stopping doing it and then sitting around with nothing to replace it is not a good idea. You will most likely be thinking only of what you are not doing, longing to do it, and will probably eventually give in to the temptation to do it.

Then I believe Jesus applies this principle to the evil that was temporarily pushed back by Him and John the Baptist. Many people were excited and followed, but if they didn't make a full commitment and change their lives, when Jesus was gone, they would be worse off than before.

---

What do you believe?

- Why do you think Jesus said the vacated space of one evil would be replaced by more?
- Have you ever observed this principle at work in your life or the life of someone you know?
- Do you think the Jews were worse off after Jesus was gone than they were before?

## Jesus disowns His family?

[Luke 11:27-28](#), [Matthew 12:46-50](#), [Mark 3:31-35](#), [Luke 8:19-21](#)<sup>254</sup>

[Luke 11:27](#) And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed [is] the womb that bore You, and [the] breasts which nursed You!" <sup>28</sup> But He said, "More than that, blessed [are] those who hear the word of God and keep it!" [Luke 11:27-28 NKJV](#)

---

<sup>253</sup> Strong. p101. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/100/mode/2up>

<sup>254</sup> Strong. p102. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/102/mode/2up>

[Matthew 12:46](#) While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him.

<sup>47</sup> Then one said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You."

<sup>48</sup> But He answered and said to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" <sup>49</sup> And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! <sup>50</sup> "For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother." [Matthew 12:46-50 NKJV](#)

[Mark 3:31](#) Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him, calling Him. <sup>32</sup> And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You."

<sup>33</sup> But He answered them, saying, "Who is My mother, or My brothers?" <sup>34</sup> And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! <sup>35</sup> "For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother." [Mark 3:31-35 NKJV](#)

[Luke 8:19](#) Then His mother and brothers came to Him, and could not approach Him because of the crowd. <sup>20</sup> And it was told Him [by some], who said, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You."

<sup>21</sup> But He answered and said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it." [Luke 8:19-21 NKJV](#)

Putting yourself in the shoes of Jesus' family, it would seem hard not to be offended at His comments. But let's look beyond these words to the broader context. His family were known to try to influence His behavior based on what they thought was best. At the time, I don't think His brothers believed He was the Messiah. For all we know, they may have been coming to Him at this time to have an intervention, to try to get Him not to be so antagonistic towards the religious leaders, or to not spend so much time with prostitutes and tax collectors and fishermen. Let's look at some of the verses that we infer this context from.

[Mark 3:20](#) Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. <sup>21</sup> But when His own people heard [about this], they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind." [Mark 3:20-21 NKJV](#)

[John 7:3](#) His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. <sup>4</sup> "For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." <sup>5</sup> For even His brothers did not believe in Him. [John 7:3-5 NKJV](#)

In chapter 33 of the book *Desire of Ages*, White paints a word picture for us of how the family relationship may have been.

The sons of Joseph were far from being in sympathy with Jesus in His work. The reports that reached them in regard to His life and labors filled them with astonishment and dismay. They heard that He devoted entire nights to prayer, that through the day He was thronged by great companies of people, and did not give Himself time so much as to eat. His friends felt that He was wearing Himself out by His incessant labor; they were unable to account for His attitude toward the Pharisees, and there were some who feared that His reason was becoming unsettled.

His brothers heard of this, and also of the charge brought by the Pharisees that He cast out devils through the power of Satan. They felt keenly the reproach that came upon them through their relation to Jesus. They knew what a tumult His words and works created, and were not only alarmed at His bold statements, but indignant at His denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees. They decided that He must be persuaded or constrained to cease this manner of labor, and they induced Mary to unite with them, thinking that through His love for her they might prevail upon Him to be more prudent.<sup>255</sup>

Jesus' miraculous power was undeniable, and I think Jesus' brothers were impressed by that, but they had other ideas of what should be done with that kind of power. In fact, one has to wonder how much His own mother, Mary, was involved in trying to influence His actions according to her own ideas of what the Messiah should be or do.

I think Jesus' main point is that those who choose can be closer to God than family members are to each other. Additionally, He may have been making a point that one must make a choice to follow God, but family relationships which are not chosen, cannot give someone an automatic pass into heaven. Because of who He was and is, Jesus already loved His family more than they could possibly love each other. But in order to benefit from His love, they needed to make a choice, and family ties would not give them any advantage.

What do you believe?

- Do you think "His own people" in [Mark 3:21](#) refers to Jesus' family?
- Do you think Jesus' brothers, whether older or younger, may have sided with the scribes and Pharisees in their opposition to His behavior?
- Do you think Mary ever tried to influence the behavior of Jesus? Do you think it ever did any good to try?

## Woes on the scribes and Pharisees

[Luke 11:37-42](#), [44,45](#), [52-54](#), [Matthew 23:13](#), [23-28](#)<sup>256</sup>

[Luke 11:37](#) And as He spoke, a certain Pharisee asked Him to dine with him. So He went in and sat down to eat.

<sup>38</sup> When the Pharisee saw [it], he marveled that He had not first washed before dinner. <sup>39</sup> Then the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees make the outside of the cup and dish clean, but your inward part is full of greed and wickedness.

<sup>40</sup> "Foolish ones! Did not He who made the outside make the inside also? <sup>41</sup> "But rather give alms of such things as you have; then indeed all things are clean to you.

[Matthew 23:25](#) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!

For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside

they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. <sup>26</sup> "Blind

Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. [Matthew 23:25-26 NKJV](#)

<sup>255</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p321.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=321>

<sup>256</sup> Strong. p103. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/102/mode/2up>

<sup>42</sup> "But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. —

<sup>44</sup> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like graves which are not seen, and the men who walk over [them] are not aware [of them]."

<sup>45</sup> Then one of the lawyers answered and said to Him, "Teacher, by saying these things You reproach us also."

<sup>46</sup> And He said, "Woe to you also, lawyers! For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. —

<sup>52</sup> "Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered."

<sup>53</sup> And as He said these things to them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to assail [Him] vehemently, and to cross-examine Him about many things, <sup>54</sup> lying in wait for Him, and seeking to catch Him in something He might say, that they might accuse Him. [Luke 11:37-42, 44, 45, 52-54 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 23:23](#) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier [matters] of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. <sup>24</sup> "Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!—

<sup>27</sup> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead [men's] bones and all uncleanness. <sup>28</sup> "Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. [Matthew 23:23-24, 27-28 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 23:13](#) "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in [yourselves], nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. [Matthew 23:13 NKJV](#)

As can be seen, there were verses left out on both sides from these woes on the Pharisees. Luke places these woes in a Pharisees house. Matthew has his woes being spoken in front of a group of people later on in Jesus' ministry. As I have mentioned before, Jesus must have repeated Himself when speaking in front of different audiences. This was most likely the case here, so Strong split the content into two different occasions. He could just as easily have duplicated it all in both places, but I believe it was his goal to use every word of the Gospels once, arranged in a chronological harmony, besides where would you stop with the duplication.

This is not the first instance of Jesus being invited to the house of a Pharisee. He was invited to the house of Simon, a Pharisee, when He was anointed by a woman with a costly vial of perfume. In that case, Jesus also read the Pharisee's mind and addressed his thoughts, but He did so in a story without attacking His host. In this case, Jesus knew what His host was thinking also, but His response was to openly rebuke His host and all Pharisees with their hypocrisy.

I believe it is possible that when Simon the Pharisee invited Jesus to his house, he was genuinely contemplating whether Jesus could be the Messiah. Whereas in this case, this could have been a more hostile environment. This may have been a setup from the start, to try to find fault with Jesus. Maybe in this case, Jesus knew there was no attendee on the fence, who would be offended and reject Him as a result of a more direct confrontation. From the lawyer's comment, they thought Jesus was just insulting them, but perhaps later on when some of them thought back to what Jesus had said, they would see the truth in it.

What do you believe?

- Do you think Jesus purposely didn't wash ceremonially, so He would have an opportunity to address the hypocrisy?
- Does it seem "un-Christ-like" to verbally attack the Pharisees and Lawyers as Jesus did?
- How do you think the Lawyers shut off the key of knowledge to entering the kingdom of heaven?

## Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also

[Luke 12:1](#), [13-34](#), [Mathew 6:19-34 \(except 22-24\)](#), [Matthew 10:29-31](#), [Luke 21:18](#)<sup>257</sup>

[Luke 12:1](#) In the meantime, when an innumerable multitude of people had gathered together, so that they trampled one another, He began to say to His disciples first [of all], "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.—

<sup>13</sup> Then one from the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

<sup>14</sup> But He said to him, "Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?" <sup>15</sup> And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."

<sup>16</sup> Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. <sup>17</sup> "And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' <sup>18</sup> "So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. <sup>19</sup> 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, [and] be merry." <sup>20</sup> "But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' <sup>21</sup> "So [is] he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

<sup>22</sup> Then He said to His disciples, "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. <sup>23</sup> "Life is more than food, and the body [is more] than clothing. <sup>24</sup> "Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds?—

[Matthew 6:25](#) For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?

<sup>6</sup> "Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God.

[Matthew 10:29](#) "Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will.—<sup>31</sup> "Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

<sup>7</sup> ... Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

<sup>7</sup> "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.—

[Matthew 10:30](#) "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. [Matthew 10:30 NKJV](#) [Luke 21:18](#) "But not a hair of your head shall be lost. [Luke 21:18 NKJV](#)

<sup>25</sup> "And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? <sup>26</sup> "If you then are not able to do [the] least, why are you anxious for the rest? <sup>27</sup> "Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>28</sup> "If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more [will He clothe] you, O [you] of little faith?

<sup>29</sup> "And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. <sup>30</sup> "For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. <sup>31</sup> "But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you. <sup>32</sup> "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. <sup>33</sup> "Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys.

<sup>34</sup> "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. [Luke 12:1, 13-34 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 6:27](#) "Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? <sup>28</sup> "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; <sup>29</sup> "and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> "Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, [will He] not much more [clothe] you, O you of little faith?

<sup>31</sup> "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' <sup>32</sup> "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. <sup>33</sup> "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

<sup>34</sup> "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day [is] its own trouble.—

<sup>19</sup> "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup> "but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

<sup>21</sup> "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. [Matthew 6:27-34, 19-21 NKJV](#)

This section is mostly about understanding how much God loves and cares for us, and also prioritizing heavenly treasure over earthly wealth. The things of this world can be lost, stolen or destroyed, but it is not so with heavenly treasure.

Regarding the first point, it is pretty hard sometimes in this sinful world to see God's love and care when so many people are hurting and suffering. How do we understand the verse in [Luke 12:24](#) when so many people go hungry every day?

[Luke 12:24](#) "Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? [Luke 12:24 NKJV](#)

First, I would like to say there is no completely satisfactory answer to this question, which has been around as long as this Bible verse. It is echoed in the common question we have all heard, "if God is good and loving, why is there so much pain and suffering in the world?" The most satisfactory answer to me is that we have all been given freedom of choice and if God were constantly imposing His will on earth, it would be violating our free will. But He does have a loophole and it has to do with the second half of this section which is to lay up treasure in heaven. God may have chosen to not exert His will any and everywhere, but those who choose to obey and follow Him can exercise their freedom of choice to be God's hands and feet and heart here on earth. I wrote a whole chapter on this topic in the appendix titled, [Hands feet, eyes and ears of God](#). I believe the act of giving of one's time and resources to do God's will is putting treasure in heaven.

So, to directly address verse 24, God through the balance of nature has provided food for the birds, and instinct to know how to survive, but it's not always easy. But because of sin, sometimes the birds fall prey to other animals, or people, or starve if their natural food supply is wiped out. I also believe that God created this earth with the ability

to feed us, but just as the birds have to spend their entire day in search of food, I do not believe God intends for food to be dropped in our laps. We may need to hunt, forage, or cultivate in order to obtain food, but with the intelligence and abilities God has given each of us, there are many ways we can work to obtain our food. Yes, I agree that sometimes greedy and evil people can make it more difficult for people under their power to obtain food, but that is one of the effects of sin. Others who choose to do God's will can work toward defeating the plans of evil and oppressive people.

What do you believe?

- Do you have a different answer for the question, "if God is good and loving, why is there so much pain and suffering in the world?"
- If God is letting human free will and sin to reign on earth, how long does He have to let it continue?
- What are some other forms of suffering besides hunger that you can work to alleviate and while doing so, put treasure in heaven?

## The parable of the fig tree

[Luke 13:1-9](#)<sup>258</sup>

[Luke 13:1](#) There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. <sup>2</sup> And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all [other] Galileans, because they suffered such things? <sup>3</sup> "I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. <sup>4</sup> "Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all [other] men who dwelt in Jerusalem? <sup>5</sup> "I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."

<sup>6</sup> He also spoke this parable: "A certain [man] had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. <sup>7</sup> "Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' <sup>8</sup> "But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize [it]. <sup>9</sup> 'And if it bears fruit, [well]. But if not, after that you can cut it down.' " [Luke 13:1-9 NKJV](#)

It seems very clear the Jesus wanted to clear up to misconception of the day that just because one suffers some calamity, doesn't mean they are being punished by God for sin. Then He threw in the warning for them, that unless they repented, they would suffer massive calamity, because He knew where their current course of action with the Romans was taking them.

I find it interesting that in the parable, the tree was given four years. In prophetic time a day represents a year, so 4 x 360 = 1440 symbolic days or literal years [see [Appendix B – Prophetic time](#)]. This just happened to be close to the age of the Israelite nation when Jesus spoke this parable. If this were really His intent, one could possibly come up with a period of time that could be added, before a newly planted tree was expected to bear fruit, which could then have made the four years span the period from Exodus to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D..

<sup>258</sup> Strong. p109. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/108/mode/2up>



God the Father is the owner of the vineyard and has determined that Israel is not going to yield the fruit for which it was planted. Jesus says, let Me go down there and work with them Myself and see if I can get them to bear fruit. If they do not change and bear fruit, their current course of action will lead to their destruction anyway.

Ellen White in her book, *To Be Like Jesus*, applies this parable to God's current chosen, then I believe even takes it a step further and applies it individually to people who are supposed to be His representative on earth. When these people mistreat their brothers and sisters, and take advantage of the necessities of others, they are not bearing the fruit God desires, and are showing that they are not governed by the principles of the Gospel.<sup>259</sup>

---

What do you believe?

- Do you think God disciplines people for their own benefit as parents might their own children?
- Would God the Father give up on someone before Jesus?
- What do you think the extra time in the parable means?

---

<sup>259</sup> White, Ellen G. *To Be Like Jesus*.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=BLJ&lang=en&collection=2&pagenumber=173>

## The parable of the sower and the seed

[Matthew 13:1-23](#), [Mark 4:1-20](#), [Luke 8:4-15](#), [Mark 4:26-29](#)<sup>260</sup>

[Matthew 13:1](#) On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. <sup>2</sup> And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

<sup>3</sup> Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying:

"Behold, a sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup> "And as he sowed, some [seed] fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. <sup>5</sup> "Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth.

<sup>6</sup> "But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. <sup>7</sup> "And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them.

<sup>8</sup> "But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

<sup>9</sup> "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

<sup>10</sup> And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"

<sup>11</sup> He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.

<sup>12</sup> "For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. <sup>13</sup> "Therefore I speak to them in parables,

[Mark 4:1](#) And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat [in it] on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea.

<sup>2</sup> Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching: <sup>3</sup> "Listen!

Behold, a sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup> "And it happened, as he sowed, [that] some [seed] fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. <sup>5</sup> "Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. <sup>6</sup> "But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. <sup>7</sup> "And some [seed] fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop.

<sup>8</sup> "But other [seed] fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred." <sup>9</sup> And He said to them,

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

<sup>10</sup> But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable. <sup>11</sup> And He said to them, "To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, [Mark 4:1-11 NKJV](#)

[Luke 8:4](#) And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city,

He spoke by a parable:

<sup>5</sup> "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. <sup>6</sup> "Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture.

<sup>7</sup> "And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it.

<sup>8</sup> "But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold."

When He had said these things He cried,

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

<sup>9</sup> Then His disciples asked Him, saying, "What does this parable mean?" <sup>10</sup> And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest [it is given] in parables, ... [Luke 8:4-10 NKJV](#)

because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. <sup>14</sup> "And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:

'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive;  
<sup>15</sup> FOR THE HEARTS OF THIS PEOPLE HAVE GROWN DULL.  
 [THEIR] EARS ARE HARD OF HEARING,  
 AND THEIR EYES THEY HAVE CLOSED,  
 LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH [THEIR] EYES AND HEAR WITH [THEIR] EARS,  
 LEST THEY SHOULD UNDERSTAND WITH [THEIR] HEARTS AND TURN,  
 SO THAT I SHOULD HEAL THEM.'

<sup>16</sup> "But blessed [are] your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; <sup>17</sup> "for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous [men] desired to see what you see, and did not see [it], and to hear what you hear, and did not hear [it].

<sup>18</sup> "Therefore hear the parable of the sower:  
<sup>19</sup> "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand [it], then the wicked [one] comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.

<sup>20</sup> "But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; <sup>21</sup> "yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.

<sup>22</sup> "Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

<sup>23</sup> "But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands [it], who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." [Matthew 13:1-23 NKJV](#)

[Mark 4:12](#) "so that 'Seeing they may see and not perceive, And hearing they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, And [their] sins be forgiven them.' " [Mark 4:12 NKJV](#)

[Luke 8:10](#) ... that 'Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.'  
[Luke 8:10 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 6:9](#) ... 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.'  
<sup>10</sup> "Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed." [Isaiah 6:9-10 NKJV](#)

[Mark 4:13](#) And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? [Mark 4:13 NKJV](#)

[Mark 4:14](#) "The sower sows the word. <sup>15</sup> "And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.

<sup>16</sup> "These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; <sup>17</sup> "and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble.

<sup>18</sup> "Now these are the ones sown among thorns; [they are] the ones who hear the word, <sup>19</sup> "and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

<sup>20</sup> "But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept [it], and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred." [Mark 4:14-20 NKJV](#)

[Luke 8:11](#) "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. <sup>12</sup> "Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

<sup>13</sup> "But the ones on the rock [are those] who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.

<sup>14</sup> "Now the ones [that] fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.

<sup>15</sup> "But the ones [that] fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep [it] and bear fruit with patience. [Luke 8:11-15 NKJV](#)

[Mark 4:26](#) And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground,<sup>27</sup> "and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how.<sup>28</sup> "For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head.<sup>29</sup> "But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." [Mark 4:26-29 NKJV](#)

In his harmony, Strong has Jesus telling a number of parables to the people at one occasion, and then when He is alone with His disciples, he explains some of them. In order to break this up into smaller sections, I have chosen to split it up by parable, so the explanation if any will follow. Strong places this teaching around the month of October, a little over two years into Jesus' public ministry.<sup>261</sup>

There is not much to add to Jesus' explanation of His parable. In many ways this parable is describing building a multilevel marketing business, where they teach you it is about the numbers. If you talk to enough people, you will find those who are truly interested. Some will not be interested at all, others will seem interested initially, but they will fall out when the going gets tough. But if you keep sharing, you will eventually find those who will wholeheartedly embrace your vision and will go out and build their own network.

I think sharing the good news of salvation should be like a person who is out shopping and finds a great deal on something. Out of their great joy over the good deal they found, they will naturally share it with their friends and family. Some may not be interested in that particular deal, but those who are will go buy it for themselves and will begin spreading the good news as well.

I tacked on the short parable from the same chapter of Mark verses [26-29](#), because it emphasizes one of the main points. Man plants the seed, but doesn't make it grow or produce a harvest, in fact he doesn't even know how it happens.

What do you believe?

- It is difficult to build a successful multilevel marketing business if you don't truly believe in the product, so does that mean if we have a hard time witnessing, we don't truly believe in the good news of salvation?
- Do you believe it is not your job to convince someone to accept the good news of salvation?
- Do you believe that it is only through Jesus, His sacrifice, and free offer of salvation anyone can be saved?

## The parable of the wheat and the tares

[Matthew 13:24-30](#), [Matthew 13:36-40](#)<sup>262</sup>

[Matthew 13:24](#) Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field;<sup>25</sup> "but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.<sup>26</sup> "But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared.<sup>27</sup> "So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?'<sup>28</sup> "He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?'<sup>29</sup> "But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them.<sup>30</sup> 'Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together

<sup>261</sup> Strong. p114. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/114/mode/2up>

<sup>262</sup> Strong. p112. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/112/mode/2up>

the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn." ' ' " [Matthew 13:24-30](#)  
[NKJV](#)

This is an interesting parable with a very clear message. If we take this very literally, it was not about the slaves' ability to distinguish the wheat from the tares. The problem I think was that by marching through the field, and uprooting the tares, the roots of the wheat would be disturbed and some would even be lost as they were inadvertently pulled up with the tares. For example, what if someone in a church has friends or family with whom they have roots, and the leadership of the church judges and kicks out that friend or family member, how do you think the one left behind may feel about that church? But is it really that black and white? Does the Bible also talk about keeping the church pure? Here is something Jesus said that may be partly related.

[Matthew 18:15](#) "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. <sup>16</sup> "But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' <sup>17</sup> "And if he refuses to hear them, tell [it] to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.  
[Matthew 18:15-17 NKJV](#)

Here is a statement by Paul that seems to be on the topic.

[1 Corinthians 5:1](#) It is actually reported [that there is] sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles--that a man has his father's wife! <sup>2</sup> And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. <sup>3</sup> For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. <sup>4</sup> In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>5</sup> deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

<sup>6</sup> Your glorying [is] not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? <sup>7</sup> Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. <sup>8</sup> Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth.

<sup>9</sup> I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. <sup>10</sup> Yet [I] certainly [did] not [mean] with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. <sup>11</sup> But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner--not even to eat with such a person.

<sup>12</sup> For what [have] I [to do] with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?

<sup>13</sup> But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person." [1 Corinthians 5:1-13 NKJV](#)

So, does this contradict what Jesus taught? In [verses 6-7](#), Paul explains why one should be removed from the church. Essentially, he says by analogy, that if this type of behavior is accepted, then others may feel it is ok and follow. But in [verse 5](#) Paul also says that hopefully the person will repent so they can be saved. Paul also clarifies in [verses 9-13](#), that

he is not saying not to associate with sinners at all. After all that was one of the biggest complaints the Pharisees had with Jesus. So, is Paul contradicting Jesus? I think the answer lies in Jesus own explanation of the parable.

[Matthew 13:36](#) Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." <sup>37</sup> He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> "The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked [one]. <sup>39</sup> "The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. <sup>40</sup> "Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. [Matthew 13:36-40 NKJV](#)

He had one more parable that described the good and the bad being sorted at the end of the world.

[Matthew 13:47](#) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, <sup>48</sup> "which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. <sup>49</sup> "So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, <sup>50</sup> "and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth." [Matthew 13:47-50 NKJV](#)

In the first parable, Jesus identifies the field as the world. And both describe the judgment and the separation of the good from the evil by God at the end of the age or world.

In summary, I think what Paul teaches is that if we accept and embrace people in the church who are openly, blatantly and unrepentantly sinning, we are condoning their behavior and risk that behavior spreading. We also risk outsiders looking in and thinking, if those people are Christians, I want nothing to do with them. So, while all of us are sinners, people in the church should be forsaking their sin, not embracing it.

---

What do you believe?

- Islamic terrorists may be justified in identifying some people as infidels, but when they kill people, is this what Jesus is talking about?
- Is there a distinction between removing someone from church membership and not allowing them to enter the building?
- How could the act of removing someone from church membership [[1 Corinthians 5:2](#)] help to save their soul in the end [[1 Corinthians 5:5](#)]?

## The parables of the mustard seed, and the leaven

[Matthew 13:31-35](#), [Mark 4:30-34](#), [Luke 13:18-21](#)<sup>263</sup>

[Matthew 13:31](#) Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, <sup>32</sup> "which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

<sup>33</sup> Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."

<sup>34</sup> All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, <sup>35</sup> that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

"I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world." [Matthew 13:31-35 NKJV](#)

[Mark 4:30](#) Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? <sup>31</sup> "[It is] like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; <sup>32</sup> "but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade." [Mark 4:30-](#)

[32 NKJV](#)

[Luke 13:20](#) And again He said, "To what shall I liken the kingdom of God? <sup>21</sup> "It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened." [Luke 13:18-20 NKJV](#)

[Mark 4:33](#) And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear [it]. <sup>34</sup> But without a parable He did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples. [Mark 4:33-34 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 78:2](#) I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, [Psalm 78:2 NKJV](#)

These two parables are similar, in that they are both about something starting small and growing and spreading in size and influence. There was probably a mustard tree present when Jesus spoke the first parable, maybe He was even sitting under it. I believe this is the way Jesus taught, He spoke in terms of things people could relate to and would remember. They may not have understood the meaning at the time, but later on as they thought back on the teachings of Jesus, they would see the truth in His words. In the book *Christ Object Lessons*, White comments on this parable saying,

Not only is the growth of Christ's kingdom illustrated by the parable of the mustard seed, but in every stage of its growth the experience represented in the parable is repeated. For His church in every generation God has a special truth and a special work. The truth that is hid from the worldly wise and prudent is revealed to the child-like and humble. It calls for self-sacrifice. It has battles to fight and victories to win. At the outset its advocates are few. By the great men of the world and by a world-conforming church, they are opposed and despised. See John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, standing alone to rebuke the pride and formalism of the Jewish nation. See the first bearers of the gospel into Europe. How obscure, how hopeless, seemed the mission of Paul and Silas, the two tentmakers, as they with their companions took ship at Troas for Philippi. See "Paul the aged," in chains, preaching Christ in the stronghold of the Caesars. See the little communities of slaves and peasants in conflict with the heathenism of imperial Rome. See Martin Luther withstanding that mighty church which is the masterpiece of the world's wisdom. See him holding fast God's word against emperor and pope, declaring, "Here I take my stand; I can not do otherwise. God be my help." See John Wesley preaching Christ and His righteousness in the midst of formalism, sensualism, and infidelity. See one burdened with the woes of the

<sup>263</sup> Strong. p113. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/112/mode/2up>

heathen world, pleading for the privilege of carrying to them Christ's message of love. Hear the response of ecclesiasticism: "Sit down, young man. When God wants to convert the heathen, He will do it without your help or mine."<sup>264</sup>

I find it interesting that in many other cases, Jesus used leaven as a symbol for sin or false teachings, but in this case He used it as a symbol for the growth of the kingdom of God on earth. I guess the principles of the kingdom of heaven have the ability to spread throughout and change a person's life from the inside out, similar to the way sin can. This has been seen over and over in the lives of people whose entire lives have been changed for the better when they committed themselves to Christ.

What do you believe?

- Can you think of something you would like to do to spread the Gospel that might be looked down on as small and insignificant by the Church?
- Do you think God needs us to help reach the heathen with the good news of salvation?
- Do you know someone whose life has been completely changed for the better after they committed their life to Christ?

## Let your light shine so that people will glorify your Father in heaven

[Matthew 5:14-16](#), [6:22-23](#), [10:26-27](#), [Mark 4:21-22](#), [Luke 8:16-17](#), [Luke 11:33](#), [12:2-3](#)<sup>265</sup>

[Matthew 5:14](#) "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

<sup>15</sup> "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all [who are] in the house. <sup>16</sup> "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. [Matthew 5:14-16 NKJV](#)

[Mark 4:21](#) Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? [Mark 4:21 NKJV](#)

[Luke 8:16](#) "No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts [it] under a bed, but sets [it] on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light. [Luke 8:16 NKJV](#)

[Luke 11:33](#) "No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts [it] in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light. [Luke 11:33 NKJV](#)

[Luke 11:34](#) "The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when [your eye] is bad, your body also [is] full of darkness.

<sup>35</sup> "Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. <sup>36</sup> "If then your whole body [is] full of light, having no part dark, [the] whole [body] will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light." [Luke 11:34-36 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 6:22](#) "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. <sup>23</sup> "But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great [is] that darkness!

[Matthew 6:22-23 NKJV](#)

<sup>264</sup> White, Ellen G. *Christ Object Lessons*. Washington, D.C., Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1900, p78-79.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=COL&lang=en&collection=2&section=all&pagenumber=78>

<sup>265</sup> Strong. p117. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/116/mode/2up>



[Matthew 10:26](#) "Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. <sup>27</sup> "Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. [Matthew 10:26-27 NKJV](#)

[Mark 4:22](#) "For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. [Mark 4:22 NKJV](#)

[Luke 8:17](#) "For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor [anything] hidden that will not be known and come to light. [Luke 8:17 NKJV](#)

[Luke 12:2](#) "For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. <sup>3</sup> "Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops. [Luke 12:2-3 NKJV](#)

Strong probably strung these teachings together because of the common element of light, and the sequences in Luke. The first is pretty straight forward. We are to let our light shine by doing good works, not for the purpose of receiving compliments, or earning our way to heaven, but that those who see them will think well of God. If we live the way God wants, our lives should naturally shine as a light, unless we try to hide or cover it up.

One possible application of the second teaching could be that what we watch or look at will influence our lives. Today there is so much visual content in the form of movies, videos, TV, computer games and websites which are largely consumed through the eye. Are there things that you watch or look at that you would be embarrassed for your spouse or children or parents to know you were watching? Are there things you watch that you would be uncomfortable watching with Jesus? On the other hand, if you focus our sight on uplifting things, read good content, especially the Bible, it will naturally have a positive influence on your life.

In the context of what Jesus is saying, I think the third statement has to do with teaching, knowledge and information. There are things that can be hard to understand. Even some of Jesus' parables had meaning that was not immediately understood. There are many things written in the Bible that are hard to understand. I believe this is a promise from Jesus that teachings and information about God and the gift of salvation will be understood. In fact, He instructs us to preach and teach it.

What do you believe?

- How can you let your light shine for God's glory?
- Can you think of another explanation for a bad eye leading to shining dark light?
- In the last statement, do you think Jesus could have been referring to the saying, "be sure your sin will find you out?" Can you find the origin of that saying in the Bible?

## Parables of the treasure in the field and the pearl of great price

[Matthew 13:44-46](#)<sup>266</sup>

[Matthew 13:44](#) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

<sup>45</sup> "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, <sup>46</sup> "who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it. [Matthew 13:44-46 NKJV](#)

<sup>266</sup> Strong. p120. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/120/mode/2up>

Strong places these two short parables at the end of the teaching time Jesus had with His disciples and not having them taught directly to the general public. The reason is because it follows the explanation of the wheat and the tares to the disciples. That is not to say that Jesus never repeated these parables to the public.

On the surface these two parables seem to be teaching the same thing, but the first parts are very different. In the first case a man is just going about his business, not looking at all, but in the second he is seeking. The response to the find is the same in both cases, which means they both recognized the value of what they had found. So, what are these parables teaching? Is the gift of salvation free or not? Do we have to buy it with everything we own?

It is my belief that salvation is a free gift, but I think that truly accepting it requires 100% commitment. I believe that if we are not willing to sell everything we have in exchange for it, then we are not recognizing its true value. If this is true, then those with great wealth and possessions, will have to be willing to give up more. So then, if salvation is the ultimate goal and outweighs everything in this life, are great wealth and possessions a blessing or a curse? Is this what Jesus is talking about in the following exchange with this rich man and His following conversation with the disciples?

[Matthew 19:21](#) Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

<sup>22</sup> But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

<sup>23</sup> Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. <sup>24</sup> "And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

<sup>25</sup> When His disciples heard [it], they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?"

<sup>26</sup> But Jesus looked at [them] and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." [Matthew 19:21-26 NKJV](#)

Looking at this on a large scale, does it seem that people in third world countries are more willing to accept the gift of salvation than those in more developed nations? If you answered yes, is this because people with more wealth are comfortable and feel need of nothing? Is it easier to feel a need for something better if all you own is a one room shack, a sleeping mat and a few dishes and pots and pans? Is this part of what's wrong with the Church of Laodicea, mentioned in the book of Revelation?

[Revelation 3:15](#) "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. <sup>16</sup> "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. <sup>17</sup> "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'--and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—<sup>18</sup> "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, [that] the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. [Revelation 3:15-18 NKJV](#)

Many questions were asked throughout this chapter, and some of them will be listed here at the end to give more time to contemplate them.

What do you believe?

- Is the gift of salvation free or not?
- Do we have to buy it with everything we own?
- When it comes to salvation, are great wealth and possessions a blessing or a curse?
- Does God bless some people with wealth, or do they earn it in spite of their best interests?
- What do you think the gold tried in the fire represents in [Revelation 3:18](#)?

## “No one, after having put his hand to the plough, and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God”

[Matthew 8:18-22](#), [Luke 9:57-62](#)<sup>267</sup>

[Matthew 8:18](#) And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side.

<sup>19</sup> Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go."

[Luke 9:57](#) As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go."

<sup>20</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air [have] nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay [His] head."

<sup>58</sup> And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

<sup>21</sup> Then another of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."

<sup>59</sup> And He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father."

<sup>22</sup> But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead." [Matthew 8:18-22 NKJV](#)

<sup>60</sup> But He said to him, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead; ...

[Luke 9:60](#) ... Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God."

<sup>61</sup> And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go [and] bid them farewell who are at my house." <sup>62</sup> But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." [Luke 9:57-62 NKJV](#)

Strong has these encounters happening just before Jesus and the disciples cross the lake, where they meet up with the demoniacs. Jesus seems kind of harsh here and even sounds like He is trying to discourage some people from following Him. What's going on here? In [verse 20](#), Jesus is clearly wanting to communicate to this scribe that life as a disciple, at least at that time was not an easy life. Jesus was essentially homeless, traveling from place to place, depending on friends and strangers for hospitality, and often sleeping out under the stars. This is a far cry from the mega church leaders today who live in multi-million-dollar mansions and fly around in private jets. Even many committed followers of Christ in developed nations today are far from living the type of life Jesus lived.

In the next two encounters Jesus sounds even more harsh. The next candidate said, let me go bury my father first, and Jesus responded, let the dead bury their own dead. Another said, let me go say goodbye to my family at home first, and Jesus said, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Did Jesus really

<sup>267</sup> Strong. p121. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n185/mode/2up>

intend this should be the response in all similar circumstances? Or were these answers by Jesus specifically tailored to these individuals because He knew exactly what they were thinking?

Matthew Henry offers some enlightening commentary on these encounters. He suggests that perhaps the man's father was not dead yet, and hence he was procrastinating. Christ wishes us to be kind and respectful to all including our parents. But this must not be used as an excuse for not doing our true duty for God.

In the next instance, one says he wants to follow Jesus but wants to go home first and say good-bye to his family. So, what do we make of Jesus' response to this man. First, consider the example of ploughing a field that Jesus gave. If a person ploughing a field is not keeping his focus straight ahead, the rows will not be straight, and will not be fit for planting. But on the other hand, Henry points out through the example of Elisha that it is acceptable to go home and kiss his father and mother before following as a disciple.

[1 Kings 19:20](#) And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and [then] I will follow you." ... [1 Kings 19:20 NKJV](#)

So why did Jesus respond this way? Henry recalls Lot's wife who showed where her heart truly was by looking back to Sodom as it was being destroyed [[Genesis 7:23-26](#)].<sup>268</sup> I think perhaps Jesus, knowing this man's heart, knew this was procrastination on his part.

White in the book *Gospel Workers* suggests that we have a responsibility to spouse and family, but our relationship and duty to God must be the first priority in our life.<sup>269</sup>

---

What do you believe?

- I don't think God calls everyone to full time ministry, but how can we make Him first priority in our life when we have a job and family?
- Do you see yourself procrastinating or putting off what you feel God is calling you to do?
- What do you think God would want you to do in your current place in life?

---

<sup>268</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Luk/Luk\\_009.cfm?a=982062](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Luk/Luk_009.cfm?a=982062)

<sup>269</sup> White, Ellen G. *Gospel Workers*. p248.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=GW92&lang=en&collection=2&section=all&pagenumber=248>

## Jesus calms the storm

[Matthew 8:23-27](#), [Mark 4:35-41](#), [Luke 8:22-25](#)<sup>270</sup>

[Mark 4:35](#) On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side."<sup>36</sup> Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him.<sup>37</sup> And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.<sup>38</sup> But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"

<sup>39</sup> Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.

<sup>40</sup> But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How [is it] that you have no faith?"

<sup>41</sup> And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!" [Mark 4:35-41 NKJV](#)

[Luke 8:22](#) it happened, on a certain day, that He got into a boat with His disciples. And He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side of the lake." And they launched out.<sup>23</sup> ... And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling [with water], and were in jeopardy.<sup>23</sup> But as they sailed He fell asleep.<sup>24</sup> And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!"

Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm.

<sup>25</sup> But He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, "Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!" [Luke 8:22-25 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 8:23](#) Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him.

<sup>24</sup> And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep.<sup>25</sup> Then His disciples came to [Him] and awoke Him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!"—

<sup>26</sup> ... Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.—

<sup>26</sup> But He said to them, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" ...<sup>27</sup> So the men marveled, saying, "Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" [Matthew 8:23-27 NKJV](#)

The disciples must have still been coming to terms with the extent of Jesus' power. They had already seen Him turn water into wine, He had demonstrated His power over sickness, demons, and even death. Now they were amazed that He could even command nature.

A few other observations from the details of this story are:

- Mark says there were other boats that launched and followed Jesus [[Mark 4:36](#)]. That means there were additional witnesses to this miracle.
- Off the top of my head, I cannot think of any other mention in the Gospels of Jesus sleeping. Can you?
- Jesus must have been exhausted to be able to sleep through a storm that the disciples thought would sink their boat. This shows His humanity.

Looking back on this from our perspective, I see some similarity between this miracle and the second and third days of creation.

[Genesis 1:6](#) Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters."<sup>7</sup> Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which [were] under the firmament from the waters which [were] above the firmament; and it was so.<sup>8</sup> And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.

<sup>270</sup> Strong. p122. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/122/mode/2up>

<sup>9</sup> Then God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry [land] appear"; and it was so. [Genesis 1:6-9 NKJV](#)

When God created the world in the beginning, He was able to move air, land and water merely by speaking. In fact, this leads me to believe that perhaps there is actual power, or energy in physics terms, in God's voice.

---

What do you believe?

- Was it necessary for the disciples to wake Jesus up in order for Him to calm the storm to save them?
- Did Jesus need them to ask before He exerted His power to calm the storm?
- Did Jesus ever perform a miracle without someone asking?
- Do you think the power flowed from Jesus' words or do you think He could have simply thought and performed the miracle?
- Did Jesus ever perform a miracle for His own comfort or benefit?
- Why did Jesus accuse the disciples of having little faith?

## Jesus heals the demoniacs

[Mark 5:1-22](#), [Luke 8:26-39](#), [Matthew 8:28-34](#)<sup>271</sup>

[Mark 5:1](#) Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. <sup>2</sup> And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, <sup>3</sup> who had [his] dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, <sup>4</sup> because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. <sup>5</sup> And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.

[Luke 8:26](#) Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. <sup>27</sup> And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs.—<sup>29</sup> ... For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness.—

[Matthew 8:28](#) When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed [men], coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way.

---

<sup>271</sup> Strong. p123. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/122/mode/2up>

<sup>6</sup> When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. <sup>7</sup> And he cried out with a loud voice and said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me."

<sup>8</sup> For He said to him, "Come out of the man, unclean spirit!" <sup>9</sup> Then He asked him, "What [is] your name?" And he answered, saying, "My name [is] Legion; for we are many."

<sup>10</sup> Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country.

<sup>11</sup> Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. <sup>12</sup> So all the demons begged Him, saying, "Send us to the swine, that we may enter them." <sup>13</sup> And at once Jesus gave them permission.

Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.

<sup>14</sup> So those who fed the swine fled, and they told [it] in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. <sup>15</sup> Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one [who had been] demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. <sup>16</sup> And those who saw it told them how it happened to him [who had been] demon-possessed, and about the swine. <sup>17</sup> Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region.

[Luke 8:28](#) When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!"

<sup>29</sup> For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. ...

<sup>30</sup> Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him. <sup>31</sup> And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss.

<sup>32</sup> Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them.

<sup>33</sup> Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned.

[Luke 8:34](#) When those who fed [them] saw what had happened, they fled and told [it] in the city and in the country. <sup>35</sup> Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. <sup>36</sup> They also who had seen [it] told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed. <sup>37</sup> Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. ...

[Matthew 8:29](#) And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"

<sup>30</sup> Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding.

<sup>31</sup> So the demons begged Him, saying, "If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine." <sup>32</sup> And He said to them, "Go." So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water.

<sup>33</sup> Then those who kept [them] fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what [had happened] to the demon-possessed [men].

<sup>34</sup> And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged [Him] to depart from their region. [Matthew 8:28-34 NKJV](#)

<sup>18</sup> And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. <sup>19</sup> However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you." <sup>20</sup> And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.

<sup>21</sup> Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. [Mark 5:1-21 NKJV](#)

Luke 8:37 ... And He got into the boat and returned. <sup>38</sup> Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, <sup>39</sup> "Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you." And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him. [Luke 8:26-39 NKJV](#)

I think when reading these accounts in parallel, the first question that might come to mind is: are there one or two demon possessed men? This has been a question that has been discussed as long as the gospels have been compiled in this format. Many have used this discrepancy to argue against the inspiration of the Bible. My first response would be that if you are looking for a reason not to believe in the inspiration of the Bible by God, you can find many. But if you are one who finds the Bible and the good news of salvation inspirational and life changing, there are satisfactory answers to this discrepancy.

First, I would like to point out that of the three writers, it is virtually certain that Luke and Mark were not eyewitnesses to the event. Whether Matthew was or not is debatable, depending on the timeline of his call to discipleship. Have you ever played the game "telephone," or maybe you know it by a different name? The game where a word or phrase is whispered from one person to the next, and in the end, it is usually hilariously different. Is it possible that this effect would have an impact on the accuracy of the details? The next observation I would make is this. If there were two men, saying there was a man would not be a false statement. Thirdly, digging a little into the original language from which the English was translated from gives us some additional insight. In Mark "a man"<sup>272</sup> is translated from the Greek word, [ἄνθρωπος, anthrōpos](#)<sup>273</sup>, which can have the following meanings:

1. A human being
2. Indefinitely, someone, a man, one
3. In the plural, people

Luke however is a little more definite by using the words, [τις, tis](#)<sup>274</sup> [ἄνθρω, anēr](#)<sup>275</sup>, which were translated to "by a man."<sup>276</sup> The meaning of those words would generally be "a certain male person," although [τις](#) can refer to multiple people, and [ἄνθρω](#) can refer to a group of people.

I choose to side with the possible eyewitness when I believe there were two men. I don't think the number of demoniacs was the point any of the writers was trying to convey in telling this story. I think the main points are:

- The demon possessed man or men were extremely violent and scary
- Jesus cast out enough demons to possess a whole herd of pigs to run off a cliff into the sea and drown themselves
- The people saw the loss of property, and begged Jesus to leave

<sup>272</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb/mar/5/2/p0/t\\_conc\\_962002](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb/mar/5/2/p0/t_conc_962002)

<sup>273</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G444&t=NKJV>

<sup>274</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G5100&t=NKJV>

<sup>275</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G435&t=NKJV>

<sup>276</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb/luk/8/41/p0/ss1/t\\_conc\\_981027](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb/luk/8/41/p0/ss1/t_conc_981027)



- The now sane man or men wanted to stay with Jesus, but He instead asked them to go home and share what God had done for them
- After having spent only that brief time with Jesus, the man or men became possibly the most successful missionaries during Jesus' ministry
- They did this by simply telling the entire city the great things Jesus had done for them

Luke couldn't wait to tell us how successful they were, because in the very next verse he says:

[Luke 8:40](#) So it was, when Jesus returned, that the multitude welcomed Him, for they were all waiting for Him. [Luke 8:40 NKJV](#)

The next question that comes to mind for me is where did this occur? Mark and Luke say the country of the Gadarenes, and Matthew's translation says the country of the Gergesenes. Is this a contradiction or do both names refer to the same place? Gordon Franz, on the website, Associates for Biblical Research, in summary said that the words could be two names for the same region depending on the target audience.<sup>277</sup> Strong says they landed near the site of the ancient city of the Gergashites, which was now within the bounds of the town of Gadara.<sup>278</sup> I think most all would agree that the incident occurred on the eastern shore of the sea of Galilee, which would most likely make it Gentile territory. Franz, quoted above, believes it happened near the newly discovered harbor of Gadara, now located near Tel Samra, or the campground for Kibbutz Ha'on. Since he didn't give GPS coordinates, I assume this is somewhere near the community of Ha'on that I found on google maps.<sup>279</sup>

---

What do you believe?

- Do you think there were one or two men?
- What can you share with people if you feel you don't have an amazing conversion or salvation story?
- With only a brief encounter with Jesus and no prior training on witnessing, how were the men so successful in preparing the city to welcome Jesus the next time He came?

---

<sup>277</sup> <http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2011/03/07/The-Demoniacs-of-Gadara.aspx>

<sup>278</sup> Strong. p123. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/122/mode/2up>

<sup>279</sup> <https://www.google.com/maps/place/HaOn/@32.7264594,35.6185702,16z>

## Matthew invites his friends to meet Jesus

[Luke 5:29-39](#), [Matthew 9:10-13](#), [Mark 2:15-22](#)<sup>280</sup>

[Luke 5:29](#) Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them.

<sup>30</sup> And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, "Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

<sup>31</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

<sup>32</sup> "I have not come to call [the] righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

[Matthew 9:10](#) Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, [that] behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. <sup>11</sup> And when the Pharisees saw [it], they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

<sup>12</sup> When Jesus heard [that], He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. <sup>13</sup> ... For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."<sup>13</sup> "But go and learn what [this] means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.'<sup>14</sup> [Matthew 9:10-13 NKJV](#)

[Mark 2:15](#) And it happened that He was reclining [at the table] in his house, and many tax collectors and sinners were dining with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many [of them,] and they were following Him. <sup>16</sup> When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that He was eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they said to His disciples, "Why is He eating with tax collectors and sinners?"

<sup>17</sup> And hearing [this,] Jesus said to them, "[It is] not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

[Hosea 6:6](#) For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, ... [Hosea 6:6 NKJV](#)

<sup>33</sup> Then they said to Him, "Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?" <sup>34</sup> And He said to them, "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? <sup>35</sup> "But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days."

<sup>36</sup> Then He spoke a parable to them:

No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was [taken] out of the new does not match the old. <sup>37</sup> "And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. <sup>38</sup> "But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved. <sup>39</sup> "And no one, having drunk old [wine], immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.' " [Luke](#)

[5:29-39 NKJV](#)

[Mark 2:18](#) John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and they came and said to Him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?" <sup>19</sup> And Jesus said to them, "While the groom is with them, the attendants of the groom cannot fast, can they? As long as they have the groom with them, they cannot fast. <sup>20</sup> "But the days will come when the groom is taken away from them, and then they will fast, on that day.

[Mark 2:21](#) "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear results. <sup>22</sup> "And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost and the skins [as well,] but [one puts] new wine into fresh wineskins." [Mark 2:15-22 NKJV](#)

I found it very interesting that in all three accounts, the call of Matthew to full time discipleship immediately preceded the feast. If this were the case, Matthew would probably not have been an eyewitness to the healing of the demoniacs in Gadara or the Gerasenes. However, Strong has the call of Matthew taking place seven months earlier in April,<sup>281</sup> and this feast in November, a little over two years into the public ministry of Jesus. Whenever it occurred, it would seem

<sup>280</sup> Strong. p127. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/126/mode/2up>

<sup>281</sup> Strong. p65. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n125/mode/2up>

logical that Matthew would have wanted to give his former colleagues an opportunity to meet Jesus up close and personal. It almost sounds like the Pharisees and their scribes were present at the party, and confronted the disciples with their questions, but it might make more sense for this questioning to have taken after the party. The Jewish leaders probably had spies following Jesus around all the time, and if they weren't invited to the feast, they undoubtedly knew who was in attendance. What is interesting this time is that they approached the disciples, rather than Jesus with their question. They were probably tired of getting shut down with Jesus' undebatable and intuitive answers, so they thought they might do better questioning His disciples. However, Jesus overheard and as usual, had another good answer. While it is clear that you cannot reach sinners with the good news of salvation if you never associated with them, is there a right way and a wrong way to hang out with sinners? Is it a good idea to hang out at a bar every night, looking for people to witness to? It may be for the right person but would definitely not be for recovering alcoholics.

The next question was about fasting, which I think for the Pharisees, had lost its true meaning and purpose and had become about putting on a show of religiousness. With the true purpose and benefit for fasting in mind, Jesus answered that there would come a time when the disciples fasted, but this was not it. On a different occasion, this is how Jesus described proper fasting.

[Matthew 6:16](#) "Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. <sup>17</sup> "But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> "so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who [is] in the secret [place]; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

[Matthew 6:16-18 NKJV](#)

Last was the analogy about not mixing old and new. I don't think this is a teaching by Jesus that old and new should not be mixed. I think it is a statement that as human beings, we resist change, at least big change. White comments that the religion of the Pharisees had become like a rut of ceremonies and traditions. Their hearts could be compared to dried up wine skins. They thought their own righteousness was sufficient, and as such were not willing to accept the teachings of Jesus. He found other vessels in which to pour His new teachings, in uneducated fishermen, despised tax collectors, the Samaritan woman at the well, and the common people who heard Him gladly.<sup>282</sup> Finally, I am not willing to turn Jesus' last statement, that old (fermented) wine is better than new (fresh) grape juice, into a position that drinking alcoholic beverages is good. I think this was probably a thought that was common among the people and would be something they could relate to. This is how the parables of Jesus worked, giving new understanding about God and heaven in terms of everyday things they could relate to.

---

What do you believe?

- Do you think Matthew threw this party immediately after he was called to follow Jesus, or do you think maybe he did it sometime later?
- What do you think Jesus meant by His teaching about old and new?
- What do you think Jesus meant by His statement, "no one, after drinking old wine wishes for new?"

---

<sup>282</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p279.  
<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=279>

## Jesus heals a woman and brings a little girl back to life

[Mark 5:22-43](#), [Matthew 9:18-26](#), [Luke 8:41-56](#)<sup>283</sup>

[Mark 5:22](#) And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet <sup>23</sup> and begged Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live."  
<sup>24</sup> So [Jesus] went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.

<sup>25</sup> Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, <sup>26</sup> and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. <sup>27</sup> When she heard about Jesus, she came behind [Him] in the crowd and touched His garment. <sup>28</sup> For she said, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well."

<sup>29</sup> Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in [her] body that she was healed of the affliction. <sup>30</sup> And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?" <sup>31</sup> But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?' " <sup>32</sup> And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. <sup>33</sup> But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth.

<sup>34</sup> And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

<sup>35</sup> While He was still speaking, [some] came from the ruler of the synagogue's [house] who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?"

[Matthew 9:18](#) While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live." <sup>19</sup> So Jesus arose and followed him, and so [did] His disciples.

<sup>20</sup> And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment.

<sup>21</sup> For she said to herself, "If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well."

[Luke 8:45](#) And Jesus said, "Who touched Me?" When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, "Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?' " <sup>46</sup> But Jesus said, "Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me." <sup>47</sup> Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately.

[Matthew 9:22](#) But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that hour.

[Luke 8:41](#) And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And he fell down at Jesus' feet and begged Him to come to his house, <sup>42</sup> for he had an only daughter about twelve years of age, and she was dying. But as He went, the multitudes thronged Him.

<sup>43</sup> Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any,

<sup>44</sup> came from behind and touched the border of His garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped.

[Luke 8:48](#) And He said to her, "Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace."

[Luke 8:49](#) While He was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue's [house], saying to him, "Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher."

<p><sup>36</sup> As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe." <sup>37</sup> And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James.</p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 8:50</a> But when Jesus heard [it], He answered him, saying, "Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well." <sup>51</sup> When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in except Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the girl.</p>
<p><sup>38</sup> Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. <sup>39</sup> When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping."</p>	<p><a href="#">Matthew 9:23</a> When Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd wailing, <sup>24</sup> He said to them, "Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping."</p>
<p><sup>40</sup> And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those [who were] with Him, and entered where the child was lying. <sup>41</sup> Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise."  <sup>42</sup> Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years [of age]. And they were overcome with great amazement. <sup>43</sup> But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that [something] should be given her to eat. <a href="#">Mark 5:22-43 NKJV</a></p>	<p>And they ridiculed Him. <sup>25</sup> But when the crowd was put outside, and took her by the hand, and the girl arose.</p> <p><sup>54</sup> But He put them all outside, took her by the hand and called, saying, "Little girl, arise."  <sup>55</sup> Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately. ... <sup>56</sup> And her parents were astonished, but He charged them to tell no one what had happened. <sup>55</sup> ... And He commanded that she be given [something] to eat. <a href="#">Luke 8:41-56</a></p> <p><sup>26</sup> And the report of this went out into all that land. <a href="#">Matthew 9:18-26 NKJV</a></p>

These two stories have always been linked because of the way they are intertwined. If you took the time to read the parallel versions, one question might come to mind. Was the girl already dead when the official first approached Jesus as described in Matthew, or was she at the point of death as described in Mark and Luke? To me, the logical explanation is that Matthew only briefly covered this story and combined the initial meeting and request with the second event, when news came from the house that she had died. In both cases, Jesus proceeded toward the house. I also wondered why the Synagogue official allowed his daughter's sickness to progress to the point of near death, before seeking Jesus for healing. I suspect, he may not have been a true believer until it was his last hope. After all it was not customary for Jewish religious rulers to embrace Jesus. But if this ruler was hesitating or on the fence about his belief, Jesus did not confronted him with it as He did with the [royal official from Capernaum](#), which was only recorded in [John 4:46-50](#). He came to Jesus to request healing for his son who was at the point of death, but it seems his belief was conditional upon Jesus performing this miracle for him, and he was called out for his doubt. After the interruption and delay caused by the woman's healing, some people from the house who had apparently not heard of Jesus' ability to raise the dead, came and reported that the girl had died and added, why bother the Teacher anymore. After the miracle, Jesus gave strict orders to not tell anyone what had happened? It would have been impossible to contain the news because of how many people had been there for the funeral. Whether the parents obeyed or not, according to Matthew, the news spread throughout the whole land.

The second miracle that occurred in this story is the healing of the hemorrhaging woman. Even though the Bible doesn't explicitly say so, I believe along with probably most others that this bleeding, if not menstrual, at least appeared to be so. I cannot speak from personal experience, but excessive loss of blood can have some unpleasant side effects. Aside from the physical issues, and perhaps worse for the woman, may have been the attitude toward her of being perpetually unclean according to the Law of Moses.

[Leviticus 15:19](#) 'If a woman has a discharge, [and] the discharge from her body is blood, she shall be set apart seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening. <sup>20</sup> 'Everything that she lies on during her impurity shall be unclean; also everything that she sits on shall be unclean. <sup>21</sup> 'Whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. <sup>22</sup> 'And whoever touches anything that she sat on shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. <sup>23</sup> 'If [anything] is on [her] bed or on anything on which she sits, when he touches it, he shall be unclean until evening. <sup>24</sup> 'And if any man lies with her at all, so that her impurity is on him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean.

<sup>25</sup> 'If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, other than at the time of her [customary] impurity, or if it runs beyond her [usual time of] impurity, all the days of her unclean discharge shall be as the days of her [customary] impurity. She [shall be] unclean. <sup>26</sup> 'Every bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her as the bed of her impurity; and whatever she sits on shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her impurity. <sup>27</sup> 'Whoever touches those things shall be unclean; he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. [Leviticus 15:19-27 NKJV](#)

Verses 25-27 make it abundantly clear that even if it is not menstruation, but looks like it, the woman is still considered unclean. In addition to the burden of uncleanness, the woman had dealt with many dishonest so-called doctors who were happy to take her money, but Mark says, she even got worse. With no money left, and her sickness continuing to get worse, Jesus was her only hope. White suggests that the woman had heard of the miracles of Jesus and felt sure that He could heal her if she could only get to Him. Now that Jesus was near, her opportunity had arrived, but as usual He was surrounded by huge crowds of people. Personally, I think Jesus knew of the woman's need and purposely walked near her. She saw that they were in a hurry to get to the home of Jairus and didn't feel that she could stop the whole crowd, so in a last-ditch effort, she believed that if she could just touch Jesus as He passed by she would be made well. The woman succeeded in touching the fringe of Jesus' cloak and instantly she knew she had been healed. Immediately Jesus stopped, which must have caused a lot of additional pushing and shoving in the crowd, and asked "who touched Me?" Peter, always ready with something to say, may have said something to this effect. "Master, the crowd is pressing in on You on all sides, how in the world can you ask, 'who touched Me?'" Jesus wanted to give the woman an opportunity to acknowledge her faith, and He probably also wanted to make sure that people would not superstitiously preserve His clothes thinking they had healing power.<sup>284</sup>

---

What do you believe?

- Why did Jesus tell the parents not to tell anyone what had happened?
- Why did the translators of Mark use the phrase "Talitha, cumi" and follow it with the English translation?

---

<sup>284</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p343-347.  
<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=343>

- Why do you think Jewish ceremonial law considered a woman unclean during her period?

## Jesus heals two blind men and a man who can't speak

[Matthew 9:27-34](#)<sup>285</sup>

[Matthew 9:27](#) When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!"

<sup>28</sup> And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."

<sup>29</sup> Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you." <sup>30</sup> And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "See [that] no one knows [it]." <sup>31</sup> But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country.

<sup>32</sup> As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. <sup>33</sup> And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!"

<sup>34</sup> But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons." [Matthew 9:27-34 NKJV](#)

Strong places these healings in November, three months into the third year of the public ministry of Jesus. While it doesn't feel unusual for Jesus to be called the Son of David, this title carried a meaning that that many people were not willing to attribute to Jesus, especially the Jewish leaders. I did a word search for "son of david" in the NKJV, and found that in the Gospels, it occurred 17 times. In Matthew, the phrase occurred ten times, but one was in the genealogy and one was the angel addressing Joseph as the son of David. Another was given in answer to a theoretical question by Jesus to the Pharisees about who "The Christ" is the son of. And a fourth was written as the crowds wondering out loud, whether Jesus could be the Son of David. Two more were by the crowds at the triumphal entry, leaving only four verses where an individual directly addressed Jesus as "Son of David." One by a Canaanite woman in [Matthew 15:22](#) asking for healing for her daughter, and two verses from a different story, of two blind men on the side of the road asking for healing [[Matthew 20:30,31](#)]. Which leaves this instance of two other blind men calling Jesus the "Son of David," as they asked for healing. In Mark and Luke combined, 4 of the 7 occurrences were also by the two blind men on the side of the road. So that means in all four of the Gospels, the only individuals who directly addressed Jesus as "Son of David," were four blind men and a Canaanite woman. That is not to say these were the only ones who addressed Jesus using Messianic titles, but what was it about blind men and "Son of David?" Could it be that the blind were more willing to address Jesus with this title because they couldn't see that He looked like a humble wandering peasant?

The second healing, was the case of a demon possession apparently manifesting itself with physical symptoms. I tried to think if there were other instances in the Gospels where this phenomenon occurred, and I found one other. My chapter titled [Jesus heals a blind and mute demon possessed man](#), covered a very similar healing. In fact, Luke's account only refers to the man as being mute, not blind and mute as the parallel account does.

[Luke 11:14](#) And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. So it was, when the demon had gone out, that the mute spoke; and the multitudes marveled. <sup>15</sup> But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons." [Luke 11:14-15 NKJV](#)

<sup>285</sup> Strong. p133. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/132/mode/2up>

If you looked back at the chapter mentioned above, you can see that the healing is followed, in Matthew, Mark and Luke, by a discussion with the Pharisees who accused Jesus of using Satan's power to cast out demons. In fact, were it not for that dialog, we would probably have put the [Luke 11:14-15](#) healing in parallel with this, the [Matthew 9:32-34](#) account. In either case, when I searched for the word "demon," this was the only other case of demon possession that I found that had physical as opposed to behavioral symptoms. (I am grouping super strength with the behavioral rather than physical in that statement.) I wonder if the physical symptom type of demon possession was much less common at that time.

What do you believe?

- Why is faith so important for healing? Do you think it's possible for someone to be healed if they don't have faith?
- Do you think these men were doing the right thing when they disobeyed Jesus and spread the news about Him?
- Do you think there are people today who have physical symptoms or handicaps as a result of demon possession?

## Jesus is not accepted in His home town of Nazareth

[Mark 6:1-6](#), [Matthew 13:54-58](#),<sup>286</sup>

[Mark 6:1](#) Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. <sup>2</sup> And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing [Him] were astonished, saying, "Where [did] this Man [get] these things? And what wisdom [is] this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! <sup>3</sup> "Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" So they were offended at Him.

<sup>4</sup> But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house."

<sup>5</sup> Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed [them]. <sup>6</sup> And He marveled because of their unbelief. ... [Mark 6:1-6 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 13:54](#) When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this [Man] get this wisdom and [these] mighty works?

<sup>55</sup> "Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? <sup>56</sup> "And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this [Man] get all these things?" <sup>57</sup> So they were offended at Him.

But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house."

<sup>58</sup> Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief. [Matthew 13:54-58 NKJV](#)

Is it a timeless principle, that a prophet is not accepted in his hometown? I don't think all public figures are rejected in their hometowns. Athletes for one are loved and adored by their hometowns, unless they leave to another team. Maybe leaving is the key, because prophets would expectedly have a larger ministry than to just their hometowns. Most of the time they are serving elsewhere and when they do return home, maybe there are greeted like the hometown athlete coming back on the opposing team. If a prophet just stayed home performing miracles and making their hometown great and prosperous, they would probably be adored. So, to me it seems that the nature of the work of a prophet, teaching, reproofing, bringing change is not conducive to home town adoration. I think it's not hard to see how a town

<sup>286</sup> Strong. p134. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/134/mode/2up>



who knew you as a helpless child, and as a trouble making teen (though not in the case of Jesus, but maybe His siblings), would embrace you telling them they had to change.

In a prior chapter I had asked the question, whether someone could be healed if they didn't have faith. I think this question is answered in this story by the statement, "And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief." [Matthew 13:58]. Mark is even stronger by saying, "He could do no mighty work there ..." [Mark 6:5]. I guess this still doesn't tell us why or how the lack of faith makes the physical healing impossible.

What do you believe?

- Can you think of any other examples of a person being rejected by their own hometown?
- Are these brothers of Jesus mentioned elsewhere in the bible?
- Do you think the prophet's family would have more or less reason to reject him than the hometown?

## Jesus sends His disciples out in pairs to teach and preach

[Matthew 9:35-10:15](#), [10:40-11:1](#), [Mark 6:6-13](#), [Luke 9:1-6](#)<sup>287</sup>

[Matthew 9:35](#) Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. <sup>36</sup> But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. <sup>37</sup> Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly [is] plentiful, but the laborers [are] few. <sup>38</sup> "Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

[Matthew 10:1](#) And when He had called His twelve disciples to [Him], He gave them power [over] unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. <sup>2</sup> Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the [son] of Zebedee, and John his brother; <sup>3</sup> Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the [son] of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; <sup>4</sup> Simon the Cananite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

<sup>5</sup> These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. <sup>6</sup> "But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>7</sup> "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' <sup>8</sup> "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons.

[Mark 6:7](#) And He called the twelve to [Himself], and began to send them out two [by] two, and gave them power over unclean spirits.

[Mark 6:6](#) ... Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

[Luke 9:1](#) Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases.

[Luke 9:2](#) He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

<sup>287</sup> Strong. p135. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/134/mode/2up>

Freely you have received, freely give. <sup>9</sup> "Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, <sup>10</sup> "nor bag for [your] journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food.

[Mark 6:8](#) He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff--no bag, no bread, no copper in [their] money belts—<sup>9</sup> but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics.

[Luke 9:3](#) And He said to them, "Take nothing for the journey, neither staffs nor bag nor bread nor money; and do not have two tunics apiece.

<sup>11</sup> "Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out. <sup>12</sup> "And when you go into a household, greet it. <sup>13</sup> "If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.

<sup>10</sup> Also He said to them, "In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place.

<sup>4</sup> "Whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart.

<sup>14</sup> "And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. <sup>15</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city! [Matthew 9:35-10:15 NKJV](#)

<sup>11</sup> "And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!" [Mark 6:6-11 NKJV](#)

<sup>5</sup> "And whoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them." [Luke 9:1-5 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 10:40](#) "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. <sup>41</sup> "He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

<sup>42</sup> "And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold [water] in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."

[Mark 9:41](#) "For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward. [Mark 9:41 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 11:1](#) Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities. [Matthew 10:40-11:1 NKJV](#)

[Mark 6:12](#) So they went out and preached that [people] should repent. <sup>13</sup> And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed [them]. [Mark 6:12-13 NKJV](#)

[Luke 9:6](#) So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere. [Luke 9:6 NKJV](#)

I deviated from Strong in a couple ways. He left out the names of the twelve apostles from [Matthew 10:2-4](#). He also included Jesus' instructions before sending out seventy from [Luke 10](#). I will include those very similar instructions when I cover that story. Jesus is beginning to prepare the disciples for ministry when He will no longer be with them. They would no doubt make mistakes, and wonder what they should do in certain circumstances. On returning to Jesus from this experience, they would be able to go over each troubling incident with Him and discuss the best ways to handle those situations. Mark, in [verse 7](#), is the only one that tells us Jesus sent them out in pairs. There are many reasons why it is good to go out in pairs. A person alone could be in considerably more danger and could get easily discouraged and quit. With more than two, it is too easy for one person to be overshadowed and not participate.

Let's look at some of Jesus instructions. It seems that Jesus sent them out to do exactly the same thing that He did which was to heal and teach. In Jesus' case, healing was expanded to include raising the dead, and casting out demons. I

believe that some have the gift of miraculous healing today, but I think they are few. For those that do seem to possess this gift of the Spirit, they may encounter the same difficulty that Jesus did in His day, which was questions about whether the healing is done with God's power or the Devil's. What is much more common today is the gift of healing through medical science. Though this type of healing is not perceived the same way, it can still be rendered with similar effect when it is provided free of charge or brought to those in less developed countries who would not have access to it otherwise. Receiving sight through a cataract surgery for someone in a third world country may be no less a miracle even though it is medical science. This also applies to other medical practices including the use of medications and vaccinations. It is this application of Jesus' instructions that has driven Churches, namely the Catholics and Seventh Day Adventists to open hospitals all over the world. I think the underlying premise is that by providing health and healing services, Christians can show they care, which opens the door to preaching the Gospel.

The other half of Jesus' command was to teach, preach and proclaim the good news of the kingdom of heaven. Expanding on this command of Jesus, there is an opportunity to show care through teaching. Many parts of the world lack knowledge on how to reduce the risk of disease through basic sanitation or protection practices. Many of these places also lack the ability or the resources to implement these practices. Many people also live in poverty because they lack education. So, by educating and providing assistance, Christians show care, which opens the door to preaching the Gospel.

Ellen White wrote:

Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me." [Ministry of Healing, p143](#)<sup>288</sup>

There are some other elements of Christ's instructions that should be noted as well. He said, "the worker is worthy of his support" [[Matthew 10:10](#)]. Pastors or priests are paid through contributions of those they minister to, but is this what Jesus was teaching? What Jesus is advancing here seems more like a medical or humanitarian missionary. In His own example, the healing probably almost always accompanied the preaching. When we go to third world countries on medical mission trips today, we don't generally expect the host country to support us financially.

Two more elements of Christ's instructions left to discuss are blessing a worthy home or taking back your blessing from an unworthy. In these specific instructions from Jesus, it was a blessing of peace that was to be pronounced on the home. What specifically is a blessing of peace as opposed to one of prosperity or fruitfulness for example? One would think it might mean peace among family members living under that roof, or peace between that home and their neighbors. But is that kind of peace not dependent on choices made by the free will of the people involved? I think that blessings of peace have often been pronounced by secular people without any intent for God to be the giver. This can sometimes have an effect if spoken enough, even as our words can program our actions. But I think in this case Jesus meant for it to be much more than mind training. When I think of a prayer of blessing and peace, the following often quoted prayer from the book of Numbers comes to mind.

[Numbers 6:22](#) And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: <sup>23</sup> "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them:

---

<sup>288</sup> White, E. G.. *The Ministry of Healing*, Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1942, p143.  
<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=MH&lang=en&pagenumber=143>

<sup>24</sup> "The LORD bless you and keep you;  
<sup>25</sup> The LORD make His face shine upon you,  
And be gracious to you;  
<sup>26</sup> The LORD lift up His countenance upon you,  
And give you peace." ' "

<sup>27</sup> "So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them." [Numbers 6:22-27 NKJV](#)

If you attend church, chances are that you have probably heard these words prayed at one time or another and most likely more than once. This was a blessing given word for word, from God to Moses, for the High Priest to recite to the Israelites. In this case, God specifically says He will bless them when High Priest pronounces this blessing over them. I think this is the type of blessing Jesus intended for his disciples to pronounce on the homes of worthy hosts, and God would in turn bless them. Peace is a precious commodity in many places in the world and I suspect that many people would take peace over physical healing if they had to choose.

Finally, what about wiping the dust of their feet, and it being more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for those cities that reject them? Obviously wiping the dust off their feet was a symbolic gesture, however I do not believe that means that humans can render judgment against a city leading to their destruction. I guess I believe it was more of a gesture that they had done their part and that town was left to God's judgment without the excuse of ignorance. Now about Sodom and Gomorrah, they were destroyed ahead of the judgment with fire and brimstone because of their wickedness. You can read all about it in [Genesis 18-19](#). I can deduce from the conversation between Abram and God [[18:23-32](#)], that there were less than ten righteous people in the city and possibly they were all removed along with Lot by the angels [[19:15-16](#)]. When someone passes away, we should always understand that God is their judge and we do not know how they will be judged regardless of what we think we know. In the case of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah at that time, we know how they will be judged, because they were destroyed because of their wickedness. So, not that there are degrees of judgment, but if missionaries in Jesus' name are rejected, unless those people repent later, we know how they will be judged. Of course, I believe that every person is judged individually and that God will be fair and just. For example, if the missionary was a terrible person and not representative of Him, or if there were righteous people that had nothing to do with rejecting His representatives.

---

What do you believe?

- Do you believe a person can be lost because a human being did not share the Gospel with them?
- Do you think a person can be lost because they disobeyed God's command to share the good news of salvation with others?
- Can you think of a way that you can use Christ's method of witnessing to people?

## Death of John the Baptist

[Mark 6:14-29](#), [Matthew 14:1-12](#), [Luke 9:7-9](#)<sup>289</sup>

[Mark 6:14](#) Now King Herod heard [of Him], for His name had become well known. And he said, "John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him."

[Matthew 14:1](#) At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus <sup>2</sup> and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him."

[Luke 9:7](#) Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by Him; and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead,

<sup>15</sup> Others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets."

[Luke 9:8](#) and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the old prophets had risen again.

<sup>16</sup> But when Herod heard, he said, "This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!"

<sup>9</sup> Herod said, "John I have beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear such things?" So he sought to see Him. [Luke 9:7-9 NKJV](#)

<sup>17</sup> For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. <sup>18</sup> Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

[Matthew 14:3](#) For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put [him] in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. <sup>4</sup> Because John had said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."

<sup>19</sup> Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; <sup>20</sup> for Herod feared John, knowing that he [was] a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

<sup>5</sup> And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

<sup>21</sup> Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief [men] of Galilee.

<sup>6</sup> But when Herod's birthday was celebrated,

<sup>22</sup> And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give [it] to you." <sup>23</sup> He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod. <sup>7</sup> Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask.

<sup>24</sup> So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!"

<sup>8</sup> So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, "Give me John the Baptist's head here on a platter." <sup>9</sup> And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who

<sup>25</sup> Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter."

<sup>26</sup> And the king was exceedingly sorry; [yet], because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her.

<sup>9</sup> And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded [it] to be given to [her].

<sup>289</sup> Strong. p139. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/138/mode/2up>

<sup>27</sup> Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, <sup>28</sup> brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. <sup>29</sup> When his disciples heard [of it], they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb. [Mark 6:14-29 NKJV](#)

<sup>10</sup> So he sent and had John beheaded in prison. <sup>11</sup> And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought [it] to her mother. <sup>12</sup> Then his disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus. [Matthew 14:1-12 NKJV](#)

I deviated from Strong's chronology which had Herod's birthday party and John's beheading happening at this time. I chose to go with both Matthew and Mark which had Herod recalling his party and the beheading of John because of the miracles he heard Jesus was performing. I also included the section of the arrest even though it was covered in the earlier chapter, [He must increase, I must decrease - John's imprisonment](#), so as to not break the flow of the story.

A couple things are clear from the start. Herod must not have heard of Jesus before he killed John, and he also appeared to believe in some form of reincarnation. If Herod did not know of Jesus and John as two distinct people, especially since Jesus spent most of his time in Galilee, then I believe John must have been killed pretty early on in the public ministry of Jesus. Strong has Herod putting John in prison sometime in the first summer after Jesus began His public ministry,<sup>290</sup> but he still has John alive a year later.<sup>291</sup> I wonder how Herod could not have heard of Jesus for two years while John was still alive in prison? Maybe John's death occurred much earlier in the ministry of Jesus. This is another good reason to make this a recollection and not the actual time when John was beheaded. The Bible also mentions that others said maybe Jesus was Elijah or another one of the prophets of old. These thoughts were most likely motivated by the following prophecies from the Jewish scriptures.

[Deuteronomy 18:15](#) "The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, [Deuteronomy 18:15 NKJV](#)

[Malachi 4:5](#) Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. [Malachi 4:5 NKJV](#)

Moving on to what actually led to John's death, the promise to give anything, even up to half the kingdom. There is one other king in the Bible who made this same promise. It was the Persian king Ahasuerus, to his Jewish queen Esther. He actually made this offer three times, once when she risked her life to appear before him in court without his summons [[Esther 5:3](#)]. And interestingly enough, the other two times, were at a feast, possibly under the influence of alcohol [[Esther 5:6](#), [7:2](#)]. When a king made a promise like this, several factors came into play. He was obviously pleased with the person the promise was being made to. But probably, he was mostly making a show of his power to grant an extravagant wish. I'm sure the king never intended for the person to ask for half the kingdom, but what would have happened if they did? Maybe these offers were only made to women who were not considered to have the type of

<sup>290</sup> Strong. p46. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n105/mode/2up>

<sup>291</sup> Strong. p91. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n153/mode/2up>

ambition to ask for half the kingdom. It is interesting to me that three of the four times this offer is made, alcohol was involved. Ellen White wrote the following commentary about Herod and the leading men who attended his feast.

Herod was astonished and confounded. The riotous mirth ceased, and an ominous silence settled down upon the scene of revelry. The king was horror-stricken at the thought of taking the life of John. Yet his word was pledged, and he was unwilling to appear fickle or rash. The oath had been made in honor of his guests, and if one of them had offered a word against the fulfillment of his promise, he would gladly have spared the prophet. He gave them opportunity to speak in the prisoner's behalf. They had traveled long distances in order to hear the preaching of John, and they knew him to be a man without crime, and a servant of God. But though shocked at the girl's demand, they were too besotted to interpose a remonstrance. No voice was raised to save the life of Heaven's messenger. These men occupied high positions of trust in the nation, and upon them rested grave responsibilities; yet they had given themselves up to feasting and drunkenness until the senses were benumbed. Their heads were turned with the giddy scene of music and dancing, and conscience lay dormant. By their silence they pronounced the sentence of death upon the prophet of God to satisfy the revenge of an abandoned woman.

Herod waited in vain to be released from his oath; then he reluctantly commanded the execution of the prophet. Soon the head of John was brought in before the king and his guests. Forever sealed were those lips that had faithfully warned Herod to turn from his life of sin. Never more would that voice be heard calling men to repentance. The revels of one night had cost the life of one of the greatest of the prophets.

Oh, how often has the life of the innocent been sacrificed through the intemperance of those who should have been guardians of justice! He who puts the intoxicating cup to his lips makes himself responsible for all the injustice he may commit under its besotting power. By numbing his senses he makes it impossible for him to judge calmly or to have a clear perception of right and wrong. He opens the way for Satan to work through him in oppressing and destroying the innocent. [Desire of Ages, p221-222](#).<sup>292</sup>

As I said above, the oath was made to impress the guests in attendance. White made an interesting point that I had not read elsewhere. If one of those guests had expressed some reservation about going through with the deed it would have given Herod the escape he needed to save face and not fulfill his oath.

---

What do you believe?

- How do you think Herod could have thought Jesus was a reincarnation of John?
- Do you think offering to fulfill a person's wish up to giving them half your kingdom was generally a generous thing or a self-serving thing?
- Do you think the fulfilling Herod's oath was only about saving face, or do you think he was bound legally?

---

<sup>292</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p221-222. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=221>

## Jesus teaches His disciples that they needed rest

[Mark 6:30-32](#), [Luke 9:10](#), [Matthew 14:13](#), [John 6:1](#)<sup>293</sup>

<p><a href="#">Mark 6:30</a> Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. <sup>31</sup> And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.</p> <p><sup>32</sup> So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. <a href="#">Mark 6:30-32 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 9:10</a> ... Then He took them and went aside privately into a deserted place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. <a href="#">Luke 9:10 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Matthew 14:13</a> ... He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. ... <a href="#">Matthew 14:13 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 9:10</a> When the apostles returned, they gave an account to Him of all that they had done. ...</p> <p><a href="#">John 6:1</a> After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is [the Sea] of Tiberias. <a href="#">John 6:1 NKJV</a></p>
--	--	--	--

Three Gospels have the feeding of the five thousand, which will be covered in the next chapter, preceded by a brief period of seclusion and rest from the crowds. Two of them say that Jesus withdrew by Himself, Mark says they went "to a secluded place by themselves." Mark and Luke have this seclusion following the disciples being sent out in pairs, Matthew has it following the recollection of the beheading of John the Baptist.

Recall that Jesus had already been rebuked by His family for being so moved with compassion for the people, that He appeared to them, to not be taking care of His basic needs.

[Mark 3:20](#) Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. <sup>21</sup> But when His own people heard [about this], they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind." [Mark 3:20-21 NKJV](#)

I think it is possible that Jesus kept a busier pace in His public ministry than might be sustainable for an entire lifetime. But I think He knew He had a relatively short time to accomplish so much. Jesus also realized where His strength came from and I believe spent time at the start of each day with God.

[Mark 1:35](#) Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. [Mark 1:35 NKJV](#)

I believe that Jesus wanted to teach the disciples that they needed time away from the crowds and their work, to rest and rejuvenate their mind and body. I believe He also used this time of seclusion, to council and teach them after their ministry experience. I think this re-enforces what we should already know, that a human being cannot be giving all the time and, must be on the receiving end as well in order to function. But I think that Jesus' example also shows us that His time alone in prayer was a large part of His rejuvenation.

<sup>293</sup> Strong. p141. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/140/mode/2up>



Ellen White dedicated an entire chapter to this topic in the *Desire of Ages*, titled Come Rest Awhile.<sup>294</sup> Some excerpts:

Christ's words of compassion are spoken to His workers today just as surely as they were spoken to His disciples. "Come ye yourselves apart, ... and rest awhile," He says to those who are worn and weary. It is not wise to be always under the strain of work and excitement, even in ministering to men's spiritual needs; for in this way personal piety is neglected, and the powers of mind and soul and body are overtaxed. Self-denial is required of the disciples of Christ, and sacrifices must be made; but care must also be exercised lest through their overzeal Satan take advantage of the weakness of humanity, and the work of God be marred. [Desire of Ages, p362](#)<sup>295</sup>

No other life was ever so crowded with labor and responsibility as was that of Jesus; yet how often He was found in prayer! How constant was His communion with God! Again and again in the history of His earthly life are found records such as these: "Rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." "Great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. And He withdrew Himself into the wilderness, and prayed." "And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." [Mark 1:35](#); [Luke 5:15-16](#); [6:12](#). [p362](#)<sup>296</sup>

What do you believe?

- Considering that at times, Jesus spent entire nights in prayer, do you believe that if necessary, time spent with God can replace sleep?
- Considering the following texts [[Matthew 4:4](#); [Luke 4:4](#); [John 4:34](#)], do you believe that if necessary, time spent with God can replace food?
- If your answer is yes to the prior questions, what does "if necessary" mean to you?

## Jesus feeds five thousand

[Mark 6:33-46](#), [Matthew 14:13-23](#), [Luke 9:11-17](#), [John 6:2-15](#)<sup>297</sup>

[John 6:4](#) Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. [John 6:4 NKJV](#)

[Mark 6:33](#) But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him.

[Matthew 14:13](#) ... But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities.

[Luke 9:11](#) But when the multitudes knew [it], they followed Him;

<sup>294</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p359. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=359>

<sup>295</sup> White. *Desire of Ages*. p362.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=362>

<sup>296</sup> White. *Desire of Ages*. p362.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=362>

<sup>297</sup> Strong. p142. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/142/mode/2up>

<sup>34</sup> And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd.

[John 6:2](#) Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased.

[Matthew 14:14](#) And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.

and He received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of healing.

So He began to teach them many things.

[John 6:3](#) And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.

[Luke 9:11](#) ... and He received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God,

<sup>35</sup> When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, "This is a deserted place, and already the hour [is] late. <sup>36</sup> "Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat." [Mark 6:33-36 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 14:15](#) When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food."

[Luke 9:12](#) When the day began to wear away, the twelve came and said to Him, "Send the multitude away, that they may go into the surrounding towns and country, and lodge and get provisions; for we are in a deserted place here."

[John 6:5](#) Then Jesus lifted up [His] eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" <sup>6</sup> But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. [John 6:5-6 NKJV](#)

[Mark 6:37](#) But He answered and said to them, "You give them something to eat."

[Matthew 14:16](#) But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

[Luke 9:13](#) But He said to them, "You give them something to eat." ...

And they said to Him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them [something] to eat?"

[John 6:7](#) Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a

<sup>38</sup> But He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." And when they found out they said,

[John 6:8](#) One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him,

[Matthew 14:17](#) And they said to Him,

[Luke 9:13](#) ... And they said,

"Five, and two fish."

<sup>9</sup> "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?"

"We have here only five loaves and two fish." <sup>18</sup> He said, "Bring them here to Me."

"We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we go and buy food for all these people." <sup>14</sup> For there were about five thousand men.

<sup>39</sup> Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. <sup>40</sup> So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties.

[John 6:10](#) Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

[Matthew 14:19](#) Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. ...

[Luke 9:14](#) ... Then He said to His disciples, "Make them sit down in groups of fifty." <sup>15</sup> And they did so, and made them all sit down.

<sup>41</sup> And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave [them] to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among [them] all.

[John 6:11](#) And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed [them] to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.

[Matthew 14:19](#) ... And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes.

[Luke 9:16](#) Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke them, and gave [them] to the disciples to set before the multitude.

<sup>42</sup> So they all ate and were filled.

[John 6:12](#) So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost." <sup>13</sup> Therefore they

[Matthew 14:20](#) So they all ate and were filled,

[Luke 9:17](#) So they all ate and were filled,

<sup>43</sup> And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish.

gathered [them] up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.

and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained.

and twelve baskets of the leftover fragments were taken up by them. [Luke 9:11-17 NKJV](#)

<sup>44</sup> Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men. [Mark 6:33-44 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 14:21](#) Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

[John 6:14](#) Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

<sup>15</sup> Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king,

[Mark 6:45](#) Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away. <sup>46</sup> And when He had sent them away,

[Matthew 14:22](#) Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. <sup>23</sup> And when He had sent the multitudes away,

He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone. [John 6:2-14-15 NKJV](#)

He departed to the mountain to pray. [Mark 6:33-46 NKJV](#)

He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. [Matthew 14:13-23 NKJV](#)

John places this event just before the Passover. Strong estimates the month of March, just prior to the third Passover in Jesus' public ministry. It is very clear from the Gospels that this large gathering and feeding interrupted the secluded retreat that we discussed in the previous chapter. We are not told much about what Jesus taught the people except for His common theme about the Kingdom of God, which He usually did through parables. On this occasion, as usual, He had compassion and healed those who had need of healing. The main point of the story as recorded though, is the miracle of multiplying a very small amount of food to feed a huge crowd of people. It seems that every time Jesus performed a new type of miracle, the people were amazed and in this case, they wanted to crown Him as king. White suggest that it wasn't hard for the people to imagine how invincible the Jews would be with a king who could heal wounds, raise the dead, provide unlimited supplies, and the list could go on. Since that was not His goal, Jesus knew how that effort would end, so he immediately put a stop to that movement. The disciples thought this was the golden opportunity they had been waiting for and had joined with the multitude in their plans. It is very difficult to sway a huge

single minded crowd, but in this case, Jesus was firm in His command to send the disciples across the lake and to disperse the crowd.<sup>298</sup> I suspect that some of the authority He used in cleansing the temple may have been at play here.

In case you were wondering, this is not the first story of food being miraculously multiplied in the Bible. Let's look at some:

[1 Kings 17:8](#) Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, <sup>9</sup> "Arise, go to Zarephath, which [belongs] to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you." <sup>10</sup> So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow [was] there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink." <sup>11</sup> And as she was going to get [it], he called to her and said, "Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand."

<sup>12</sup> So she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I [am] gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die."

<sup>13</sup> And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go [and] do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring [it] to me; and afterward make [some] for yourself and your son. <sup>14</sup> "For thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth.' "

<sup>15</sup> So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for [many] days. <sup>16</sup> The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah. [1 Kings 17:8-16 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 4:1](#) A certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, saying, "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the LORD. And the creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves."

<sup>2</sup> So Elisha said to her, "What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?" And she said, "Your maidservant has nothing in the house but a jar of oil."

<sup>3</sup> Then he said, "Go, borrow vessels from everywhere, from all your neighbors--empty vessels; do not gather just a few. <sup>4</sup> "And when you have come in, you shall shut the door behind you and your sons; then pour it into all those vessels, and set aside the full ones."

<sup>5</sup> So she went from him and shut the door behind her and her sons, who brought [the vessels] to her; and she poured [it] out. <sup>6</sup> Now it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said to her son, "Bring me another vessel." And he said to her, "[There is] not another vessel." So the oil ceased. <sup>7</sup> Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debt; and you [and] your sons live on the rest." [2 Kings 4:1-7 NKJV](#)

[2 Kings 4:42](#) Then a man came from Baal Shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley bread, and newly ripened grain in his knapsack. And he said, "Give [it] to the people, that they may eat."

---

<sup>298</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p377. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=377>

<sup>43</sup> But his servant said, "What? Shall I set this before one hundred men?" He said again, "Give it to the people, that they may eat; for thus says the LORD: 'They shall eat and have [some] left over.' " <sup>44</sup> So he set [it] before them; and they ate and had [some] left over, according to the word of the LORD. [2 Kings 4:42-44 NKJV](#)

In the first and third instances mentioned, the miracle provided food to satisfy the immediate hunger of people. The multiplication of the oil was to provide money to pay off a debt and to live on.

What do you believe?

- It wouldn't have hurt the people to miss a meal, so why do you think Jesus chose to perform this miracle?
- Is it coincidence that all the miracles, including the Old Testament, involved the multiplication of bread or its ingredients?
- Do you think there is some significance to the fact that Jesus' miracle included the multiplication of fish?

## Jesus walks on water

[Matthew 14:24-33](#), [Mark 6:47-52](#), [John 6:16-21](#)<sup>299</sup>

[John 6:16](#) Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, <sup>17</sup> got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them.

[Matthew 14:24](#) But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

[Mark 6:47](#) Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He [was] alone on the land. <sup>48</sup> Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them.

[John 6:18](#) Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing. <sup>19</sup> So when they had rowed about three or four miles,

<sup>25</sup> Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. <sup>26</sup> And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.

Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. <sup>49</sup> And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; <sup>50</sup> for they all saw Him and were troubled.

they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid.

<sup>27</sup> But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

But immediately He talked with them and said to them, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

<sup>20</sup> But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid."

<sup>28</sup> And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

<sup>29</sup> So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.

<sup>30</sup> But when he saw that the wind [was] boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

<sup>31</sup> And immediately Jesus stretched out [His] hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

<sup>299</sup> Strong. p146. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/146/mode/2up>

<sup>32</sup> And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. <sup>33</sup> Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God." [Matthew 14:24-33 NKJV](#)

[Mark 6:51](#) Then He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped; and they were utterly astonished, <sup>52</sup> for they had not gained any insight from [the incident of] the loaves, but their hearts were hardened. [Mark 6:47-52 NKJV](#)

[John 6:21](#) Then they willingly received Him into the boat, ...

[John 6:21](#) ... and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going. [John 6:16-21 NKJV](#)

The first interesting thing to note about this story is that when the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water, they thought he was a ghost. The Greek word [φάντασμα, phantasma](#)<sup>300</sup> has the meanings, appearance, apparition or specter. This generally carries the notion of a supernatural or spirit being. I recall another incident after the resurrection of Jesus, when the disciples were wondering if they were seeing a spirit.

[Luke 24:36](#) Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." <sup>37</sup> But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. [Luke 24:36-37 NKJV](#)

In this case, the Greek word is [πνεῦμα, pneuma](#)<sup>301</sup> which was most frequently translated to the word spirit, and second most Holy Spirit. The translations to the word spirit covered the widest meanings, from Spirit or God, to evil spirits, and all the human spirit applications in between. This word was also used in reference to wind, which is probably why we have the word pneumatic, which is usually used to describe a tool powered by pressurized air. I wonder if the Greek word carries this meaning because of Jesus' wind analogy for the Holy Spirit, or if that meaning existed before. In both cases, I believe the disciples thought they were seeing something that was not human flesh and blood.

There were actually four miraculous things that happened in this story. First, Jesus walked on the water. Second, Peter walked on the water. Third, the storm was calmed. Finally, the boat was immediately transported to their destination.

---

What do you believe?

- At the time, do you think the Jews believed the spirits of the deceased could appear as ghosts?
- How could the disciples be "utterly astonished" if they really believed Jesus was the Son of God?
- What do you think Mark meant when he wrote that "their hearts were hardened?"

<sup>300</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G5326&t=NKJV>

<sup>301</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G4151&t=NKJV>

## Many to desert Jesus after He says to eat His flesh and drink His blood

[Mark 6:53-56](#), [Matthew 14:34-36](#), [John 6:22-71](#)<sup>302</sup>

[Mark 6:53](#) When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and anchored there. <sup>54</sup> And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people recognized Him, <sup>55</sup> ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. <sup>56</sup> Wherever He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made well. [Mark 6:53-56 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 14:34](#) When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret. <sup>35</sup> And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick, <sup>36</sup> and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched [it] were made perfectly well. [Matthew 14:34-36 NKJV](#)

[John 6:22](#) On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except that one which His disciples had entered, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but His disciples had gone away alone—<sup>23</sup> however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks—<sup>24</sup> when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. <sup>25</sup> And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You come here?"

<sup>26</sup> Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. <sup>27</sup> "Do not [Psalm 78:24](#) Had rained down manna on them to eat, labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which [Psalm 78:24 NKJV](#) And given them of the bread of heaven. endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."

<sup>28</sup> Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"

<sup>29</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

<sup>30</sup> Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? <sup>31</sup> "Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' "

<sup>32</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. <sup>33</sup> "For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

<sup>35</sup> And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. <sup>36</sup> "But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. <sup>37</sup> "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. <sup>38</sup> "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. <sup>39</sup> "This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. <sup>40</sup> "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

<sup>302</sup> Strong. p147. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/146/mode/2up>

<sup>41</sup> The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven."

<sup>42</sup> And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

<sup>43</sup> Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. <sup>44</sup> "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>45</sup> "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.'

[Isaiah 54:13](#) All your children [shall be] taught by the LORD,

Therefore everyone who has heard and

And great [shall be] the peace of your children. [Isaiah 54:13 NKJV](#)

learned from the Father comes to Me. <sup>46</sup> "Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. <sup>47</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. <sup>48</sup> "I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup> "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. <sup>50</sup> "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup> "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."

<sup>52</sup> The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us [His] flesh to eat?"

<sup>53</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup> "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>55</sup> "For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. <sup>56</sup> "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. <sup>57</sup> "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. <sup>58</sup> "This is the bread which came down from heaven--not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever."

<sup>59</sup> These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.

<sup>60</sup> Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard [this], said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?"

<sup>61</sup> When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you? <sup>62</sup> "[What] then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? <sup>63</sup> "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and [they] are life. <sup>64</sup> "But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. <sup>65</sup> And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."

<sup>66</sup> From that [time] many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. <sup>67</sup> Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?"

<sup>68</sup> But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. <sup>69</sup> "Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

<sup>70</sup> Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" <sup>71</sup> He spoke of Judas Iscariot, [the son] of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve. [John 6:22-71 NKJV](#)

The Bible doesn't say where the feeding of the 5000 took place, but it does say the boat landed at Gennesaret. Multiple sources on the internet pointed to a location a few miles west of Capernaum on the Northwest shore of the Sea of



Galilee.<sup>303 304 305</sup> This is consistent with [John 6:59](#), which says that Jesus made these statements in the Synagogue in Capernaum.

John first leads us to the main topic by saying that the next day some people came back to the location where the feeding took place. When Jesus had made them leave the day before, they had seen the disciples leave in the only boat. They also saw Jesus head the opposite direction up, the mountain. So, they assumed He would still be there but they couldn't find Him. John doesn't tell us how they actually learned where He had gone, but he does say they went to Capernaum and when they found Him, the first question they asked was how He got there. I think they had already heard of the storm and the walking on the water and wanted to hear the story from His own mouth. I think they were not ready to give up on their plan to make Jesus king, and wanted to pick up where they left off the day before with talk of even more miracles.

Getting to the heart of the matter, what does it mean to eat the flesh of Jesus and drink His blood? And why did He choose to use such potentially repulsive language for this symbol? He even went so far as to emphasize, "For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink" in [verse 55](#). Let's start by examining the physical, the known side of the analogy. The food we eat and the things we drink become part of us through the amazing energy conversion of digestion. We need to eat and drink to live and grow, but this life is limited (our bodies deteriorate and die). Now if we follow the analogy, we need to daily take what Jesus offers, to nourish and grow our spiritual bodies for eternal life. Just as we eat and drink daily, we need to nourish out spiritual lives daily. Maybe we can interpret [verse 55](#) to mean that physical food leads to temporary life, but true food leads to eternal life. In [verse 56](#), Jesus clarifies His statement Himself by saying, "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him." Those who were arguing with Jesus brought up to topic of Mana which they knew to have been food miraculously provided to their ancestors. Jesus reminded them that everyone that ate the manna was dead, so even though it was provided miraculously, it was still no better than their temporal physical food. What He now offered, would lead to growth into eternal life.

Jesus undoubtedly knew that these statements would be a major turning point in His public ministry. Up to this time, probably most of His followers, including the twelve chosen disciples, were expecting Him to take the throne of Israel and lead the nation back to world dominance as in the days of King David. This of course included getting out from under the rule of the hated Roman Empire. After Jesus had fed the 5000, there was a growing movement among the crowd to take Jesus by force and make Him king. Now that they had seen His refusal to take the throne, and His disinterest in political issues of national interest, they realized that He was not the Messiah they were looking for. [Verse 66](#) summarized this nicely by saying, "As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore." There were people besides the twelve who followed Jesus everywhere who were also known as disciples. I believe that many, but not all of these deserted Jesus at this time.

---

What do you believe?

- Obviously, Jesus wasn't cutting off His limbs and feeding the people His actual flesh, so why do you think He said His flesh was true food and His blood was true drink?
- Do you think questions of cannibalism ever arose among outsiders, hearing the early Christians talking about eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Jesus?

---

<sup>303</sup> <http://www.bible-history.com/geography/ancient-israel/gennesaret.html>

<sup>304</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kinneret\\_\(archaeological\\_site\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kinneret_(archaeological_site))

<sup>305</sup> <http://biblehub.com/topical/g/gennesaret.htm>

- Why do you think so many Jews struggled to accept what Jesus was offering? Do you think it was really any harder for them than it is for anyone to accept Jesus as their Savior?

## Jesus accuses the Jews of prioritizing their law above God's

[John 7:1](#), [Mark 7:1-23](#), [Matthew 15:1-20](#)<sup>306</sup>

[John 7:1](#) After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him. [John 7:1 NKJV](#)

[Mark 7:1](#) Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. <sup>3</sup> For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash [their] hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. <sup>4</sup> [When they come] from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, [like] the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

<sup>5</sup> Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him,

"Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"

[Matthew 15:2](#) "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."

<sup>6</sup> He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

<sup>3</sup> He answered and said to them, ... <sup>7</sup> "Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: -

'This people honors Me with [their] lips,  
But their heart is far from Me.

[Isaiah 29:13](#) ... "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths  
And honor Me with their lips,  
But have removed their hearts far from Me,  
And their fear toward Me

[Matthew 15:8](#) 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth,  
And honor Me with [their] lips,  
But their heart is far from Me.

<sup>7</sup> And in vain they worship Me,  
Teaching [as] doctrines the  
commandments of men.'

is taught by the  
commandment of men, [Isaiah 29:13 NKJV](#)

<sup>9</sup> And in vain they worship Me,  
Teaching [as] doctrines the  
commandments of men.' "

<sup>8</sup> "For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men--the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

<sup>9</sup> He said to them, "[All too] well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. <sup>10</sup> "For Moses said,

[Matthew 15:3](#) ... "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? <sup>4</sup> "For God commanded, saying,

'Honor your father and your mother';  
and,

[Exodus 20:12](#) "Honor your father and your mother,  
... [Exodus 20:12 NKJV](#)

'Honor your father and your mother'; and,

'He who curses father or mother,  
let him be put to death.'

[Exodus 21:17](#) "And he who curses his father or his  
mother shall surely be put to death. [Exodus 21:17](#)

'He who curses father or mother,  
let him be put to death.'

<sup>306</sup> Strong. p154. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/154/mode/2up>

<sup>11</sup> "But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me [is] Corban"--' (that is, a gift [to God]),  
<sup>12</sup> "then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, <sup>13</sup> "making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

[Matthew 15:5](#) "But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me [is] a gift [to God]"—  
<sup>6</sup> 'then he need not honor his father or mother.'  
 Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.

<sup>14</sup> When He had called all the multitude to [Himself], He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: <sup>15</sup> "There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. <sup>16</sup> "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!" [Mark 7:1-16 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 15:10](#) When He had called the multitude to [Himself], He said to them, "Hear and understand:  
<sup>11</sup> "Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man." [Matthew 15:1-11 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 15:12](#) Then His disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?"

<sup>13</sup> But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. <sup>14</sup> "Let them alone.

They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."

[Luke 6:39](#) And He spoke a parable to them: "Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch? [Luke 6:39 NKJV](#)

<sup>15</sup> Then Peter answered and said to Him, "Explain this parable to us."

[Mark 7:17](#) And when He [later] entered a house, away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him about the parable.

<sup>16</sup> So Jesus said, "Are you also still without understanding? <sup>17</sup> "Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? <sup>18</sup> "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. <sup>19</sup> "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

<sup>18</sup> And He said to them, "Are you so lacking in understanding as well? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the person from outside cannot defile him, <sup>19</sup> because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?" ([Thereby] He declared all foods clean.) <sup>20</sup> And He was saying, "That which comes out of the person, that [is what] defiles the person.

<sup>20</sup> "These are [the things] which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man."

<sup>21</sup> "For from within, out of the hearts of people, come the evil thoughts, [acts of] sexual immorality, thefts, murders, [acts of] adultery, <sup>22</sup> deeds of greed, wickedness, deceit, indecent behavior, envy, slander, pride, [and] foolishness. <sup>23</sup> "All these evil things come from within and defile the person."

[Mark 7:1-23 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 15:12-20 NKJV](#)

Strong has this encounter occurring in April just after the third Passover during the public ministry of Jesus. He suggests that because of [the wrong kind] excitement about Him, and a potential plot against Him, Jesus skipped this Passover. White, in the *Desire of Ages* also suggests that Jesus skipped this Passover and since He didn't come to

them, the scribes and Pharisees came after Him in Galilee.<sup>307</sup> When they found Him, they immediately began challenging Him about the observance of some of their laws.

After the Babylonian exile, the Jews had finally come to realize that there was a correlation between their prosperity and their observance of the Laws given to Moses. They also noticed a correlation between their disobedience of God and their subservience to foreign oppressors. They began to safeguard against breaking God's Law by establishing other laws that kept them from getting close to breaking God's Law. Over time, I think they probably even made more laws to keep them from getting close to breaking their own laws. And what we see now is that they had reached to point where they were more concerned with keeping their own law, than they were the Law of God. In other words, if there was ever a conflict between the two laws, they would probably prioritize their law above God's.

In the first case, they were accusing the disciples of eating without first ceremonially washing their hands. The way it appears to me is that God had given the Israelites the Ten Commandments, which was to be the most sacred and important laws for their nation. They were even instructed to keep the tables of stone on which God wrote His Law in the Ark of the Covenant. But there were other laws that were given to them, such as civil law that were instrumental in governing the people. There were laws governing the sanctuary and the sacrificial services. There were also numerous laws given about cleanness and uncleanness that were treated as ceremonial. I believe that many of those ceremonial laws were given to teach and enforce basic hygiene practices that many today could see would increase health and wellness and reduce the spread of disease. I believe the ceremonial washing of hands fell into this category. Rather than trying to teach the people the principle behind washing your hands before you eat, they were simply taught ceremonially that they must wash hands before eating. White states:

The rules in regard to purification were numberless. The period of a lifetime was scarcely sufficient for one to learn them all. The life of those who tried to observe the rabbinical requirements was one long struggle against ceremonial defilement, an endless round of washings and purifications. While the people were occupied with trifling distinctions, and observances which God had not required, their attention was turned away from the great principles of His law. [\*Desire of Ages\*, p396](#)<sup>308</sup>

Jesus responded to these scribes and Pharisees by telling them they had their priorities upside down. They were guilty of giving more importance to their tradition than to God's own Law, the Ten Commandments. He gave an example in the practice of Corban, which was essentially willing everything you own to the Temple upon your death. I wonder if the law of Corban actually included land in the will, because God's instruction to the Israelites was that the land should always remain in the family. It is possible that this practice became a way for the priests to gain more land? No doubt the people were taught to view such persons with great admiration and respect for being willing to giving everything to the Temple. But upon closer examination, it was really kind of a selfish thing. The person was really not giving up anything because they retained everything while they lived. It was their descendants who were losing out. But what Jesus specifically pointed out was that in the current practice of Corban, in order to maximize what the Temple would get on that person's death, they were exempt from spending their wealth to care for their parents. In this case, the practice of Corban which was not a law given by God, was held in higher esteem than the commandment to honor your father and your mother.

---

<sup>307</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p395. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=395>

<sup>308</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p396. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=396>

When Jesus was alone with this disciples, He explained to them that what really matters most when it comes to cleanliness are the thoughts in your mind. He added that the words a person speaks reflect what they are thinking. He also clarified His statements by saying that the things a person eats does not make them unclean in the true sense. Is Jesus actually doing away with the ceremonial law at this time as well as the Jewish laws of clean and unclean meats? I think what Jesus was doing was to try to separate the idea of ceremonial cleanliness, and the idea of trying to maintain that state, from that of true uncleanness as a result of breaking God's Law. The original laws given for ceremonial cleanliness were still beneficial from a health standpoint, but all the additional laws or tradition as Jesus called it were not a sin or salvation issue. I believe the same was applicable regarding the consumption of meat. The original laws given through Moses were still beneficial from a health and wellness standpoint but they are not a sin and salvation issue. Having said all of that, I guess there are some cases where knowingly ingesting something through the mouth that has a detrimental effect on the mind or body, which in turn directly effects our true state of cleanness as Jesus described, could be considered an issue of sin or salvation.

What do you believe?

- Can you think of something similar to this practice of corban that we do today?
- Do you think the ceremonial laws given through Moses were done away with by Jesus? If so, how do you explain that in the context of an unchanging God?
- If our bodies are considered a temple for God [[1 Corinthians 6:19](#)], do you think it could be considered sin to eat something that you know has a detrimental effect on your body even if it doesn't affect your mental capacity?

## Jesus heals a Canaanite woman's daughter

[Matthew 15:21-28](#), [Mark 7:24-30](#)<sup>309</sup>

[Matthew 15:21](#) Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. <sup>22</sup> And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed."

[Mark 7:24](#) From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know [it], but He could not be hidden. <sup>25</sup> For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. <sup>26</sup> The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

<sup>23</sup> But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us."

<sup>24</sup> But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

<sup>25</sup> Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"

<sup>26</sup> But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw [it] to the little dogs."

Mark 27 But Jesus said to her, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw [it] to the little

<sup>27</sup> And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

Mark 28 And she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs."

<sup>309</sup> Strong. p158. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/158/mode/2up>

<sup>28</sup> Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great [is] your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour. [Matthew 15:21-28 NKJV](#)

<sup>Mark 29</sup> Then He said to her, "For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter." <sup>30</sup> And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed. [Mark 7:24-30 NKJV](#)

Strong estimates this event to have taken place in May after the third Passover during Jesus' public ministry. This story is most notable for the way Jesus initially treated the woman, which for Him was uncharacteristic. On the other hand, it was exactly the way a Jew might be expected to treat a Canaanite. It was uncharacteristic because Jesus had shown Himself to be accepting of the most repulsive and "sinful" in Jewish society, lavishing His love and miracles on them. In this instance, I can image the disciples being a little surprised but completely happy with the way Jesus ignored the woman. White describes the scene by saying this emboldened them to ask Jesus to tell the woman to go away and stop bothering them. This no doubt saddened Jesus, but He carried on His ruse a little further. White suggests that Jesus placed Himself in the woman's path because He knew she desired to make this request of Him, but also to teach His disciples a lesson.<sup>310</sup> When He first sent them out on their training missionary trip, He told them to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel [[Matthew 10:5-6](#)]. Jesus was not being racist in His instructions. White suggests that He wished to give the Jews another chance to be His representatives on earth and He knew if the Gospel was immediately offered to Samaritans and Gentiles, they would reject it for sure.<sup>311</sup> In His great commission to them as He was leaving them, Jesus told them to go into all the world [[Matthew 28:19](#)].

Jesus was known to be very quick witted verbally and had silenced many of His opponents with His questions and responses. This is perhaps the only instance He allowed Himself to be seemingly out witted in a verbal exchange.

Through her persistence, this woman showed great faith, and like the Gentile centurion before her, believed Jesus able to heal her daughter without touching or even being present.

God does not show favoritism toward and race or gender. I believe His only purpose in choosing the Jews, was so that they could be His representatives to the rest of the world. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, David and others had shown a willingness to believe and obey Him and it was through them and their descendants that God wished to keep alive a knowledge of Him on the earth. God chooses people who are willing to believe in Him so they can be witnesses for Him. When the Jews eventually rejected His purpose for them, others were chosen in their place.

What do you believe?

- Do you believe being chosen by God is a privilege or a responsibility?
- Do you think Jesus would still have healed the woman's daughter if she had been discouraged by His initial rebuffs?

<sup>310</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p400. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=400>

<sup>311</sup> White. *Desire of Ages*. p351.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=351>

- Do you believe God wanted the ancient Jews to try to convert the Canaanites or to stay away from them so they would not be led astray by them?

## Jesus feeds four thousand

[Mark 7:31-8:9](#), [Matthew 15:29-39](#)<sup>312</sup>

[Mark 7:31](#) Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee.

[Matthew 15:29](#) Jesus departed from there, skirted the Sea of Galilee, ... [Matthew 15:29 NKJV](#)

<sup>32</sup> Then they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put His hand on him. <sup>33</sup> And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. <sup>34</sup> Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened."

<sup>35</sup> Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly.

<sup>36</sup> Then He commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed [it]. <sup>37</sup> And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak." [Mark 7:31-37 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 15:29](#) ... and went up on the mountain and sat down there. <sup>30</sup> Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them [the] lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus' feet, and He healed them. <sup>31</sup> So the multitude marveled when they saw [the] mute speaking, [the] maimed made whole, [the] lame walking, and [the] blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel. [Matthew 15:29-31 NKJV](#)

[Mark 8:1](#) In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat,

Jesus called His disciples [to Him] and said to them, <sup>2</sup> "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat.

<sup>3</sup> "And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar."

<sup>4</sup> Then His disciples answered Him, "How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?"

<sup>5</sup> He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven."

[Matthew 15:32](#) Now Jesus called His disciples to [Himself] and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way."

<sup>33</sup> Then His disciples said to Him, "Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?"

<sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few little fish."

<sup>312</sup> Strong. p160. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/160/mode/2up>

<sup>6</sup> So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and gave thanks, broke [them] and gave [them] to His disciples to set before [them]; and they set [them] before the multitude. <sup>7</sup> They also had a few small fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before [them]. <sup>8</sup> So they ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments. <sup>9</sup> Now those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away, [Mark 8:1-9 NKJV](#)

<sup>35</sup> So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. <sup>36</sup> And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke [them] and gave [them] to His disciples; and the disciples [gave] to the multitude.

<sup>37</sup> So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left. <sup>38</sup> Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. <sup>39</sup> And He sent away the multitude, got into the boat, and came to the region of Magdala. [Matthew 15:32-39 NKJV](#)

According to Strong, this feeding of the four thousand took place in May approximately two months after the feeding of the five thousand. This feeding was preceded by healing many people and most like teaching as well. In fact, it says the people had been there with Jesus for three days. I imagine the people had probably brought some of their own food, which had probably all been used up after three days. They were so hungry for the teaching and healing Jesus offered, that they were not willing to leave His presence even though they had nothing to eat. When Jesus questioned the disciples about providing food for the multitude, the miraculous feeding of the five thousand should have been fresh in their minds. But they responded by asking, where could we possibly get enough food to feed all these people? Why didn't they immediately answer that they had seven pieces of bread and a few fish, assuming that Jesus would repeat His miracle? Strong implies as does White that this crowd of four thousand men plus women and children were the same that had started gathering to Him when He healed the deaf and mute man in the region of Decapolis.<sup>313</sup> So, what does that have to do with anything? Wikipedia has an article on Decapolis that sheds some light on the subject. This region was a group of ten cities, linked by their embracing of Greek and Roman culture. Except for Damascus, all the cities were founded during the period of Greek dominance after Alexander the Great. The people of the area had welcomed the Roman General, Pompey, as a liberator from Jewish Hasmonean rule.<sup>314</sup> That was all just a long way of saying these people were Gentiles and not worthy of Jesus' miracles in the eyes of the disciples. They may also have been thinking that the feeding of the five thousand almost led to the coronation of Jesus as king, so why would that same miracle be shared with Gentiles?

From the Wikipedia article, I also noticed that Gadara is one of the cities named among the ten. It was very possible that the demoniacs Jesus healed were in part responsible for the warm reception. Recall that Jesus had sent them home to tell what He had done for them. According to Strong's chronology, the demoniac healing occurred in October, about seven months earlier.<sup>315</sup> I covered that story in my chapter [Jesus heals the demoniacs](#). White provides validation for this suspicion.

It was in the region of Decapolis that the demoniacs of Gergesa had been healed. Here the people, alarmed at the destruction of the swine, had constrained Jesus to depart from among them. But they had listened to the messengers He left behind, and a desire was aroused to see Him. As He came again into that region, a crowd gathered about Him, and a deaf, stammering man was brought to Him. Jesus did not, according to His custom, restore the man by a word only. Taking him apart from the multitude, He put His fingers in his ears, and touched his tongue; looking up to heaven, He sighed at thought of the ears that would not be open to the truth, the

<sup>313</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p404. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=404>

<sup>314</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decapolis>

<sup>315</sup> Strong, p123. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/122/mode/2up>



tongues that refused to acknowledge the Redeemer. At the word, "Be opened," the man's speech was restored, and, disregarding the command to tell no man, he published abroad the story of his cure. [Desire of Ages, p404.](#)<sup>316</sup>

The dialog with the Canaanite woman only days before just began to open the minds of the disciples to the idea of sharing the gifts of God with the Gentiles. Now, Jesus left no doubt by freely sharing the gifts of His miracles with a large number of Gentiles.

What do you believe?

- Why do you think Jesus told the deaf mute man and other witnesses to the healing not to tell anyone what happened?
- Why do you think the disciples didn't assume Jesus would repeat the feeding miracle for these Gentiles after healing all of them?
- Where do you think the left-over food came from? If you were part of the crowd, would you give it back?

## Jesus warns His disciples to be on guard against the leaven of the Pharisees

[Matthew 15:39-16:12](#), [Matthew 5:25-26](#), [Mark 8:10-21](#), [Luke 12:54-59](#)<sup>317</sup>

[Mark 8:10](#) immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of Dalmanutha.

[Matthew 15:39](#) ... and came to the region of Magdala. [Matthew 15:39 NKJV](#)

<sup>11</sup> Then the Pharisees came out and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him. [Mark 8:10-11 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 16:1](#) Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven.

[Matthew 16:2](#) He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, '[It will be] fair weather, for the sky is red';<sup>3</sup> "and in the morning, '[It will be] foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' ... [Matthew 16:2-3 NKJV](#)

[Luke 12:54](#) Then He also said to the multitudes, "Whenever you see a cloud rising out of the west, immediately you say, 'A shower is coming'; and so it is. <sup>55</sup> "And when [you see] the south wind blow, you say, 'There will be hot weather'; and there is. <sup>56</sup> "Hypocrites!

You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how [is it] you do not discern this time?

[Matthew 16:3](#) ... You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot [discern] the signs of the times. [Matthew 16:3 NKJV](#)

<sup>57</sup> "Yes, and why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right?"

<sup>316</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p404. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=404>

<sup>317</sup> Strong. p162. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/162/mode/2up>

<sup>58</sup> "When you go with your adversary to the magistrate, make every effort along the way to settle with him, lest he drag you to the judge, the judge deliver you to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. <sup>59</sup> "I tell you, you shall not depart from there till you have paid the very last mite." [Luke 12:54-59 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 16:4](#) "A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." And He left them and departed.

<sup>5</sup> Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. <sup>6</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees." <sup>7</sup> And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "[It is] because we have taken no bread." <sup>8</sup> But Jesus, being aware of [it], said to them, "O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread?" <sup>9</sup> "Do you not yet understand,

[Psalm 115:5](#) ... Eyes they have, but they do not see;

<sup>6</sup> They have ears, but they do not hear; ... [Psalm 115:5-6 NKJV](#)

or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up?

<sup>10</sup> "Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up?

<sup>11</sup> "How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?--[but] to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." <sup>12</sup> Then they understood that He did not tell [them] to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees. [Matthew 16:4-12 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 5:25](#) "Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. <sup>26</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny." [Matthew 5:25-26 NKJV](#)

[Mark 8:12](#) But He sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Assuredly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation." <sup>13</sup> And He left them, and getting into the boat again, departed to the other side.

[Mark 8:14](#) Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and they did not have more than one loaf with them in the boat. <sup>15</sup> Then He charged them, saying, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." <sup>16</sup> And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "[It is] because we have no bread." <sup>17</sup> But Jesus, being aware of [it], said to them, "Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened?

<sup>18</sup> "Having eyes, do you not see?

And having ears, do you not hear?

And do you not remember?" <sup>19</sup> "When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?" They said to Him, "Twelve." <sup>20</sup> "Also, when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up?" And they said, "Seven."

<sup>21</sup> So He said to them, "How [is it] you do not understand?"

[Mark 8:12-21 NKJV](#)

I suppose the first question some may have is: did they go to Dalmanutha or Magdala? As it is written, it refers to the district of Dalmanutha and the region of Magdala. A brief search on the internet showed that there is currently no knowledge of a Dalmanutha outside of the Bible. The best answer I can give to this question is that we don't have archaeological or historical evidence to locate either. As for Matthew and Mark using different names, no one really has a problem with this especially because one refers to a district and the other a region.

The Pharisees and Sadducees were political opponents and, in many cases, hated each other. Now they were united in their hatred of Jesus. White suggests that the disciples wished that Jesus would provide a sign, thinking it would win

them over, or at least silence them. Every healing He performed was a sign, but since they held most of the recipients of His miracles in such low esteem, the acts were essentially meaningless to them.<sup>318</sup>

Jesus warned the disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. He applies the symbol of leaven or yeast, to the false teachings and doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Yeast works slowly and imperceptibly, changing the entire lump of dough. In the same way the false teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees can be made to sound good, but they work slowly and imperceptibly to change the person into their nature.<sup>319</sup> Jesus said:

[Matthew 23:15](#) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. [Matthew 23:15 NKJV](#)

I found it interesting that yeast was not always a symbol of something bad.

[Matthew 13:33](#) Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened." [Matthew 13:33 NKJV](#)

Based on this statement by Jesus in Matthew, it could be said that the way yeast works on the loaf of bread is also symbolic of positive changes that can take place in your life. The analogy could be used to state that turning your life over to God, can slowly and imperceptibly change you into His image.

What do you believe?

- How do you think the Pharisees and Sadducees could see all those miracles and still ask for a sign?
- If the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees were based on the original laws given to Moses by God, how could they be bad?
- Time and again, Jesus used bread as a symbol for Himself, do you think it was always only unleavened bread?

## Jesus tells His disciples that He must suffer and die

[Matthew 16:13-23](#), [Mark 8:22-30](#), [Luke 9:18-22](#)<sup>320</sup>

[Mark 8:22](#) Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. <sup>23</sup> So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything.

<sup>24</sup> And he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking."

<sup>25</sup> Then He put [His] hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly. <sup>26</sup> Then He sent him away to his house, saying, "Neither go into the town, nor tell anyone in the town."

[Mark 8:22-26 NKJV](#)

<sup>318</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p406. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=406>

<sup>319</sup> White. *Desire of Ages*. p408.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=408>

<sup>320</sup> Strong. p165. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/164/mode/2up>

- [Matthew 16:13](#) When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"
- [Mark 8:27](#) Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, "Who do men say that I am?"
- [Luke 9:18](#) And it happened, as He was alone praying, [that] His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, "Who do the crowds say that I am?"
- <sup>14</sup> So they said, "Some [say] John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."
- [Mark 8:28](#) So they answered, "John the Baptist; but some [say], Elijah; and others, one of the prophets."
- [Luke 9:19](#) So they answered and said, "John the Baptist, but some [say] Elijah; and others [say] that one of the old prophets has risen again."
- <sup>15</sup> He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"
- [Mark 8:29](#) He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ...
- <sup>20</sup> He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ...
- <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
- [Mark 8:29](#) ... Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ." [Mark 8:27-29 NKJV](#)
- <sup>20</sup> ... Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God." [Luke 9:18-20 NKJV](#)
- <sup>17</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed [this] to you, but My Father who is in heaven. <sup>18</sup> "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. <sup>19</sup> "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."
- <sup>20</sup> Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.
- [Mark 8:30](#) Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him.
- [Luke 9:21](#) And He strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one,
- <sup>21</sup> From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.
- [Mark 8:31](#) And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup> He spoke this word openly. ...
- [Luke 9:22](#) saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised on the third day." [Luke 9:21-22 NKJV](#)
- <sup>22</sup> Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" <sup>23</sup> But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." [Matthew 16:13-23 NKJV](#)
- [Mark 8:32](#) ... Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. <sup>33</sup> But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, "Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." [Mark 8:30-33 NKJV](#)

So, what was going on with the healing of this blind man? Did Jesus not do a proper job in His first attempt? Elizabeth Talbot suggested that this two-step healing was an enacted parable. The first part of the healing was like the disciples' knowledge that the Messiah would come, but they didn't understand the reason. Touching the man again, Jesus completed the healing and the man could see clearly. Now Jesus attempts to help the disciples to clearly see that His true mission is to suffer and die.<sup>321</sup>

<sup>321</sup> Talbot, Elizabeth Viera. *Mark Good News*. Nampa, Idaho, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2012. p37.  
[http://www.jesus101institute.org/transaction\\_detail.php?id=14](http://www.jesus101institute.org/transaction_detail.php?id=14)

The next thing I want to discuss is the statement, "upon this rock I will build my church," in Matthew 16:18:

[Matthew 16:18](#) "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. [Matthew 16:18 NKJV](#)

Is Peter the rock on which the church is built? Let's take a look at a few other verses. I did a New Testament word search on foundation, stone and rock and included the relevant verses below.

[Luke 6:47](#) "Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: 48 "He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the **foundation** on the **rock**. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. [Luke 6:47-48 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 3:11](#) For no other **foundation** can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. [1 Corinthians 3:11 NKJV](#)

[Ephesians 2:20](#) having been built on the **foundation** of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner[**stone**], [Ephesians 2:20 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 21:10](#) And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, <sup>11</sup> having the glory of God. Her light [was] like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. <sup>12</sup> Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are [the names] of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: <sup>13</sup> three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. <sup>14</sup> Now the wall of the city had twelve **foundations**, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. [Revelation 21:10-14 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 21:42](#) Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures:

'The **stone** which the builders rejected  
Has become the chief **cornerstone**.  
This was the LORD's doing,  
And it is marvelous in our eyes' ? [Matthew 21:42 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 21:44](#) "And whoever falls on this **stone** will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." [Matthew 21:44 NKJV](#)

[Mark 12:10](#) "Have you not even read this Scripture:

'The **stone** which the builders rejected  
Has become the chief **cornerstone**. [Mark 12:10 NKJV](#)

[Luke 20:17](#) Then He looked at them and said, "What then is this that is written:

'The **stone** which the builders rejected  
Has become the chief **cornerstone**'?

<sup>18</sup> "Whoever falls on that **stone** will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." [Luke 20:17-18 NKJV](#)

[Acts 4:8](#) Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: <sup>9</sup> "If we this day are judged for a good deed [done] to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, <sup>10</sup> "let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. <sup>11</sup> "This is the '**stone** which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief **cornerstone**.' <sup>12</sup> "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." [Acts 4:8-12 NKJV](#)

[Romans 9:30](#) What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; <sup>31</sup> but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. <sup>32</sup> Why? Because [they did] not [seek it] by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. <sup>33</sup> As it is written:

"Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling **stone** and **rock** of offense,  
And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." [Romans 9:30-33 NKJV](#)

[1 Peter 2:4](#) Coming to Him [as to] a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God [and] precious, <sup>5</sup> you also, as living **stones**, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup> Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture,

"Behold, I lay in Zion  
A chief **cornerstone**, elect, precious,  
And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."

<sup>7</sup> Therefore, to you who believe, [He is] precious; but to those who are disobedient,

"The **stone** which the builders rejected  
Has become the chief **cornerstone**,"

<sup>8</sup> and

"A **stone** of stumbling  
And a **rock** of offense."

They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. [1 Peter 2:4-8 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 7:24](#) "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the **rock**: <sup>25</sup> "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the **rock**. [Matthew 7:24-25 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 10:1](#) Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, <sup>2</sup> all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, <sup>3</sup> all ate the same spiritual food, <sup>4</sup> and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual **Rock** that followed them, and that **Rock** was Christ. [1 Corinthians 10:1-4 NKJV](#)

In the Old Testament, the references to God as a rock were too many to list. Not surprisingly, many of them came from Moses, and David. In summary:

- Jesus is the chief cornerstone ([Matthew 21:42](#), [Mark 12:10](#), [Luke 20:17](#), [Acts 4:11](#), [1 Peter 2:6-7](#))

- Jesus is the stone which was rejected, a stumbling stone, and rock of offense to the Jews ([Matthew 21:42](#), [Mark 12:10](#), [Luke 20:17](#), [Acts 4:11](#), [Romans 9:33](#), [1 Peter 2:6-8](#))
- Christ's words are the rock on which we can lay a secure foundation to build ([Matthew 7:25](#), [Luke 6:48](#))
- Jesus Christ is the foundation ([1 Corinthians 3:11](#))
- The apostles and prophets are the foundation and Jesus is the cornerstone ([Ephesians 2:20](#))
- The twelve foundation stones in the New Jerusalem in heaven have the names of the twelve apostles ([Revelation 21:14](#))
- The rock that provided water to the Israelites in the wilderness represents Christ ([1 Corinthians 10:4](#))
- Jesus is the stone on which we must fall to break our sinful nature ([Matthew 21:44](#), [Luke 20:18](#))

Without question, the apostles are the foundation with Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone or the rock on which the foundation is built. Christ's words or teachings are the rock on which we can build. Nowhere does Peter claim it, or is he clearly called out above his fellow apostles as THE rock on which the church is built. In fact, one could argue, if that is what Jesus had intended, there should have been no debate among the disciples about who would be the greatest after that statement. One could also argue that when Peter denied Jesus not long after this conversation, the gates of Hell did prevail against him. I think what Jesus may have meant is: You are Peter, a part of the foundation, but your declaration that I am the Christ, the Son of the Living God, is the foundation of the Church.

By Strong's estimation, this healing and the following conversation took place around May. The disciples may have still been on a high from the feeding of the 5000 and the more recent feeding of the 4000. With great conviction, Peter has declared his belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Being the Christ meant only one thing to them, and that was being their long looked for Messiah and deliverer. To most Jews of the time, that meant driving out the Romans, and the restoration of David's dynasty to the throne of Israel. I think the disciples still believed the Jewish leaders would eventually come around or be forced to recognize who Jesus really was. I believe they still envisioned a temporal kingdom and positions high in the government for each of them. It was like throwing a bucket of water on a bed of hot coals when Jesus began talking about how He must suffer and die. To them, this didn't even compute. How can their all-powerful, all-knowing, eternal God suffer and die? A suffering Messiah and a dying God, were oxymoron's to them, which they just couldn't fathom. Since this was unthinkable, they must have thought it was another of Jesus' symbols, like the leaven or His body being flesh and His blood drink. In fact, this was a real downer which Peter was just not going to put up with. The Bible literally says Peter took Jesus aside and rebuked Him for talking like this. As the time of His death approached, Jesus must have been feeling increased pressure from the knowledge that His disciples still did not understand His mission. What's worse, He often found them bickering about which of them would be the greatest in the kingdom. Satan must have used this knowledge to discourage Jesus and make Him feel like His mission was a failure. In fact, that is exactly what Satan was doing through one of Jesus' closest followers. I don't believe Jesus was literally calling Peter Satan, but he did recognize the sentiments as coming from the devil.

---

What do you believe?

- Why do you think Jesus' initial healing of the blind man had him seeing incorrectly?
- Who do you think was the leader of the early church?
- Why do you think it was so hard for the disciples to understand Christ's mission?

## The cost of following Jesus

[Matthew 16:24-28](#), [Matthew 10:32-33,38](#), [Mark 8:34-38](#), [Luke 9:23-26](#), [Luke 12:8-9](#), [Luke 14:27](#)<sup>322</sup>

<a href="#">Matthew 16:24</a> Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself,	<a href="#">Luke 9:23</a> Then He said to [them] all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, ...	<a href="#">Mark 8:34</a> When He had called the people to [Himself], with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, ...
and take up his cross, and follow Me. <sup>25</sup> "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.	<a href="#">Matthew 10:38</a> "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. <sup>39</sup> "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.	<a href="#">Luke 9:23</a> ... and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. <sup>24</sup> "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.
<a href="#">Matthew 10:38-29 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Luke 14:27</a> "And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.	<a href="#">Mark 8:34</a> ... and take up his cross, and follow Me. <sup>35</sup> "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.
<sup>26</sup> "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? <a href="#">Matthew 16:24-26 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Luke 9:25</a> "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?	<a href="#">Mark 8:36</a> "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? <a href="#">Mark 8:37</a> "Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

<a href="#">Matthew 10:32</a> "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.	<a href="#">Luke 12:8</a> "Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God.
<a href="#">Matthew 10:32-33 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Luke 12:8 NKJV</a>
<sup>33</sup> "But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. <a href="#">Matthew 10:32-33 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Luke 12:9</a> "Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. <a href="#">Luke 12:9 NKJV</a>
<a href="#">Matthew 16:27</a> "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.	<a href="#">Luke 9:26</a> "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed ...
<a href="#">Matthew 16:27-28 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Mark 8:38</a> "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed ...

<a href="#">Matthew 16:27</a> "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.	<a href="#">Luke 9:26</a> ... when He comes in His [own] glory, and [in His] Father's, and of the holy angels. <a href="#">Luke 9:23-26 NKJV</a>	<a href="#">Mark 8:38</a> ... when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." <a href="#">Mark 8:34-38 NKJV</a>
--	--	---

<sup>28</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." [Matthew 16:27-28 NKJV](#)

The first thing we read in this text is probably not something we like to talk about, perhaps especially with new believers. What does Jesus mean by denying yourself? To me, this means not gratifying your own wants and desires. Must we deny all our wants and desires? I don't think God expects us to deny ourselves everything we want or desire. It seems pretty logical, that God would want us to deny ourselves the sinful pleasures that are harmful to us, but does He want our self-denial to go beyond that? Is denying yourself related to taking up your cross and following Him? It is very interesting to me that Jesus used this language before He was crucified. It was customary for people to be forced to

<sup>322</sup> Strong. p168. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/168/mode/2up>



carry their cross to their own crucifixion, but this was not something they willingly volunteered to do. Jesus tells us that we must take up our own cross and follow Him. I think the self-denial and the cross do go together. If the cross is symbolic of crucifying our sinful nature, does that mean our sinful wants and desires can be suppressed? Let's see what Paul has to say about the topic.

[Romans 6:1](#) What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? <sup>3</sup> Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

<sup>5</sup> For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be [in the likeness] of [His] resurrection, <sup>6</sup> knowing this, that our old man was crucified with [Him], that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. <sup>7</sup> For he who has died has been freed from sin. [Romans 6:1-7 NKJV](#)

[Romans 8:13](#) For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. [Romans 8:13 NKJV](#)

[Galatians 2:20](#) "I have been crucified with Christ; 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 gave Himself for me. [Galatians 2:20 NKJV](#)

[Galatians 5:24](#) And those [who are] Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. [Galatians 5:24 NKJV](#)

From what we have just read, we can see that Paul really believed in this idea of crucifying one's sinful nature, resulting in freedom from sin. So how do we accomplish this? From [Romans 6:3-4](#), we can see that baptism is a part of this, but all who have been baptized realize that this is not a permanent death of our sinful natures. [Luke 9:23](#) recorded Jesus as saying that we must take up our cross daily. In fact, I would even say we must take up our cross continually. I know it doesn't sound easy, but I think the point is that we must not live our lives struggling to overcome each individual sin we repeatedly commit. There is one thing we must do, and that is to crucify self and let Christ live in us, and the sins will not be a problem as long as we leave our sinful nature in the grave. I know this doesn't really tell us exactly how to do it, but I think that God intends for us to use our freedom of choice and choose continually to kill our sinful nature and let Christ live in us.

Next, Jesus says that if you confess Him before men, He will confess you before His father. If you deny Him before men, He will deny you before His father. Do you think this means an overt denial as Peter did during Jesus' trial when three times, he denied any association with Jesus? I think confessing Him means more than just talk. I think the way we live our lives must be consistent with the things we say. If we are hard to get along with and dishonest and then try to share our belief in Jesus, it will not be very effective. In fact, it may cause the person to say, if that's what it means to be a Christian, I want nothing to do with it. In this way our negative actions can in a way deny Jesus. On the flip side, what does confessing Jesus before men mean? Every person is different, and we don't all relate to people in the same way. Some are much more outgoing and love talking to people, and some are very reserved. Some are very good at speaking to large crowds, and many are more afraid of public speaking than of death. For those that find this difficult, I would suggest looking at it another way. Imagine you are shopping for a particular item and you find it at a great discount, how easy and natural is it for you to share that find with others? Another way to look at it is, what if you had some knowledge of a coming disaster, would you share that news? I think we each know the answers to those questions. For me, what it means is that if I truly believe that I have salvation and eternal life through Jesus Christ, and I see it as exciting news, I will share it with others.

Jesus concluded this conversation in a strange way in [Matthew 16:28](#) by saying that there were some present who would not die before they saw the Son of Man come in His kingdom. What did He mean by that? Clearly there are no survivors from that time waiting for His second coming. I think the answer to this mystery lies in an event that was soon to happen, known as the transfiguration which will be the topic of the next chapter.

What do you believe?

- Do you think there are degrees of self-denial and does our salvation require complete denial of self?
- How can you crucify your sinful nature so that Christ can live in you?
- Do you think working alongside someone without ever sharing your faith with them would be denying Jesus?

## The transfiguration

[Luke 9:28-36](#), [Matthew 17:1-13](#), [Mark 9:2-13](#)<sup>323</sup>

[Luke 9:28](#) Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. <sup>29</sup> As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe [became] white [and] glistening. <sup>30</sup> And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, <sup>31</sup> who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. <sup>32</sup> But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. <sup>33</sup> Then it happened, as they were parting from Him,

[that] Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"--not knowing what he said. <sup>34</sup> While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud.

<sup>35</sup> And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!"

<sup>36</sup> When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. But they kept quiet, and told

[Mark 9:2](#) Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. <sup>3</sup> His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them. <sup>4</sup> And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.

<sup>5</sup> Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." <sup>6</sup> For he did not know what to answer; for they became terrified. <sup>7</sup> Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them,

and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!" <sup>8</sup> All at once they looked around and saw no one with them anymore, except Jesus alone.

[Matthew 17:1](#) Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; <sup>2</sup> and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. <sup>3</sup> And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.

<sup>4</sup> Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

<sup>5</sup> While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them,

and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" <sup>6</sup> When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified.

<sup>323</sup> Strong. p170. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/170/mode/2up>

no one in those days any of the things they had seen. [Luke 9:28-36 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 17:9](#) Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead."

[Mark 9:9](#) Now as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

<sup>10</sup> And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" <sup>11</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things.

[Mark 9:11](#) And they asked Him, saying, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" <sup>12</sup> Then He answered and told them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and restores all things. ...

<sup>12</sup> "But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands." <sup>13</sup> Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist. [Matthew 17:9-13 NKJV](#)

[Mark 9:13](#) "But I say to you that Elijah has also come, and they did to him whatever they wished, as it is written of him."—  
<sup>12</sup> ... And how is it written concerning the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things and be treated with contempt? [Mark 9:9-13 NKJV](#)

The voice of God was also heard audibly when Jesus was baptized saying, "this is my beloved Son." It would be heard one more time before the crucifixion. How many actually heard the words and understood them at the first and third occurrences is not known, but there were many people present. Only the disciples Peter, James and John were present when God spoke this time, and they undoubtedly heard and understood what was said. We don't know what Moses and Elijah said to Jesus, but I suspect that among other things they may have offered encouragement. With the life of self-denial Jesus lived and rejection He received from His own chosen people, I'm sure some love, thankfulness and affirmation would be welcome. Even more so from some who not only understood but would be the beneficiaries of His sacrifice.

Let's backtrack a little now and re-visit some of Jesus' words that were perhaps a little hard to understand.

[Matthew 16:28](#) "Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." [Matthew 16:28 NKJV](#)

As we stated in the previous chapter, clearly there are no survivors from that time waiting for the second coming of Christ. I believe that this is what Jesus had in mind when He made that statement. He was glorified, and his face shown bright like the sun. He was accompanied by Moses who was resurrected and Elijah who never died, both of whom were taken to heaven. It was a mini representation of Jesus' second coming where the dead in Christ would be resurrected and the righteous living would both be taken to heaven with Him.

As they came down the mountain, the disciples asked Jesus about the prophecy of the Elijah who was prophesied to come.

[Malachi 4:5](#) Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. [Malachi 4:5 NKJV](#)

I don't know if this line of questioning had anything to do with the fact that they had just seen Elijah and maybe were wondering if this was the fulfillment of that prophecy. I for one question whether this prophecy was actually intended for the first coming because that coming was not really the great and terrible day of the Lord. But if there was any debate before, that John the Baptist was the Elijah that was prophesied to come before the Messiah, Jesus cleared that

up. So perhaps the Elijah, or maybe more appropriately, the message of Elijah is to prepare the way for both the first and second comings of Jesus. The next verse in Malachi, should not be overlooked.

[Malachi 4:6](#) And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse." [Malachi 4:6 NKJV](#)

What do you think this verse means next to the following words of Jesus describing His first coming?

[Luke 12:51](#) "Do [you] suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. <sup>52</sup> "For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. <sup>53</sup> "Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." [Luke 12:51-53 NKJV](#)

It's not hard to imagine how Jesus may have turned Jewish families against each other. If part of the family accepted Him as the Messiah and the other part didn't, that would have caused severe strife and division in a Jewish home. Is it possible that Jesus' first coming caused division, but the Elijah message will bring families back together before the second coming?

What do you believe?

- Why do you think God didn't speak more often to affirm Jesus to the Jews?
- Why do you think Moses and Elijah were sent and not Enoch, or the most powerful angel?
- What do you think they talked about?

## Jesus casts out a demon the disciples couldn't

[Mark 9:14-29](#), [Matthew 17:14-18](#), [Luke 9:37-43](#)<sup>324</sup>

[Mark 9:14](#) And when He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them. <sup>15</sup> Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to [Him], greeted Him. <sup>16</sup> And He asked the scribes, "What are you discussing with them?"

<sup>17</sup> Then one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. <sup>18</sup> "And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. ... —

<sup>22</sup> It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him ... —

[Matthew 17:14](#) And when they had come to the multitude, ...

Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to [Him], greeted Him.

"What are you discussing with them?"

[Matthew 17:14](#) And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, <sup>15</sup> "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; ...

[Matthew 17:14](#) ... for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. [Matthew 17:14-15 NKJV](#)

[Luke 9:37](#) Now it happened on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, that a great multitude met Him.

[Luke 9:38](#) Suddenly a man from the multitude cried out, saying, "Teacher, I implore You, look on my son, for he is my only child. <sup>39</sup> "And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out; it convulses him so that he foams [at the mouth]; ...

[Luke 9:39](#) ... and it departs from him with great difficulty, bruising him.

<sup>324</sup> Strong. p173. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/172/mode/2up>

<sup>18</sup> ...So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not." <sup>19</sup> He answered him and said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me." <sup>20</sup> Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth. <sup>21</sup> So He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. <sup>22</sup> ... But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." <sup>23</sup> Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things [are] possible to him who believes." <sup>24</sup> Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" <sup>25</sup> When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it: "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!" <sup>26</sup> Then [the spirit] cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, "He is dead." <sup>27</sup> But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

<sup>28</sup> And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?"

<sup>29</sup> So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting."

[Mark 9:14-29 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 17:16](#) "So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him."

<sup>17</sup> Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me."

[Matthew 17:16-17 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 17:18](#) And Jesus rebuked the demon,

and it came out of him;

and the child was cured from that very hour.

[Mathew 17:19](#) Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?"

<sup>20</sup> So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief;

for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.

<sup>21</sup> "However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

[Matthew 17:18-21 NKJV](#)

[Luke 9:40](#) "So I implored Your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." <sup>41</sup> Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." <sup>42</sup> And as he was still coming, the demon threw him down and convulsed [him]. ... [Luke 9:38-42 NKJV](#)

[Luke 9:42](#) ... Then Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit,

healed the child, and gave him back to his father. <sup>43</sup> And they were all amazed at the majesty of God. ... [Luke 9:42-43 NKJV](#)

[Luke 17:5](#) And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."

<sup>6</sup> So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. [Luke 17:5-6 NKJV](#)

This is a really strange case to me. Are there actually some demons that are harder to cast out than others? Not that casting out a demon would ever be done casually. But if God had given the disciples authority to cast demons out in the name of Jesus, what happened in this case? Jesus actually implied that there was something different in this case by saying, "this kind." White suggests in the book *Desire of Ages*, that the nine disciples were jealous of the preferred

treatment of Peter, James and John.<sup>325</sup> They all wanted the highest place in the kingdom, and they could see their chances slipping as Jesus continued to favor those same three. I can just see them griping to each other after Jesus left the night before with only the three, leaving them at the foot of the mountain. What was so special about those three anyway? They could all perform the same miracles couldn't they? Perhaps it was this state of mind that left them without the faith to perform this or any miracle.

I have alluded to the rules of engagement that I think must exist between God and Satan in the battle for human souls. Does the possession of children seem fair? I have always thought that a person had to make a deal with the devil or invite him in before he could take possession. How old would someone have to be to adequately understand this type of choice? Is it possible that some of the cases of demon possession in the Bible are really what we call seizures today? There would be no point in Jesus trying to correct the people about their diagnosis, would there? Since people rarely pause to discuss questions as they read a paragraph, I will include some of them again next.

What do you believe?

- Do you believe Satan is allowed to possess children?
- If parents of a child invite possession of themselves and try to teach their child to do the same, would God allow it?
- Do you think some of the cases of demon possession in the Bible were what we call seizures today?

## Who is the greatest?

[Matthew 17:22-27](#), [18:1-5](#), [Mark 9:30-32](#), [Luke 9:43-48](#)<sup>326</sup>

[Mark 9:30](#) Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know [it].<sup>31</sup> For He taught His disciples and said to them, "The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day."

<sup>32</sup> But they did not understand this saying,

and were afraid to ask Him. [Mark 9:30-32 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 17:22](#) Now while they were staying in Galilee,

Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men,<sup>23</sup> "and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up." And they were exceedingly sorrowful. [Matthew 17:22-23 NKJV](#)

[Luke 9:43](#) ... He said to His disciples,  
<sup>44</sup> "Let these words sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men."

<sup>45</sup> But they did not understand this saying, and it was hidden from them so that they did not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this saying. [Luke 9:43-45 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 17:24](#) When they had come to Capernaum, those who received the [Mark 9:33](#) Then He came to Capernaum. ... [temple] tax came to Peter and said, "Does your Teacher not pay the [temple] tax?"

<sup>325</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p431. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=431>

<sup>326</sup> Strong. p176. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/176/mode/2up>

<sup>25</sup> He said, "Yes." And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?"

<sup>26</sup> Peter said to Him, "From strangers." Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free. <sup>27</sup> "Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you." [Matthew 17:24-27 NKJV](#)

[Mark 9:33](#) ... And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?"

[Matthew 18:1](#) At that time the disciples

came to Jesus, saying, ... [Matthew 18:1 NKJV](#)

<sup>34</sup> But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who [would be the] greatest.

[Luke 9:46](#) Then a dispute arose among them as to which of them would be greatest. <sup>47</sup> And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, ... [Luke 9:46-47 NKJV](#)

<sup>35</sup> And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." [Mark 9:33-35 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 18:1](#) ... "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

<sup>2</sup> Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, <sup>3</sup> and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup> "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

[Mark 9:36](#) Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them,

[Luke 9:47](#) ... took a little child and set him by Him,

<sup>5</sup> "Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me. [Matthew 18:1-5 NKJV](#)

<sup>37</sup> "Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me." [Mark 9:36-37 NKJV](#)

<sup>48</sup> and said to them, "Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. ...

[Luke 9:47-48 NKJV](#)

[Luke 9:48](#) ... For he who is least among you all will be great." [Luke 9:48 NKJV](#)

Jesus again tells His disciples that He will be killed and resurrected on the third day. Mark and Luke tell us straight out that they did not understand. His words were very straight forward and unambiguous, so they must have assumed He was talking to them in symbols or parables and didn't really want to hear the interpretation because it says, they were afraid to ask.

The next thing that happened was another occasion where I believe Jesus' opponents were trying to find some fault with Him. They had never had any success trying to trap Jesus with their questions, so this time they approached Peter. They asked if Jesus paid the two-drachma tax. Apparently, this was the temple tax which we discussed in detail in the chapter on His [first Passover](#). We mentioned that the temple tax was approximately half of a shekel in silver. That is why Jesus paid this tax for two people with one shekel. In that same chapter we also discussed the reasoning behind the tax. The origin of the temple tax which was to be used for the upkeep and operation of the temple, was one of the laws given to

Moses by God. When the Jews were numbered they were instructed to pay a half-shekel so that a plague would not break out among the people [[Exodus 30:11-16](#)]. That's why Jesus called it a poll tax. But there was another purpose behind the temple tax system that Jesus wanted to point out. In that same chapter on His first Passover, we also discussed the amount of the tax which had its basis in the redemption price the Jew were to pay so that the Levites would serve full time in the temple instead of each first born who belonged to God. From the perspective of a tax paid so that a Levite would serve full time in place of you, it would seem that the Levite wouldn't have to pay. By extension, Rabbi's, who dedicated their life to the learning and instruction of religious teachings, were probably also granted exemption. While He may have been entitled to an exemption as a Rabbi, I believe Jesus was also claiming exemption as the Son of God. I'm not sure how relevant it is but I found a Jewish library website that said, "rabbis and scholars were supposed to be exempt from communal taxation." The same website also stated, "In the geonic period it was laid down that rabbis were to be exempted from taxes imposed on the community by the king and his ministers."<sup>327</sup> In any case, Peter missed the opportunity to express both his belief in Jesus as a legitimate religious teacher, but also as the Messiah. Jesus on the other hand showed His divinity in the way He obtained the money for the tax that He need not have paid.

Next, we find the disciples arguing, not for the first time or the last, about which of them is the greatest. This really was mostly about who would have the highest or most important position in the kingdom which they still believed Jesus would set up. Jesus' response to this was to turn their thinking upside-down. The one who strives to make himself first, will be last and servant of all. Whoever humbles himself will be greatest in the kingdom of heaven. The one who is least, is the greatest. Jesus said essentially the same thing three different ways to make sure that He was being clear. While His statements seem to be made with respect to the kingdom of God in heaven, I think that some of the elements apply even in this sinful world. For example, I think that people are less resistant to elevating someone to a position of power and authority if they have seen in that person some humility and a willingness to serve others. I think business owners and CEO's with humble serving attitudes have seen their employees being more dedicated and harder working.

---

What do you believe?

- Why do you think the disciples had such difficulty understanding or believing Jesus' statements about His soon coming death and resurrection?
- How do you think the tax-collectors would have responded if Peter had claimed exemption from the tax for Jesus?
- Do you think the principle of the greatest is the least works all the time even now, or is it a principle for a perfect world?

## He who is not against us is for us

[Mark 9:38-42](#), [49-50](#), [Matthew 18:6-7](#), [Matthew 5:13](#), [Luke 9:49-50](#), [Luke 17:1-2](#), [Luke 14:34-35](#)<sup>328</sup>

[Mark 9:38](#) Now John answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us." <sup>39</sup> But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. <sup>40</sup> "For he who is not against us is on our side.

[Luke 9:49](#) Now John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us." <sup>50</sup> But Jesus said to him, "Do not forbid [him],  
for he who is not against us is on our side." [Luke 9:49-50 NKJV](#)

<sup>327</sup> <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/ancienttaxation.html>

<sup>328</sup> Strong. p179. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/178/mode/2up>



<sup>41</sup> "For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

<sup>42</sup> "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea. [Mark 9:38-42 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 18:6](#) "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

[Luke 17:2](#) "It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.—

<sup>7</sup> "Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes! [Matthew 18:6-7 NKJV](#)

[Luke 17:1](#) Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe [to him] through whom they do come! [Luke 17:1,2 NKJV](#)

[Mark 9:49](#) "For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. <sup>50</sup> "Salt [is] good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it?

[Matthew 5:13](#) "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. [Matthew 5:13 NKJV](#)

[Luke 14:34](#) "Salt [is] good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? <sup>35</sup> "It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, [but] men throw it out. ..." [Luke 14:34 NKJV](#)

Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another." [Mark 9:49-50 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 18:10](#) "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven. [Matthew 18:10 NKJV](#)

This section begins with a conversation Jesus had with the disciples where He tells them, "For he who is not against us is for us." [[Mark 9:40](#), [Luke 9:50](#)] But I seem to recall another verse where it seems Jesus is saying the opposite:

[Matthew 12:30](#) "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad. [Matthew 12:30 NKJV](#)

It sounds like Jesus is contradicting Himself. Well as is usually the case in resolving these contradictions, the first step is to look at the entire context. In this case, we have someone who is doing good deeds, God's work, and in general giving credit to Jesus. He just happens to not have been personally instructed or commissioned directly by Jesus or the disciples. In the second case, Jesus had just cast a demon out of a man and was having a discussion with the Pharisees about whose power was used to perform this action. Ken Collins had an interesting explanation, quoting an ancient commentator, Theophylact, on the text. His explanation is that the second text is about the power used for casting out demons, specifically spirits.<sup>329</sup> Let's read more of the context and then come back to what Collins says.

[Matthew 12:22](#) Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. <sup>23</sup> And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

<sup>329</sup> <http://www.kencollins.com/answers/question-43.htm>

<sup>24</sup> Now when the Pharisees heard [it] they said, "This [fellow] does not cast out demons except by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons."

<sup>25</sup> But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. <sup>26</sup> "If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? <sup>27</sup> "And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast [them] out? Therefore they shall be your judges. <sup>28</sup> "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. <sup>29</sup> "Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. <sup>30</sup> "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad. [Matthew 12:22-30 NKJV](#)

If Collins is right, the controversy immediately vanishes, because we're talking about people in one case and spirits in the other. I think it's pretty widely accepted that spirits, more specifically demons and the Devil, are on the opposite sides in a conflict, from angels and God. Hence, if a spirit is not of or from God, then it is against Him.

If you are not willing to accept this spirit explanation, I think there is still another. In the first case, the statement is made regarding "us," meaning Jesus and the twelve disciples. I think Jesus is saying just because he is not part of our little group of thirteen, doesn't mean he cannot perform miracles and help our cause. I think Jesus is not talking about people's choices for good or evil in general, but those who are doing good works in His name. So, to modernize this a little, I might put it this way. Just because someone is not part of our Christian denomination, doesn't mean we should try to shut down their evangelizing and good works. In the second case, I think it is true in general that ultimately there is no neutral ground. If you are not with God, ultimately you will be against Him and with Satan. So, the first case could be a statement referring to other Christians performing good works in God's name, and the second to a person's decision in the battle between good and evil.

Jesus' discussion immediately flows into a couple other statements that He may or may not have intended to be related. I think if we set the right context we can tie them together. In reprimanding His disciples for trying to stop the man from casting out demons in the name of Jesus, we could envision Him reprimanding church leaders for trying to stop an outreach by members of their own congregation because they haven't sanctioned it. I could also see Him reprimanding the same people for even trying to stop or discredit the outreach of people from another denomination. With that context in mind, Jesus then directs His conversation to little ones who believe. This could represent either physically young, such as children, or spiritually young believers. Envision an older church member, in their zealotness to defend or enforce their view of what is acceptable or not, causing the young to lose their faith in Jesus. Unfortunately, in this day and age, another scenario that comes to mind is the sexual exploitation of children by those in authority over them. With the soft spot He has in His heart for the defenseless, I can see Jesus saying to the perpetrators, it would have been better for you to have died before you did that.

I placed the last couple verses about salt and fire in parallel, but I think the part in Mark that talks about salt and fire may be talking about something different or may be from a different conversation than the verses in Matthew and Luke. The latter I think are more straight forward in their meaning. The right amount of salt clearly can make food taste better, but too little will be ineffective and too much may be offensive. The same could be said about our Christianity to the world. Christians should make the world a better place, and non-Christians should appreciate them as a person enjoys a well flavored meal. I think an example of this could be Hospitals and schools such as are operated by Catholics and the Seventh-Day Adventists. On the other hand, is picketing a gay event with a sign that says homosexuals will burn in hell, an example of too much salt? Salt and fire in Mark is more difficult. In his commentary Henry says there is little

consensus on this verse.<sup>330</sup> It is interesting and possibly helpful that the KJV reads a little different and includes a whole other phrase.

[Mark 9:49](#) "For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. [Mark 9:49 NKJV](#)

A couple options offered by David Guzik are that fire refers to tribulation, or the Holy Spirit. As followers of Jesus, being seasoned with either should make us better and more fit representatives of Him.<sup>331</sup>

What do you believe?

- What do you think Jesus was referring to when He talked about being salted or seasoned with fire?
- Can you think of other ways in which Christians can be like just the right amount of salt?
- Can you also think of other ways in which Christians can be like too much salt?

## Giving and receiving forgiveness for sins?

[Matthew 18:15-35](#), [Luke 17:3-4](#)<sup>332</sup>

[Matthew 18:15](#) "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. <sup>16</sup> "But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that

'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' <sup>17</sup> "And if he refuses to hear them, tell [it] to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

[Luke 17:3](#) "Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. [Luke 17:3 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 19:15](#) "... by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established. [Deuteronomy 19:15 NKJV](#)

<sup>18</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

<sup>19</sup> "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup> "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

<sup>21</sup> Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"

[Luke 17:4](#) "And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him." [Luke 17:4 NKJV](#)

<sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. <sup>23</sup> "Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. <sup>24</sup> "And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. <sup>25</sup> "But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. <sup>26</sup> "The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I

<sup>330</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mar/Mar\\_009.cfm?a=966049](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mar/Mar_009.cfm?a=966049)

<sup>331</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide\\_Mar/Mar\\_9.cfm?a=966049](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide_Mar/Mar_9.cfm?a=966049)

<sup>332</sup> Strong. p181. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/180/mode/2up>

will pay you all.'<sup>27</sup> "Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

<sup>28</sup> "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took [him] by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' <sup>29</sup> "So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' <sup>30</sup> "And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. <sup>31</sup> "So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. <sup>32</sup> "Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. <sup>33</sup> 'Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' <sup>34</sup> "And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

<sup>35</sup> "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses." [Matthew 18:15-35 NKJV](#)

Jesus gave some counsel on how to deal with a church member who has sinned against you. Jesus gave three steps, but if the issue is resolved, the remaining steps are not needed.

1. First approach them yourself in private. If you can get them to see their wrong, you have not only resolved the issue but you have kept the matter private.
2. If the first step was not effective, the next step is to take along two or three witnesses, preferably church leaders, the next time you go talk to the offending person. These witnesses can listen to both sides and can mediate and also help you to see if you are also in the wrong.
3. If the witnesses still believe there is a wrong being committed and the second step did not help, the third step is to bring the whole church into it. This seems pretty extreme and I guess it rarely comes to this, but what does this mean? Does it mean to bring the issue up to a church business meeting? Or does the church board represent the entire church enough to confront the person and take action. I would hope it doesn't mean to announce it to the entire congregation during church from the pulpit.

I believe these steps are intended for something pretty serious and not just a disagreement. The two or three witnesses can help to determine that. I believe that this process is partly intended to keep the person from doing the same to other members of the church, but knowing the love Jesus has for sinners, it also has the salvation of the offender in mind. In the ultimate negative outcome, Jesus says to treat the person as a Gentile or a tax collector. What does that mean? Is He saying to treat the person the way a typical Jew would treat a Gentile or tax collector, or the way He would, because we know that was very different. I think before we can answer these questions and conclude this topic, we need to consider the answer Jesus gave to Peter's question about how many times he should forgive.

Some have said without providing sources that the Jews taught you only had to forgive someone three times. I couldn't really find a source for this but I did find multiple places which said that one seeking forgiveness need only ask three times if they were not being forgiven.<sup>333 334 335</sup> In this case, Peter probably thought he was being generous by going up to seven. Jesus' answer to Peter was to keep forgiving seventy times seven, but clearly He did not intend you to stop after that. Luke really abbreviated and even wrote it differently, saying you should forgive even seven times a day. Again the implication is not to stop at seven and to continue day after day. I think what He is trying to say is that since God will

<sup>333</sup> <http://www.dailyhalacha.com/m/halacha.aspx?id=679>

<sup>334</sup> <http://www.jewishexponent.com/understanding-yom-kippur-s-focus-on-atonement-and-forgiveness>

<sup>335</sup> [https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud\\_0002\\_0007\\_0\\_06619.html](https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0007_0_06619.html)

forgive no matter how many times we sin and ask for forgiveness (with one exception which we'll talk about in the next paragraph), we must be willing to do the same. With this in mind, we can now go back to my question in the previous paragraph about what Jesus meant when He said to treat the person as a Gentile or tax collector after the third attempt. Clearly Jesus is not teaching that you should stop forgiving after the third confrontation. The example He lived was to treat Gentiles and tax collectors as people who should be loved and won over to the Kingdom of God.

Next Jesus told a parable that illustrated one case where God would refuse to forgive us. In fact, Jesus repeated this teaching on at least one other occasion.

[Matthew 6:14](#) "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. <sup>15</sup> "But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. [Matthew 6:14-15 NKJV](#)

[Mark 11:26](#) "But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses." [Mark 11:26 NKJV](#)

So, by Jesus' own words and teachings, if we are unwilling to forgive others for sins they have committed against us, God will not forgive us for our sins. If you believe that forgiveness for your own sins is a prerequisite to salvation, you must reach a point of forgiveness to everyone who has sinned against you. This is a sobering thought for people who have had very serious sins and crimes committed against them, who are unwilling to forgive.

What do you believe?

- From your perspective, how different is that three step process if you apply it to any sin rather than just sins committed against you?
- We just mentioned that God will not forgive us if we will not forgive those who have sinned against us. Do you think there is anything else that would cause God not to forgive?
- Do you think there is any sin so terrible that God cannot forgive?

## Jesus sends out seventy

[Luke 10:1-12](#), [6:40](#), [Matthew 7:6](#), [10:23-25](#), [John 13:16](#)<sup>336</sup>

[Luke 10:1](#) After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. <sup>2</sup> Then He said to them, "The harvest truly [is] great, but the laborers [are] few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. <sup>3</sup> "Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves. <sup>4</sup> "Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road. <sup>5</sup> "But whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' <sup>6</sup> "And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you. <sup>7</sup> "And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house. <sup>8</sup> "Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. <sup>9</sup> "And heal the sick there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' <sup>10</sup> "But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, <sup>11</sup> 'The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you.' <sup>12</sup> "But I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city. [Luke 10:1-12 NKJV](#)

<sup>336</sup> Strong. p183. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/182/mode/2up>

[Matthew 7:6](#) "Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces. [Matthew 7:6 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 10:23](#) "When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

<sup>24</sup> "A disciple is not above [his] teacher, nor a servant above his master. <sup>25</sup> "It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more [will they call] those of his household! [Matthew 10:23-25 NKJV](#)

[Luke 6:40](#) "A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher. [Luke 6:40 NKJV](#)

[John 13:16](#) "Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. [John 13:16 NKJV](#)

As usual, the harmony and sequence are from Strong. However, since I am not trying to use every single word in the Gospels just once in the entire arrangement, I am including the instructions to the seventy again even though it was used in parallel with the instructions to the twelve ([Jesus sends His disciples out in pairs to teach and preach](#)). One big difference that I noticed was that there was no mention of healing powers for the seventy, although it does mention on their return that they were able to cast out demons in the name of Jesus [[Luke 10:17](#)]. I guess that doesn't mean they weren't given those powers, but Luke doesn't mention it. This also reinforces the idea that there was a larger group of people that were following Jesus around. I think these seventy were not just the casual crowd but were also disciples according to the definition of the word. These seventy were sent out to the towns where Jesus planned to go, to announce that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, and to prepare the people for His arrival.

---

What do you believe?

- What do you think the phrase, "the kingdom of God is at hand," meant to the Jews of the day?
- When Jesus said not to give what is holy to dogs, do you think he meant it literally?
- It's pretty obvious that a slave is not above his master, so what is Jesus trying to teach with this statement?

## Jesus goes through Samaria on His way to Jerusalem

[John 7:2-10](#), [Luke 9:51-56](#), [17:11-19](#)<sup>337</sup>

[John 7:2](#) Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. <sup>3</sup> His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. <sup>4</sup> "For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." <sup>5</sup> For even His brothers did not believe in Him.

<sup>6</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. <sup>7</sup> "The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil. <sup>8</sup> "You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come." <sup>9</sup> When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee.

---

<sup>337</sup> Strong. p185. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/184/mode/2up>

<sup>10</sup> But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

[John 7:2-10 NKJV](#)

[Luke 17:11](#) Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

<sup>12</sup> Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. <sup>13</sup> And they lifted up [their] voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

<sup>14</sup> So when He saw [them], He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed.

<sup>15</sup> And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, <sup>16</sup> and fell down on [his] face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.

<sup>17</sup> So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where [are] the nine? <sup>18</sup> "Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" <sup>19</sup> And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well." [Luke 17:11-19 NKJV](#)

[Luke 9:51](#) Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, <sup>52</sup> and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. <sup>53</sup> But they did not receive Him, because His face was [set] for the journey to Jerusalem. <sup>54</sup> And when His disciples James and John saw [this], they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?"

<sup>55</sup> But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. <sup>56</sup> "For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save [them]." And they went to another village. [Luke 9:51-56 NKJV](#)

According to Strong it is September, just prior to the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, which on our calendar usually varies between late September and late October. By his chronology, we are just beginning the fourth and final year of Jesus' ministry. It begins with John's telling of an exchange Jesus had with his brothers that showed their lack of belief, but at the same time the desire for the Jewish leaders to see more of His miracles. I think they felt the sting and the stigma of being related to Jesus whom the Jewish leaders rejected, but they couldn't deny His power. I think they would have been happy for Jesus to use His power to force the Jewish leaders to recognize and accept Him as King. Instead, Jesus was content to spend most of his time in Galilee, gathering around Himself common working class people, performing miracles far from the capital city of Jerusalem.

The book of John says Jesus went to Jerusalem in secret, which could be interpreted to mean, not travelling with the large caravans of people going to Jerusalem for the feast. The only way to avoid the travelling crowds would be to go at a different time or to take a route no one else would take. So Strong cleverly inserts these two encounters with Samaritans, both of which indicated He was on His way to Jerusalem. I reversed the order of the two from Strong because one says he was passing between Samaria and Galilee, which I assume is where He started.

The first one doesn't actually say it was a Samaritan village, in fact it probably wasn't because only one of the ten lepers was a Samaritan. Furthermore, Jesus instructed them to go to the Temple to be inspected so they could be pronounced clean. In any case, it clearly states that Jesus was travelling between Galilee and Samaria.

In the second incident, Jesus is apparently looking to spend the night in a Samaritan village. I'm sure the disciples were very uncomfortable with this but there is no record of them arguing with Him. I think they probably felt that Jesus was

gracing them with His presence and hence became severely offended when the Samaritan town turned them away. Probably remembering how Prophet Elijah from the past had called down fire from heaven to destroy people who were trying to capture him, James and John asked Jesus if they should call down fire on this Samaritan town. I can just imagine Jesus looking at them with a look of shock and amazement and saying, are you kidding Me? I came to save people, not to kill them!

What do you believe?

- Do you think Jesus lied to his brothers about not going to the feast?
- I think the brothers and the disciples would have both liked to see Jesus take the throne of Israel, so what was the difference between them?
- Do you think people usually thanked Jesus for healing them?

## The feast of Tabernacles

[John 7:11-8:1](#), [Matthew 11:28-30](#),<sup>338</sup>

[John 7:11](#) Then the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, "Where is He?"<sup>12</sup> And there was much complaining among the people concerning Him. Some said, "He is good"; others said, "No, on the contrary, He deceives the people."<sup>13</sup> However, no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.

<sup>14</sup> Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught.<sup>15</sup> And the Jews marveled, saying, "How does this Man know letters, having never studied?"

<sup>16</sup> Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.<sup>17</sup> "If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or [whether] I speak on My own [authority].

<sup>18</sup> "He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.<sup>19</sup> "Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?"

<sup>20</sup> The people answered and said, "You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?"

<sup>21</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "I did one work, and you all marvel.<sup>22</sup> "Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath.<sup>23</sup> "If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath?<sup>24</sup> "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

<sup>25</sup> Now some of them from Jerusalem said, "Is this not He whom they seek to kill?<sup>26</sup> "But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ?<sup>27</sup> "However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from."

<sup>28</sup> Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, "You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know.<sup>29</sup> "But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me."

<sup>338</sup> Strong. p187. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/186/mode/2up>



<sup>30</sup> Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. <sup>31</sup> And many of the people believed in Him, and said, "When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this [Man] has done?"

<sup>32</sup> The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him. <sup>33</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "I shall be with you a little while longer, and [then] I go to Him who sent Me. <sup>34</sup> "You will seek Me and not find [Me], and where I am you cannot come."

<sup>35</sup> Then the Jews said among themselves, "Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? <sup>36</sup> "What is this thing that He said, 'You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come'?"

<sup>37</sup> On the last day, that great [day] of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ... [John 7:11-37 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 11:28](#) "Come to Me, all [you] who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> "For My yoke [is] easy and My burden is light." [Matthew 11:28-30 NKJV](#)

[John 7:37](#) ... "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. <sup>38</sup> "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." <sup>39</sup> But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet [given], because Jesus was not yet glorified.

<sup>40</sup> Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet." <sup>41</sup> Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? <sup>42</sup> "Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" <sup>43</sup> So there was a division among the people because of Him. <sup>44</sup> Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him.

<sup>45</sup> Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?"

<sup>46</sup> The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!"

<sup>47</sup> Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? <sup>48</sup> "Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? <sup>49</sup> "But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."

<sup>50</sup> Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, <sup>51</sup> "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?"

<sup>52</sup> They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee."

<sup>53</sup> And everyone went to his [own] house.

[John 8:1](#) But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. [John 7:37-8:1 NKJV](#)

According to Strong, the feast of Tabernacles must have occurred in September of this particular year. It seems Jesus was the topic of many conversations and everyone was wondering where He was. Naturally, one would expect Him to be present at one of the major feasts, but the people also knew that His life was being threatened by the Jewish leaders.

The Feast of Tabernacles also known as the Feast of Booths is one of three Jewish pilgrimage festivals. These were times each year that every adult male was required to appear before the Lord at the place appointed. These festivals are known by multiple names, but in English, the first is commonly known as Passover and commemorates the Exodus and more specifically the night before when the Israelite first born were passed over by the angel of death. The Exodus from Egypt is start of the Israelite nation and by God's command was to be the beginning of their year. The second is known as the feast of Weeks or Pentecost. It was to be celebrated seven weeks after Passover, which corresponded to the seven weeks between the Exodus and the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. I actually never realized before, that there were exactly seven weeks between the two events. This second festival also corresponded to the first fruits of the early harvest, some of which were to be brought as an offering, and hence was also a celebration of God's providence. The third and last pilgrimage is commonly called the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths. They were to camp in temporary booths made from sticks and branches to remember the forty years wandering in the wilderness. This festival also corresponded to the end of the harvest. [[Exodus 23:14–17](#), [Exodus 34:18-23](#), [Deuteronomy 16](#)]<sup>339</sup>

Three full years into His ministry and Jesus' relationship with the rulers is so strained, even the general public knows there are plans to kill Him. The rulers feel they are justified because they claim Jesus is breaking their laws and undermining their authority. This they are afraid will lead to popular uprisings which the Romans will step in to squash with violence, as they have done before. They also claim Jesus is a sinner and is leading the people astray. Jesus responds to one of these accusations, that of healing on the Sabbath. He cites precedence in how they will perform circumcision on the eighth day, even if it falls on the Sabbath, to keep the Law of Moses? He reasons, isn't making a person healthy and whole better for them than circumcision? The rulers are plotting murder, and when Jesus confronts them on that, they lie by denying it, thus breaking the ninth Commandment, while planning to break the sixth (murder).

In His own defense, Jesus gave a valuable test to judge whether someone can be trusted or not. If someone is seeking to gain power and glory for themselves, you would be right to question their motivation. But if they are promoting someone else's, especially God's glory, they should not be so easily dismissed.

On the last day of the feast Jesus spoke out to everyone listening, that all who were thirsty should come to Him and He would be like thirst quenching water to their soul. He added, those who believe in Him as the Scripture taught, would not only quench their thirst, but it would be as if they had a stream of life-giving water flowing out of them, presumably to the benefit of others. The life of a Jew who tried to follow the endless laws placed upon them by the religious rulers was a never-ending struggle of do's and don'ts, which did nothing to satisfy the thirst in their soul. Strong fittingly inserted a statement from Matthew along a similar theme. Jesus said:

[Matthew 11:28](#) "Come to Me, all [you] who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> "For My yoke [is] easy and My burden is light." [Matthew 11:28-30 NKJV](#)

Jesus used the example of a yoke which allowed two oxen to pull a load together. He said that those who came to Him weary from carrying a heavy load would not only find His yoke like rest in comparison, but it would bring satisfaction to their soul.

<sup>339</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three\\_Pilgrimage\\_Festivals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three_Pilgrimage_Festivals)

---

What do you believe?

- If the rulers wanted Jesus dead, why didn't they just do it?
- Do you think the rulers had legitimate grounds for wanting Jesus dead, or was it mostly about jealousy?
- In what way do you think believing in Jesus is a light and easy load?

## Jesus is asked to judge a woman caught in adultery

[John 8:2-11](#)<sup>340</sup>

[John 8:2](#) Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. <sup>3</sup> Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, <sup>4</sup> they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. <sup>5</sup> "Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" <sup>6</sup> This they said, testing Him, that they might have [something] of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with [His] finger, as though He did not hear.

<sup>7</sup> So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." <sup>8</sup> And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. <sup>9</sup> Then those who heard [it], being convicted by [their] conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest [even] to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. <sup>10</sup> When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?"

<sup>11</sup> She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." [John 8:2-11 NKJV](#)

The punishment for adultery in the Law of Moses was clearly death.

[Leviticus 20:10](#) 'The man who commits adultery with [another] man's wife, [he] who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death. [Leviticus 20:10 NKJV](#)

But these scribes and Pharisees were not after justice. If they were they would have brought the other participant along as well. In fact, I don't think I'm alone in suspecting they framed the woman and the male participant was one of their own. Verse six says these accusers were actually after Jesus and they thought they had Him, no matter which decision He made. But as He had done every other time they tried to trap Him into saying or doing something they could accuse Him of, He left them slinking away into the shadows defeated. John doesn't actually say what Jesus was writing in the sand, but many believe that He was writing the secret sins of the accusers. I think it is interesting that having left out the detail of what Jesus was writing, John did think to mention that the accusers left starting with the older and ending with the younger? Does that mean Jesus wrote the sins of the older first, or maybe once word got around what was happening, they immediately left because they had more to hide?

Matthew Henry added some interesting insight, that if the male participant was not known, it was the husband who was to bring his wife, accusing her of adultery [[Numbers 5:15](#)]. In the test of the bitter water, God was actually the judge of the woman, and it was thought and apparently confirmed by experience that if the husband was also guilty, the bitter

---

<sup>340</sup> Strong. p193. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/192/mode/2up>

water would not take effect on the woman. So, by their own tradition and their refusal to take action when Jesus invited those without sin to cast the first stone, He set the woman free.<sup>341</sup> Not because she was without sin, or because He condoned the sin, but because He was merciful and forgiving. Then Jesus told the woman to go and stop repeating this sin.

Some in historical fiction and movies have made the assumption that this woman was Mary Magdalene. Some have also written without citing a reference that the sixth century Pope Gregory stated in a sermon that the woman who washed Jesus' feet, Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus, and the woman caught in adultery were all Mary Magdalene. But some also claim that in 1969 Pope Paul IV reversed this stance.<sup>342 343</sup> The author of the second reference makes another claim, that if the woman caught in adultery was Mary Magdalene from whom seven demons had been cast out, it would have provided a legal way for Jesus to not condemn her to death. It makes for more of an interesting character to be able to tie these Bible stories together, but there is no solid evidence that she is the same person. I think it's fine if someone wants to think or believe that she is the same person, but not to teach it as Biblical fact.

What do you believe?

- What do you think Jesus was writing in the sand?
- Why do you think the older accusers left before the younger?
- Do you think Jesus broke the Law of Moses in not condemning the woman to death?

## The truth will make you free

[John 8:12-59](#)<sup>344</sup>

[John 8:12](#) Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

<sup>13</sup> The Pharisees therefore said to Him, "You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true."

<sup>14</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going. <sup>15</sup> "You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. <sup>16</sup> "And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I [am] with the Father who sent Me. <sup>17</sup> "It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. <sup>18</sup> "I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me."

<sup>19</sup> Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also."

<sup>20</sup> These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.

<sup>341</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Jhn/Jhn\\_008.cfm?a=1005002](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Jhn/Jhn_008.cfm?a=1005002)

<sup>342</sup> <https://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/people/main-articles/mary-of-magdala.aspx>

<sup>343</sup> <https://www.wake-up.org/newsletter-archive/day-star-newsletter/the-mystery-of-mary-magdalene-july-2007.html>

<sup>344</sup> Strong. p194. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/194/mode/2up>

<sup>21</sup> Then Jesus said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come."

<sup>22</sup> So the Jews said, "Will He kill Himself, because He says, 'Where I go you cannot come'?"

<sup>23</sup> And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.

<sup>24</sup> "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am [He], you will die in your sins."

<sup>25</sup> Then they said to Him, "Who are You?" And Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. <sup>26</sup> "I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him."

<sup>27</sup> They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father.

<sup>28</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am [He], and [that] I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. <sup>29</sup> "And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him." <sup>30</sup> As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.

<sup>31</sup> Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.

<sup>32</sup> "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

<sup>33</sup> They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How [can] You say, 'You will be made free'?"

<sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. <sup>35</sup> "And a slave does not abide in the house forever, [but] a son abides forever. <sup>36</sup> "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

<sup>37</sup> "I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.

<sup>38</sup> "I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father."

<sup>39</sup> They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. <sup>40</sup> "But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. <sup>41</sup> "You do the deeds of your father." Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father--God."

<sup>42</sup> Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. <sup>43</sup> "Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. <sup>44</sup> "You are of [your] father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own [resources], for he is a liar and the father of it. <sup>45</sup> "But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. <sup>46</sup> "Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? <sup>47</sup> "He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God."

<sup>48</sup> Then the Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?"

<sup>49</sup> Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. <sup>50</sup> "And I do not seek My [own] glory; there is One who seeks and judges. <sup>51</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death."

<sup>52</sup> Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.' <sup>53</sup> "Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?"

<sup>54</sup> Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God. <sup>55</sup> "Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. <sup>56</sup> "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw [it] and was glad."

<sup>57</sup> Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"

<sup>58</sup> Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

<sup>59</sup> Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. [John 8:12-59 NKJV](#)

This teaching followed the incident of the woman caught in adultery, possibly even the same day. If it immediately followed, then this teaching would have occurred in one of the outer courts of the temple. Teaching in the innermost temple courtyard would have limited His audience to only male Jews.

I feel that this teaching is along similar lines to Jesus' teaching on the last day of the feast. On that day He said He could give rest to the weary and quench their soul thirst. On this day He says believing in Him brings true freedom from slavery to sin. The Pharisees were at their wits end trying to figure out how to deal with Jesus. They were so angry and at the same time helpless. They were like the mean kid with a powerful dad getting in arguments and fights on the playground, but not being able to respond with logic. The Pharisees claimed they had a famous father (Abraham and God) and essentially called Jesus a bastard (born of fornication). While they were at it calling names, they called Him a Samaritan (purely as an insult), and demon possessed. And finally, they picked up rocks to throw at Him.

At this time Jesus also called Himself the Light of the world. He was teaching in a courtyard of the Temple which was packed with symbols of Himself and His sacrifice to save. Light and fire has always been a symbol for God. In the temple was the seven-branch lampstand. Recall that God appeared to Moses in a burning bush [[Exodus 3:2](#)]. His presence with the Israelites was in the form of a pillar of fire [[Exodus 13:21](#)]. David said, "The Lord is my light and my salvation" [[Psalm 27:1](#)]. Isaiah prophesied, "I will also make You a light of the nations" [[Isaiah 49:6](#)]. John describing Jesus said, "His face was like the sun shining in its strength" [[Revelation 1:16](#)]. These are just a few of the verses referring to God as light. Physically and scientifically speaking, light is a form of energy, darkness is only the absence of it. If you shine a light, darkness is eliminated wherever the light shines, but you cannot do the opposite. Can you carry on with the analogies between light and dark, God and Satan, good and evil, life and death?

Jesus knew His time with the disciples was running out. From a human perspective, it might seem like Jesus was a failure. The leaders of the nation wanted to kill Him, His own disciples still didn't understand His mission, He had crowds of people following Him around for the wrong reasons.

What do you believe?

- How do you picture a sinner being a slave to sin?
- Do you think we can receive freedom from slavery to sin while still living in this sinful world?
- Do you think Jesus felt discouraged, or do you think He knew things were going as expected?

## The Good Samaritan

[Luke 10:17-37](#), [Matthew 11:25-27](#)<sup>345</sup>

[Luke 10:17](#) Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."

<sup>18</sup> And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. <sup>19</sup> "Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. <sup>20</sup> "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

<sup>21</sup> In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from [the] wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. <sup>22</sup> "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and [the one] to whom the Son wills to reveal [Him]."

[Matthew 11:25](#) At that time Jesus answered and said,

"I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from [the] wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. <sup>26</sup> "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. <sup>27</sup> "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and [the one] to whom the Son wills to reveal [Him]. [Matthew 11:25-27 NKJV](#)

<sup>23</sup> Then He turned to [His] disciples and said privately, "Blessed [are] the eyes which see the things you see;

<sup>24</sup> "for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen [it], and to hear what you hear, and have not heard [it]."

<sup>25</sup> And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

<sup>26</sup> He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading [of it]?"

<sup>27</sup> So he answered and said,

"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.' "

[Deuteronomy 6:5](#) "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

[Leviticus 19:18](#) ... but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: ...

<sup>28</sup> And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live."

[Leviticus 18:5](#) 'You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I [am] the LORD.

<sup>29</sup> But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

<sup>345</sup> Strong. p200. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/200/mode/2up>

<sup>30</sup> Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain [man] went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded [him], and departed, leaving [him] half dead. <sup>31</sup> "Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> "Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. <sup>34</sup> "So he went to [him] and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> "On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave [them] to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' <sup>36</sup> "So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?"

<sup>37</sup> And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." [Luke 10:17-37 NKJV](#)

Strong has the seventy missionaries that Jesus sent out the month before returning to Him now. It wasn't stated that they were given healing powers, but they did cast out demons in the name of Jesus. But it does say that they were given immunity to scorpions and snakes and in general had God's supernatural protection from any attempt to harm them. I know this doesn't mean that every follower of Jesus will have his life miraculously protected all the time, because Jesus, John the Baptist, and His own disciples were all killed by their opponents. But clearly, He did not intend for any of the seventy to be harmed on this particular mission. Finally, He gave them a warning not be proud of supernatural power that they may have been allowed to tap into, but to be happy their names were written in heaven.

The story of the Good Samaritan is possibly the most well-known parable of Jesus. In fact, the title given to the story, "The Good Samaritan," is probably known and used by many who don't even know the story, but use the phrase as an expression of doing a good deed for someone. The story came about because a lawyer tested Jesus with a question. We don't really know if this was an honest question or if it was an attempt to get Jesus to say something they could use against Him. This time Jesus decided to respond with a question. The lawyer responded with a summary of the law that the Jews had been given in Deuteronomy, which had been incorporated into the Shema which was a prayer that was supposed to be recited by Jews every morning and evening.<sup>346 347</sup> But I think this lawyer was already ahead of the game so to speak because he added a second part to his summary of the law, that being to love your neighbor as yourself. After Jesus had commended him for his good answer, he seemed unsatisfied because he asked a follow-on question which led to the well-known story.

We cannot know from the Bible whether this story was told from an actual occurrence or not, but since the road from Jericho to Jerusalem was well known for its danger, everyone could easily relate. Ellen White stated that it was an actual occurrence and that the Priest and the Levite in the story were actually in attendance.<sup>348</sup>

---

What do you believe?

- Do you believe that stopping for a stranded motorist or hitch hiker today is any more or less dangerous than it was for the Samaritan to stop and help the man?

<sup>346</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shema\\_Yisrael](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shema_Yisrael)

<sup>347</sup> <http://www.jewfaq.org/shemaref.htm>

<sup>348</sup> White. *Desire of Ages*. p499

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=499>



- Deuteronomy and the Shema say: with heart, soul, might; but the lawyer answered with: heart, soul, strength, and mind. Where do you think that difference came from? Someone else summarized the Law of God the same way, who do you think said it first?
- Do you think the priest had good reasons even beyond the danger for rationalizing not helping the wounded man?

## Only one thing is necessary

[Luke 10:38-42](#)<sup>349</sup>

[Luke 10:38](#) Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. <sup>39</sup> And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."

<sup>41</sup> And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.

<sup>42</sup> "But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." [Luke 10:38-42 NKJV](#)

When people gather together the serving of food is often a key element in promoting time for mingling and socialization. Often gatherings are planned around mealtimes and in some cultures, the serving of food is a necessary part of showing hospitality. But when there is food, there must also be those who prepare and serve it. It is a necessary role and those who benefit from it would do well to express their appreciation. In the Gospels, Martha has always been known for her dedication and excellence in the role of preparing and serving food. At that time and in that culture it was, I think, generally thought that the kitchen was the only appropriate place for women. The women would socialize over the preparation and serving of food, while the men would socialize over the consumption of it. I'm not debating whether these cultural norms are right or not, but clearly Martha saw her sister's role as helping her in the kitchen, and not socializing with the men who were being served. It must have been very difficult for Martha to take what sounded a lot like a rebuke for what was a very reasonable request. But here Jesus is giving us some priorities by which we should pattern our life. "Only one thing is necessary." Since we cannot sit physically at Jesus' feet, I substitute in its place personal time studying the Words of God and praying. I believe this is necessary in order to develop the relationship with Jesus which will lead us to be proper representatives of Him on earth and to be ready for Him when He returns.

---

What do you believe?

- What do you believe is the "one thing" Jesus said is necessary?
- What is it necessary for?
- Do you think Martha could have served and sat at the feet of Jesus as well?

---

<sup>349</sup> Strong. p203. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/202/mode/2up>

## The Lord's Prayer

[Luke 11:1-13](#), [Matthew 6:9-15](#), [Mark 11:25-26](#)<sup>350</sup>

[Luke 11:1](#) Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, [that] one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." <sup>2</sup> So He said to them, ... [Luke 11:1-2 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 6:9](#) "In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be Your name.

<sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come.

Your will be done

On earth as [it is] in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread.

<sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts,

As we forgive our debtors.

<sup>13</sup> And do not lead us into temptation,

But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

<sup>14</sup> "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. [Matthew 6:9-15 NKJV](#)

[Luke 11:2](#) ... "When you pray, say:

Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be Your name.

Your kingdom come.

Your will be done

On earth as [it is] in heaven.

<sup>3</sup> Give us day by day our daily bread.

<sup>4</sup> And forgive us our sins,

For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

And do not lead us into temptation,

But deliver us from the evil one." [Luke 11:2-4 NKJV](#)

[Mark 11:25](#) "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. <sup>26</sup> "But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses." [Mark 11:25-26 NKJV](#)

[Luke 11:5](#) And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; <sup>6</sup> 'for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; <sup>7</sup> "and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'? <sup>8</sup> "I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.

<sup>9</sup> "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup> "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. <sup>11</sup> "If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if [he asks] for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? <sup>12</sup> "Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? <sup>13</sup> "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will [your] heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" [Luke 11:5-13 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 7:7](#) "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup> "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. <sup>9</sup> "Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? <sup>10</sup> "Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent?

<sup>11</sup> "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! [Matthew 7:7-11 NKJV](#)

<sup>350</sup> Strong. p204. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/204/mode/2up>

The Lord’s Prayer is one that many have memorized and recited in groups. I believe that Jesus probably gave it as an example of how to pray rather than as something we would just recite over and over again. Noticing how short it is, I recalled Jesus actually having something to say about long prayers in public.

[Matthew 23:14](#) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation. [Matthew 23:14 NKJV](#)

[Mark 12:40](#) "who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation." [Mark 12:40 NKJV](#)

[Luke 20:47](#) "who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation." [Luke 20:47 NKJV](#)

The length of your prayer says nothing about what is in your heart. But Jesus did say that if you pray long prayers to make yourself look more holy, but are really a hypocrite, your condemnation will be worse. I know the point of this statement is not about how long our public prayers should be, but clearly long prayers for outward show is frowned upon by Jesus. I think one could have a general rule of short in public, long in private. Whether public or private, we can use the Lord’s Prayer as a template.

1. Address with familiarity and exaltation
  - a. Acknowledge God as our Father
  - b. Acknowledge His greatness, holiness, righteousness, etc...
2. Request His will be done
  - a. On earth
  - b. In our lives
3. Request or thanks for daily sustenance
  - a. Food
  - b. Shelter
4. Request forgiveness for our sins
5. Close with some exaltation

Strong diagramed the prayer in a unique way:

<i>Gradations</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Homage</i>	<i>Petitions</i>	<i>Doxology</i>	
<i>General</i>	Father	Hallowed be Your name	Give us this day our daily bread	For Yours is the kingdom	
<i>Christian</i>	our	Your kingdom come	And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors	and the power	forever
<i>Consummation</i>	Who is in heaven	Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven	And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.	and the glory	

Some time back I wrote a chapter on [The unpardonable sin](#). In that chapter I discussed the idea that there was no sin so bad that God would not forgive, if we repent and ask forgiveness. Well, I guess we should add one more condition for receiving forgiveness. If we refuse to forgive those who sin against us, God will refuse to forgive us when we ask for forgiveness. It really couldn't be stated any more clearly than it is in [Matthew 6:15](#). Perhaps another way to look at it is, if you refuse to forgive someone for something they did to you, perhaps that means you are not truly repentant of your sins?

The next section in [Luke 11:5-8](#) is a little puzzling. Is Jesus teaching that if we keep asking God over and over for something He will eventually tire of our nagging and grant our request? There was another occasion where Jesus talked about persistence in asking. In [Luke 18:1-8](#), He related a story of a widow who was being taken advantage of and how she appeared before the judge every day begging for justice. In Luke 11, He is talking about giving the Holy Spirit to those who ask, and in Luke 18, the example was about seeking justice.

What do you believe?

- What do you think Jesus meant when He prayed, "lead us not into temptation?"
- Is holding a grudge an unpardonable sin?
- Why should we have to be persistent in asking God for the Holy Spirit? Shouldn't asking once be enough?

## Jesus heals a blind man

[John 9](#)<sup>351</sup>

[John 9:1](#) Now as [Jesus] passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.

<sup>4</sup> "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; [the] night is coming when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

<sup>6</sup> When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. <sup>7</sup> And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.

<sup>8</sup> Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, "Is not this he who sat and begged?"

<sup>9</sup> Some said, "This is he." Others [said], "He is like him." He said, "I am [he]."

<sup>10</sup> Therefore they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?"

<sup>11</sup> He answered and said, "A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed, and I received sight."

<sup>12</sup> Then they said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know."

<sup>351</sup> Strong. p206. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/206/mode/2up>

<sup>13</sup> They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. <sup>14</sup> Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. <sup>15</sup> Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see."

<sup>16</sup> Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them.

<sup>17</sup> They said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."

<sup>18</sup> But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight. <sup>19</sup> And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?"

<sup>20</sup> His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; <sup>21</sup> "but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself." <sup>22</sup> His parents said these [things] because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed [that] He [was] Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. <sup>23</sup> Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

<sup>24</sup> So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner."

<sup>25</sup> He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner [or not] I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see."

<sup>26</sup> Then they said to him again, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?"

<sup>27</sup> He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear [it] again? Do you also want to become His disciples?"

<sup>28</sup> Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. <sup>29</sup> "We know that God spoke to Moses; [as for] this [fellow], we do not know where He is from."

<sup>30</sup> The man answered and said to them, "Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! <sup>31</sup> "Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. <sup>32</sup> "Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. <sup>33</sup> "If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing."

<sup>34</sup> They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out.

<sup>35</sup> Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?"

<sup>36</sup> He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?"

<sup>37</sup> And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you."

<sup>38</sup> Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him.

<sup>39</sup> And Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind."

<sup>40</sup> Then [some] of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, "Are we blind also?"

<sup>41</sup> Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains. [John 9 NKJV](#)

I'm sure this is not the first time Jesus has healed a person who was blind from birth, but with the disciples' question, it was a good time to correct a common misconception. The Jews and probably most people of the time believed that if you suffered from some physical sickness or handicap, it was a punishment for something you or your parents had done. Even though people in the past may not have known the scientific and physical causes, they could easily have seen the relationship between certain actions and their physical effects. Unfortunately, many natural consequences are even passed from parent to innocent child. Combining these observations with the belief that God punished them as a nation if they weren't faithful to Him, it's not that hard to see how they could have come to those conclusions. Jesus however, made it clear that God does not inflict an arbitrary sickness or physical handicap on someone because of a sin they or their parents committed. It does trouble me though that Jesus said the man was born blind so that: "the works of God might be displayed in him." I don't think He meant that literally but said it as a statement of the good that would come out of the healing.

An interesting question that ensued, with the healing having been performed on the Sabbath, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" Apparently, some people saw the miracles of Jesus as signs of His power rather than as acts to relieve suffering. Maybe this is one reason they were so opposed to Him healing on the Sabbath, or maybe not.

I found it interesting in [verse 17](#) where it said: "And there was a division among them." It is not clear to me whether this was a division among the Pharisees, or between them and others who were not Pharisees. Apparently, the miracles of Jesus were signs to these people, who were not willing to ascribe them to Satan's power. Those on the other side of the divide, as they always did, began to try to disprove or discredit the miracle. We have seen many cases where Jesus was questioned by these sceptics, and answered so wisely, they were silenced or reduced to name calling. Here I believe is an example of the Holy Spirit giving words to a man, so that he was able to so thoroughly win the verbal debate, that the Pharisees were again reduced to name calling.

In the last part of this encounter Jesus establishes an interesting principle. "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains." [\[verse 41\]](#) There is a principle in Western civilization called *Ignorantia juris non excusat* or *ignorantia legis neminem excusat* which is Latin for "ignorance of the law excuses not" and "ignorance of law excuses no one."<sup>352</sup> I guess one reason for the Latin is that it is adopted from Roman law. The basis of this principle is that if you are living under protection and authority of a government, it is your responsibility to be aware of the laws of the land. If this were not the case, all defendants could claim they were not aware of the law and since people cannot read minds, how can the claim be disproved? There are some measures in place to encourage the learning of applicable and relevant laws, for example, a driver's license test. In spite of the principle, there are cases where leniency is given, for example: a new law makes something illegal that was formerly legal, but insufficient notice has been given. It doesn't mean that law was not broken, but the ignorance in this case combined with the failure on the side of law enforcement may lead to a reduced penalty. I think another case for leniency could be, if a country conquers another, they cannot expect to judge all the conquered people by their laws until the new people have been informed of the laws. Finally, getting to Jesus' comment, does ignorance really excuse sin? I think in most cases a person knows that

---

<sup>352</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ignorantia\\_juris\\_non\\_excusat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ignorantia_juris_non_excusat)

murder is wrong whether they've read the Ten Commandments or not. But if someone has never heard of God, it doesn't seem fair to hold them responsible for their ignorance.

---

What do you believe?

- Why did Jesus choose to heal the man with clay made from His own spit?
- Why do you think Jesus kept healing on the Sabbath, when He knew how much trouble it would cause with the Pharisees?
- How do you think people who have never heard of God or seen a Bible will be judged by Him?

## The Good Shepherd

[John 10:1-21](#)<sup>353</sup>

[John 10:1](#) "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup> "But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup> "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup> "And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> "Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." <sup>6</sup> Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them.

<sup>7</sup> Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. <sup>8</sup> "All who [ever] came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. <sup>9</sup> "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have [it] more abundantly.

<sup>11</sup> "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup> "But a hireling, [he who is] not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. <sup>13</sup> "The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. <sup>14</sup> "I am the good shepherd; and I know My [sheep], and am known by My own. <sup>15</sup> "As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup> "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock [and] one shepherd.

<sup>17</sup> "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. <sup>18</sup> "No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

<sup>19</sup> Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings. <sup>20</sup> And many of them said, "He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?"

<sup>21</sup> Others said, "These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

[John 10:1-21 NKJV](#)

The shepherd as a symbol for God goes all the way back to the Old Testament. It is generally applied in the context of care and protection of His people. David, the shepherd who became king wrote numerous Psalms depicting God as a

---

<sup>353</sup> Strong. p211. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/210/mode/2up>

Shepherd for His followers. In this teaching Jesus drew parallels to several of the well-known characteristics of good shepherds. Sheep are known to be able to recognize faces and even remember them for years.<sup>354 355</sup> Presumably the same applies to voices as well. Jesus painted a verbal picture of Himself as the Good Shepherd, which should have been very familiar to the people listening. The following is my description of ancient shepherding based on the Bible and what I have heard from various places, provided without secular reference. Shepherds would stay with their flocks twenty-four hours a day. Possibly depending on the size of the flock, they might know each sheep by name. They were patient and tender with their flock, doing their best to protect them from unsafe terrain, predators and pests. At night they would usually try to find some kind of enclosure to contain and protect their sheep. Once the sheep were safely inside, the shepherd would sleep across the one entry-way, thus making themselves the door. Good shepherds would put their life at risk to protect their sheep from thieves or predatory animals. Hired shepherds were known to not risk their life to protect their sheep. This relationship was not only fitting for God, but it was one the hearers could easily relate to.

So, why were the people saying Jesus was demon possessed or insane? Was it because of the shepherd analogy, which was clearly ascribed to God in the Old Testament? Or was it because He said He can lay down His life and take it back up again? It seems that some were still not willing to ascribe the ability to heal the blind to Satan's power.

What do you believe?

- Why do you think the people were calling Jesus demon possessed or insane?
- Do you think shepherding was looked down on by these people?
- Do you think they saw God as their shepherd?

## If you are the Christ, tell us plainly

[John 10:22-42](#)<sup>356</sup>

[John 10:22](#) Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. <sup>23</sup> And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch. <sup>24</sup> Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."

<sup>25</sup> Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. <sup>26</sup> "But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. <sup>27</sup> "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. <sup>28</sup> "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. <sup>29</sup> "My Father, who has given [them] to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch [them] out of My Father's hand. <sup>30</sup> "I and [My] Father are one."

<sup>31</sup> Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. <sup>32</sup> Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?"

<sup>33</sup> The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God."

<sup>354</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheep#Intelligence\\_and\\_learning\\_ability](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheep#Intelligence_and_learning_ability)

<sup>355</sup> [http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2001/11/1107\\_TVsheep.html](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2001/11/1107_TVsheep.html)

<sup>356</sup> Strong. p213. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/212/mode/2up>



<sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods" '? <sup>35</sup> "If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), <sup>36</sup> "do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? <sup>37</sup> "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; <sup>38</sup> "but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father [is] in Me, and I in Him." <sup>39</sup> Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand.

[Exodus 7:1](#) So the LORD said to Moses: "See, I have made you [as] God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. [Exodus 7:1 NKJV](#)

<sup>40</sup> And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing at first, and there He stayed. <sup>41</sup> Then many came to Him and said, "John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true." <sup>42</sup> And many believed in Him there. [John 10:22-42 NKJV](#)

Strong says, according to the Apocrypha and Josephus, this Temple dedication anniversary was for the reinstatement of Jewish religion after it had been abolished by Antiochus.<sup>357</sup>

Jesus was not in the practice of calling Himself God or the Son of God. In fact, in one conversation with the disciples and Peter, Jesus told them not to tell people who He was.

[Matthew 16:16](#) Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ... <sup>20</sup> Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ. [Matthew 16:16,20 NKJV](#)

But can you guess who did know and call Jesus the Son of God? In two of his temptations, Satan tempted Jesus to prove that He was the Son of God.

[Matthew 8:29](#) And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?" [Matthew 8:29 NKJV](#)

[Mark 3:11](#) And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, "You are the Son of God." [Mark 3:11 NKJV](#)

[Luke 4:41](#) And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of God!" And He, rebuking [them], did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ. [Luke 4:41 NKJV](#)

Well, why did Jesus not want the disciples and demons calling Him the Son of God? One possible reason is that He knew the Jewish leaders would use it as evidence to crucify Him rather than believe in Him.

[Matthew 26:63](#) But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!"

<sup>64</sup> Jesus said to him, "[It is as] you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

<sup>65</sup> Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! <sup>66</sup> "What do you think?" They answered and said, "He is deserving of death." [Matthew 26:63-66 NKJV](#)

<sup>357</sup> Strong. p213. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/212/mode/2up>

[Luke 22:70](#) Then they all said, "Are You then the Son of God?" So He said to them, "You [rightly] say that I am."

<sup>71</sup> And they said, "What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth."

[Luke 22:70-71 NKJV](#)

Getting back to our story, can you just picture Jesus teaching in one of the outer courtyards of the temple, and the people start picking up stones. First of all, one might ask, why are their stones in the temple courtyard? I envisioned the temple courtyard being paved. Nevertheless, these men are picking up stones, feeling them out for the right size and shape, maybe trying to intimidate by tossing them in the air and catching them like a baseball. They are doing this because they feel Jesus has indirectly insinuated that He is the Son of God. But after Jesus' questioning response to them, they feel they couldn't get away with it that time, and no doubt angrily restrain themselves.

What do you believe?

- What do you think the term "Son of God" meant to the Jews?
- Do you think the Jews equated "Son of God" with the God who gave the Law on Mount Sinai?
- Why do you think the Jews restrained themselves from throwing the stones?

## The Death and Resurrection of Lazarus

[John 11:1-54](#)<sup>358</sup>

[John 11:1](#) Now a certain [man] was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup> It was [that] Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. <sup>3</sup> Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."

<sup>4</sup> When Jesus heard [that], He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

<sup>5</sup> Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. <sup>6</sup> So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. <sup>7</sup> Then after this He said to [the] disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."

<sup>8</sup> [The] disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?"

<sup>9</sup> Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. <sup>10</sup> "But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." <sup>11</sup> These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up."

<sup>12</sup> Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps he will get well." <sup>13</sup> However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.

<sup>14</sup> Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. <sup>15</sup> "And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him."

<sup>16</sup> Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

<sup>358</sup> Strong. p215. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n285/mode/2up>

<sup>17</sup> So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. <sup>18</sup> Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. <sup>19</sup> And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

<sup>20</sup> Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. <sup>21</sup> Now Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup> "But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

<sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

<sup>24</sup> Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

<sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

<sup>26</sup> "And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

<sup>27</sup> She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

<sup>28</sup> And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you." <sup>29</sup> As soon as she heard [that], she arose quickly and came to Him.

<sup>30</sup> Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him. <sup>31</sup> Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there."

<sup>32</sup> Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

<sup>33</sup> Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. <sup>34</sup> And He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see."

<sup>35</sup> Jesus wept. <sup>36</sup> Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!"

<sup>37</sup> And some of them said, "Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?"

<sup>38</sup> Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been [dead] four days."

<sup>40</sup> Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" <sup>41</sup> Then they took away the stone [from the place] where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up [His] eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. <sup>42</sup> "And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said [this], that they may believe that You sent Me." <sup>43</sup> Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" <sup>44</sup> And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."

<sup>45</sup> Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. <sup>46</sup> But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. <sup>47</sup> Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. <sup>48</sup> "If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."

<sup>49</sup> And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, <sup>50</sup> "nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish." <sup>51</sup> Now this he did not say on his own [authority]; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, <sup>52</sup> and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.

<sup>53</sup> Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death. <sup>54</sup> Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples. [John 11:1-54 NKJV](#)

I have mentioned his name a couple times, but this is the first time we read about Lazarus in the Gospel account. We have read of Mary and Martha before, in the chapter, [Only one thing is necessary \[Luke 10:38-42\]](#). There is no mention of parents and it appears that the sisters Mary and Martha live together in a household with their brother. If the sisters do live together with their brother, it would strongly suggest that they are not married. There is every indication that Jesus has been in the home before, when Martha served and Mary sat at His feet [\[Luke 10:38-42\]](#). In the current story, the sisters sent word to Jesus saying, "he whom you love is sick" [\[John 11:3\]](#). And "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." [\[John 11:5\]](#). In the next chapter of John, we will find Jesus again being served by Martha, with Lazarus present. On another occasion, Matthew said, "And He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there" [\[Matthew 21:17\]](#) Although Matthew doesn't say where in Bethany they stayed, when you put all these statements together, it is easy to assume where they may have stayed. All of these statements together seem to indicate a great deal of familiarity. John also tells us that it was only about two miles between Jerusalem and Bethany [\[John 11:18\]](#). A picture begins to emerge of the household of Lazarus, Martha and Mary in Bethany, as a home away from home, for Jesus and His disciples. My guess is that they would often spend the night there whenever they were in Jerusalem. I think it was probably also a place where Jesus could feel safe that His words were not being parsed to use against Him.

In [verse 2](#), John tells us that this Mary is the one who anointed Jesus' feet with ointment and wiped them with her hair. This is a puzzle piece to another story we know, but what is also interesting about it is that John doesn't relate this story until the next chapter. Some including myself have taken this to mean that Jesus' feet could have been anointed by Mary earlier in His ministry, when He was invited to the house of Simon the Pharisee [\[Luke 7:37-38\]](#).

It used to bother me that Jesus said the sickness will not end in death [\[verse 4\]](#), when He knew He was going to let Lazarus die. But I believe what Jesus meant was that death was not the end for him. It does seem strange however, that the story says Jesus loved them so when He heard Lazarus was sick, He waited two days before leaving the place to go to them. The Jews had been asking for a sign, and Jesus was planning a big one. He knew it would strengthen the faith of Mary, Martha and Lazarus as well as His disciples. But in order to perform this sign, Lazarus had to take one for the team.

The other resurrections Jesus performed had all taken place shortly after death, and in one case Jesus even said the girl is not dead but sleeping [\[Matthew 9:24\]](#). Even though the people in that story laughed at Him because they knew she was dead, it left room for doubters to claim she had not been resurrected but had merely been revived. This time there would be no doubt about it.

As it turned out [verse 45](#) says that many people who came to Mary (presumably those who came to mourn), believed. But apparently there were some spies even among the mourners, because they ran to the chief priests and reported what had happened. If you will recall, multiple times the Jews had asked Jesus for signs, but now the truth comes out, that they had considered His miracles signs. [Verse 47](#) says, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs."

In the end, their jealousy and hatred of Jesus not only led them to ignore this sign, but they resolved to kill Him. What's more, [verse 10](#) of the next chapter says, they even planned to kill Lazarus.

What do you believe?

- How many other people had Jesus resurrected from death?
- Why did Jesus cry considering that He was just about to bring Lazarus back to life?
- Why do you think the chief priests were even plotting to kill Lazarus?

## Jesus heals a hunchbacked woman on Sabbath

[Mark 10:1](#), [Matthew 19:1-2](#), [Luke 13:10-17](#)<sup>359</sup>

[Mark 10:1](#) Then He arose from there and came to the region of Judea by the other side of the Jordan. And multitudes gathered to Him again, and as He was accustomed, He taught them again. [Mark 10:1 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 19:1](#) ... and came to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. <sup>2</sup> And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them there. [Matthew 19:1-2 NKJV](#)

[Luke 13:10](#) Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. <sup>11</sup> And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise [herself] up. <sup>12</sup> But when Jesus saw her, He called [her] to [Him] and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." <sup>13</sup> And He laid [His] hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. <sup>14</sup> But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, "There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day." <sup>15</sup> The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead [it] away to water it? <sup>16</sup> "So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound--think of it--for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" <sup>17</sup> And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him. [Luke 13:10-17 NKJV](#)

I'm a little puzzled by the notion that this hunchback condition is caused by a spirit. In "typical" demon possession, it seemed that Jesus usually addressed the demon in casting it out and there was often a departing exclamation from it. Perhaps this is a case of a physical ailment caused by Satan without possession? Or is it possible that she had some seizures that led the people to believe she was possessed by a demon? Finally, as the one who introduced sin into our world, isn't it fair to credit Satan with all physical ailments.

Having taken that little diversion, I think the primary concern of this story is the appropriateness of performing certain actions on the Sabbath. This question has come up many times before because of the frequency with which the Jews accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath by healing. But it certainly hasn't changed His behavior and again He defends His action without setting aside the Sabbath commandment. His justification has generally been, it is lawful to relieve suffering on the Sabbath. Now I think there is a difference between what Jesus did without charge, and a physician setting up clinic on Sabbath and charging for his services. So, I think motivation for the action plays an important role in determining its appropriateness.

<sup>359</sup> Strong. p221. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/220/mode/2up>

What do you believe?

- If you are a doctor or nurse, do you think it's ok to keep the money you earn on Sabbath?
- Do you think it is ok to have a full-on FREE health clinic for the needy on Sabbath?
- Obviously, we accept performing some health services on Sabbath at least in part because of Jesus' example. Are there other non-health related services that you would also feel comfortable including?
- If you had a plumbing emergency on Sabbath and are willing to call a stranger within your gates to work on it, should you as a plumber also be willing to answer someone else's emergency? If so, would you charge?

## Narrow is the way that leads to life and few find it

[Luke 13:22-30](#), [Matthew 7:13-14](#), [22-23](#), [8:11-12](#)<sup>360</sup>

[Luke 13:22](#) And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. <sup>23</sup> Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?" And He said to them, <sup>24</sup> "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, ... [Luke 13:22-24 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 7:13](#) "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide [is] the gate and broad [is] the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. <sup>14</sup> "Because narrow [is] the gate and difficult [is] the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. [Matthew 7:13-14 NKJV](#)

[Luke 13:24](#) ... for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. <sup>25</sup> "When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' <sup>26</sup> "then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.'

[Matthew 7:22](#) "Many will say to Me in that day,

'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

<sup>27</sup> "But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.'

[Psalm 6:8](#) Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity; ... [Psalm 6:8 NKJV](#)

<sup>23</sup> "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

[Matthew 7:22-23 NKJV](#)

<sup>28</sup> "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out.

[Matthew 8:12](#) ... There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." [Matthew 8:12 NKJV](#)

<sup>29</sup> "They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God.

[Matthew 8:11](#) "And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>12</sup> "But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. ... [Matthew 8:11-12 NKJV](#)

<sup>30</sup> "And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last." [Luke 13:24-30 NKJV](#)

<sup>360</sup> Strong. p222. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/222/mode/2up>

It is very popular these days among those who call themselves followers, that God is love and will take them all to heaven. In fact, sometimes I think these followers have the old Jewish mentality, that they are God's chosen, and will automatically be saved. But this is not what Jesus taught. His exact words are "Because narrow [is] the gate and difficult [is] the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." [\[Matthew 7:14\]](#) I believe the popular view is a tactic of Satan to get people to be complacent. Now the question is: is this statement directed specifically at the Jews, and I think by extension, to any who consider themselves God's chosen? [Luke 13:24](#) implies that Jesus is talking about people who are trying or expecting to get to heaven. So, these are people who know about heaven. They even prophesied, cast out demons and performed miracles in the name of Jesus. But He will say, "depart from me, all you evildoers" [\[Luke 13:27\]](#). But here's where it gets interesting. While Jesus says few of them will get in, He says many will come from the east and west, while the sons of the kingdom will be cast out [\[Matthew 8:11-12\]](#). I don't think Jesus is necessarily saying a lower proportion of those who profess to be followers of Him will be in heaven than those who do not. But I do think He means that many who we think will not be saved will be there, while many who we think will be saved will not. Finally, Jesus throws out one more surprise. It is fairly natural for people to place or see themselves in a hierarchy. But Jesus says that some who think they are at the top of the hierarchy, and most important will be surprised to find themselves at the bottom when they get to heaven. And some who humbly go about their business serving Christ through their fellow man will be surprised to see themselves at the top.

---

What do you believe?

- Do you think the statement that few will get to heaven applied just to the Jewish religious leaders, or to all who call themselves chosen, or to everyone in the world?
- How do you think that people who are even able to cast out demons and heal could be lost?
- It sounds like there will be some sort of hierarchy in heaven. How do you envision that working?

## Jesus heals a man of dropsy in a Pharisee's house on Sabbath

[Luke 13:31-35](#), [14:1-6](#)<sup>361</sup>

[Luke 13:31](#) On that very day some Pharisees came, saying to Him, "Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You." <sup>32</sup> And He said to them, "Go, tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third [day] I shall be perfected.' <sup>33</sup> "Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the [day] following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.

<sup>34</sup> "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen [gathers] her brood under [her] wings, but you were not willing! <sup>35</sup> "See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until [the time] comes when you say,

'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' " [Luke 13:31-35 NKJV](#) [Psalm 118:26](#) Blessed [is] he who comes in the name of the LORD! ... [Psalm 118:26 NKJV](#)

[Luke 14:1](#) Now it happened, as He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath, that they watched Him closely. <sup>2</sup> And behold, there was a certain man before Him who had dropsy.

<sup>3</sup> And Jesus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"

---

<sup>361</sup> Strong. p224. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/224/mode/2up>

<sup>4</sup> But they kept silent. And He took [him] and healed him, and let him go. <sup>5</sup> Then He answered them, saying, "Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?" <sup>6</sup> And they could not answer Him regarding these things. [Luke 14:1-6 NKJV](#)

As I contemplated these verses from Luke, I wondered to myself, why would a Pharisee be warning Jesus of a plot to kill Him? Assuming they were in Herod's territory, I would think the jealous Pharisees would be happy to have Herod take care of their problem. One possible reason I could think of was that these were sympathetic Pharisees, perhaps one such as Nicodemus. By calling him a fox, Jesus was essentially calling Herod a sly cunning man. His response was also a slam against the wicked kings of Judah who had killed prophets in Jerusalem. I think He was also implying that as long as He was following God's plan and had unfinished business, no one could touch Him. At the end of that conversation, Jesus said the next time He entered Jerusalem, it would be a fulfillment of the prophecy of Him riding on a donkey to the praises of the people.

On Sabbath, Jesus was dining at the home of one of the leaders of the Pharisees. Here we again find either a sympathetic Pharisee or one who was laying a trap for Jesus, inside the confines and walls of his own home. It is unlikely that a sick man would just happen to find himself in front of Jesus in the home of one of leaders of the Pharisees. In fact, I can't imagine the Pharisees allowing such a man, whom they probably considered a sinner, into their house except to lay a trap for Jesus.

I was curious what dropsy was and I found this in biblestudytools.com:

drop'-si (hudropikos, "a man afflicted with hudrops or dropsy"):

Both forms of this disease occur in Palestine, that in which the limbs and body are distended with water called anasarca, depending generally on cardiac or renal disease, and the form confined to the abdomen, usually the result of liver infection. The latter is the commoner, as liver disease is a frequent result of recurrent attacks of malarial fever. The man was evidently able to move about, as he had entered into the Pharisee's house ([Luke 14:2](#)). <http://www.biblestudytools.com/encyclopedias/isbe/dropsy.html>

Jesus kept hammering His theme that it is lawful to relieve suffering on the Sabbath. His point, of them being willing to pull their son or ox out of the ditch on Sabbath, was obviously true because they didn't disagree. So, if it was their son Jesus was healing on Sabbath, I bet they would be much less antagonistic. Their whole attitude kind of makes you feel like they cared more for their own livestock than the sick common people whom they considered sinners.

---

What do you believe?

- Do you think either of these instances were sympathetic Pharisees?
- What thoughts come to your mind when you read [verse 34](#)? "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen [gathers] her brood under [her] wings, but you were not willing!"
- I could envision a Pharisee pulling their son out of the ditch, but why would they pull their livestock out on the Sabbath day?



## The parable of the marriage feast

[Matthew 22:1-14](#), [Luke 14:16-24](#)<sup>362</sup>

[Matthew 22:1](#) And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: <sup>2</sup> "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, <sup>3</sup> "and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. <sup>4</sup> "Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle [are] killed, and all things [are] ready. Come to the wedding.' " [Matthew 22:1-4 NKJV](#)

[Luke 14:18](#) "But they all with one [accord] began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' <sup>19</sup> "And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' <sup>20</sup> "Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' [Luke 14:18-20 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 22:5](#) "But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. <sup>6</sup> "And the rest seized his servants, treated [them] spitefully, and killed [them]. <sup>7</sup> "But when the king heard [about it], he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. <sup>8</sup> "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. <sup>9</sup> 'Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.' <sup>10</sup> "So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good.

[Luke 14:16](#) Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, <sup>17</sup> "and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' [Luke 14:16-17 NKJV](#)

" [Matthew 22:1-4 NKJV](#)

[Luke 14:21](#) "So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, ... —<sup>24</sup> "For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.' "—<sup>21</sup> ... 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here [the] poor and [the] maimed and [the] lame and [the] blind.' <sup>22</sup> "And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' <sup>23</sup> "Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel [them] to come in, that my house may be filled. [Luke 14:21-24 NKJV](#)

And the wedding [hall] was filled with guests.

<sup>11</sup> "But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment.

<sup>12</sup> "So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless.

<sup>13</sup> "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast [him] into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' <sup>14</sup> "For many are called, but few [are] chosen." [Matthew 22:5-14 NKJV](#)

As He did with many of His parables in Matthew, Jesus began by saying, the kingdom of heaven may be compared to. No analogy is perfect, and I do not believe having a list of selected guests reflects God's desire for who will be saved. In this case it actually fit what the Jews thought of themselves as the favored and perhaps the only people of God. It is pretty clear that the mistreatment of the king's slaves was symbolic of the way the Jews had treated some of the prophets who had been sent by God. As a result, the Jews suffered at the hands of armies, no longer held back by God's protection. I believe the next part of the parable was to be an analogy of what would take place after His death, when all people from every nation would be invited to join the Christian movement. It mattered not whether they were poor, crippled, blind, lame, evil or good, as long as they were willing to wear the wedding garment. I find the language, "compel them to come

<sup>362</sup> Strong. p226. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/226/mode/2up>

in,” to show God’s great desire to save as many as possible. The parable covers all the way to the second coming and entry to heaven. I do not believe it literally means that everyone will be brought up to heaven first, and then those who did not accept Christ’s righteousness will be expelled. I believe the point is that the garment symbolizes the righteousness of Christ that is freely offered to cover our imperfections. Without this garment we are unworthy to enter His Kingdom.

What do you believe?

- Do you think the use of the wedding analogy goes deeper than just the idea of invited and admitted guests?
- What does it mean to you for someone to be in the wedding hall without the wedding clothes?
- What does the symbolism of binding the man hand and foot before he is cast out mean to you?

## Test of discipleship

[Luke 14:25-35](#), [Matthew 10:37](#)<sup>363</sup>

[Luke 14:25](#) Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup> "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. <sup>27</sup> "And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. <sup>28</sup> "For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has [enough] to finish [it]—<sup>29</sup> "lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see [it] begin to mock him, <sup>30</sup> "saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' <sup>31</sup> "Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> "Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. <sup>33</sup> "So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

[Matthew 10:37](#) "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. [Matthew 10:37 NKJV](#)

<sup>34</sup> "Salt [is] good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? <sup>35</sup> "It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, [but] men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" [Luke 14:25-35 NKJV](#)

Wow, this seems really harsh. Does Jesus really want us to hate our parents and family? Let look at a few verses to see what Bible teaches.

[Exodus 20:12](#) "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you. [Exodus 20:12 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 21:15](#) "And he who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. ... <sup>17</sup> "And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. [Exodus 21:15, 17 NKJV](#)

[Leviticus 19:3](#) 'Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and keep My Sabbaths: I [am] the LORD your God. [Leviticus 19:3 NKJV](#)

<sup>363</sup> Strong. p229. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/228/mode/2up>

[Ephesians 6:1](#) Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. [Ephesians 6:1 NKJV](#)

[Colossians 3:20](#) Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. [Colossians 3:20 NKJV](#)

I think the Bible is pretty clear that we are not to disrespect our parents. So, can we hate and respect our parents at the same time. I think in the context of everything the Bible teaches and the way Jesus lived, the best possible interpretation is what we read in [Matthew 10:37](#), which says we must love God more than we love our father, mother and family. To me, that means we should love God so much more than we love our parents and family, that by comparison, it would be like the opposite extreme.

I think Jesus is giving us a way to measure whether we can be a true follower of His. If we don't love God enough, then we will not be willing to pay the cost of following Him. Using very graphic language Jesus added, that we must be willing to carry the cross to our own crucifixion as He knew He would be doing. At the time everyone knew what carrying the cross meant, and how horrible crucifixion was. There were probably constant reminders of it around them which is one of the reasons they hated the Romans so much. This is not the first time Jesus has used this language of the cross. We discussed it in an earlier chapter, [The cost of following Jesus](#).

But He didn't stop there, Jesus gave a couple more examples. Counting your funds before starting to build, to make sure you have enough, and considering whether your army is big or strong enough to win before going into battle. Finally, Jesus said none of them could be His disciples without giving up all their possessions. I have claimed before that God doesn't expect every follower to give up all their possessions, but is this true in light of what we just read? In the Bible we can find examples for both sides of the argument. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had great possessions and didn't liquidate them. Job had great possessions as well but showed that he was willing to trust God in spite of losing everything. The very generation that Jesus was speaking to at the time demonstrated their willingness precisely as He said they should.

[Acts 4:34](#) Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, <sup>35</sup> and laid [them] at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need. [Acts 4:34-35 NKJV](#)

So, would the church and true followers of Jesus be better off if they followed this example? It clearly shows the level of commitment and finally I think as Jesus said, that it is hard for a rich man to be saved. I think this is true for at least two reasons.

1. I think the more you have, the harder it is to give it all up
2. When you have the ability to buy whatever you want, it's harder to develop a true trust and dependence on God.

---

What do you believe?

- Why do you think we must love God so much?
- Is loving God more for His benefit or ours?
- Is the cost of discipleship the same for everyone or do some pay more?
- If some end up paying more, is that fair?
- Is Jesus suggesting that we should count the cost first and if we don't think we are willing to pay the price, not to become a disciple?

- Why don't we advocate selling all we have to followers of Jesus today?

## The lost sheep, the lost coin and the prodigal son

[Luke 15:1-32](#), [Matthew 18:12-14](#)<sup>364</sup>

[Luke 15:1](#) Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. <sup>2</sup> And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them." <sup>3</sup> So He spoke this parable to them, saying:

<sup>4</sup> "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? <sup>5</sup> "And when he has found [it], he lays [it] on his shoulders, rejoicing. <sup>6</sup> "And when he comes home, he calls together [his] friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' <sup>7</sup> "I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

[Matthew 18:12](#) "What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? <sup>13</sup> "And if he should find it,

assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that [sheep] than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. <sup>14</sup> "Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish. [Matthew 18:12-14 NKJV](#)

<sup>8</sup> "Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds [it]? <sup>9</sup> "And when she has found [it], she calls [her] friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!' <sup>10</sup> "Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

<sup>11</sup> Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. <sup>12</sup> "And the younger of them said to [his] father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls [to me].' So he divided to them [his] livelihood. <sup>13</sup> "And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. <sup>14</sup> "But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want.

<sup>15</sup> "Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

<sup>16</sup> "And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him [anything].

<sup>17</sup> "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! <sup>18</sup> 'I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, <sup>19</sup> "and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants." '

<sup>20</sup> "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> "And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

<sup>22</sup> "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put [it] on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on [his] feet. <sup>23</sup> 'And bring the fatted calf here and kill [it], and let us eat and be merry; <sup>24</sup> 'for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.

<sup>364</sup> Strong. p230. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/230/mode/2up>

<sup>25</sup> "Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.  
<sup>26</sup> "So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. <sup>27</sup> "And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.'

<sup>28</sup> "But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. <sup>29</sup> "So he answered and said to [his] father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends.  
<sup>30</sup> 'But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.'

<sup>31</sup> "And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. <sup>32</sup> 'It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.' " [Luke 15:1-32 NKJV](#)

This is a series of three related parables that illustrate God's love for lost souls and His joy over their repentance and salvation. In the first story, I have always thought of the "nine-nine who need no repentance," as people who are already believers and followers of Jesus. But really, we are all sinners, in need of repentance. I like Matthew Henry's commentary which likens the ninety-nine to vast majority of God's creation who did not rebel against Him and hence need no repentance.<sup>365</sup> Examining this parable literally, God went looking for the soul who possibly felt lost and alone but was not looking for Him. But why does God need to look for us when He knows exactly where we are? There must be a different interpretation to the verb look in this parable. I think God wishes to save every soul, but maybe He can only save those who allow themselves to be found. I know this deviates from the symbolism of the parable because the sheep doesn't really have any influence over whether it is found or not. Clearly if God knows where everyone is and not everyone is found, there must be some reason He cannot find some.

In the second parable, the condition of the lost soul is different, in that it doesn't even feel lost. I wonder, how does God go looking for this class of people without violating their free will? Will the sinfulness in this world eventually create a need that God can use? But if that is the case, how is this parable different from the lost sheep? It seems in this case the coin is not capable of even knowing it is lost or in need of anything? If God can save this class of people, why can't He save everyone then?

Finally, the symbolism in the last story is about someone who rejects God, then comes back when he realizes what He lost. After the son is welcomed back, we learn of another class of people who serve God begrudgingly and are not willing to accept the repentant son back.

In all three cases it is made abundantly clear that God is overjoyed when someone is found or finds his way back. This is a strong reminder of how much God loves us.

What do you believe?

- Can you think of specific examples or at least types of people for each of the three stories?
- Can God save people who aren't looking for Him without violating their free will?
- Do you think the older son in the last story is lost?

<sup>365</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Luk/Luk\\_015.cfm?a=988007](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Luk/Luk_015.cfm?a=988007)

## The shrewd steward

[Luke 16:1-9](#)<sup>366</sup>

[Luke 16:1](#) He also said to His disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. <sup>2</sup> "So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.'

<sup>3</sup> "Then the steward said within himself, 'What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. <sup>4</sup> 'I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.'

<sup>5</sup> "So he called every one of his master's debtors to [him], and said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' <sup>6</sup> "And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' So he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' <sup>7</sup> "Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' So he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' <sup>8</sup> "So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.

<sup>9</sup> "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. [Luke 16:1-9 NKJV](#)

The story begins by introducing the main character as a dishonest steward squandering his master's possessions. He was obviously lazy, and maybe even padding his pockets on both sides of his dealings. When he got wind that he was going to lose his job, characteristically he applied his shrewdness toward his own survival. He proceeded to show compassion toward the master's creditors (at the master's expense) to put them in his debt. The troubling part of the story is that the master commends the ingenuity and shrewdness of the fired steward, and it seems that Jesus does as well. This strange story culminates with [verse 9](#) saying, "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home."

Ok, let's take a deep breath and see if we can make sense of this story in terms of it being a recommendation from Jesus. Based on the master's casualness with the situation, I'm going to say that he must have been very rich and though the steward was losing money, it really wasn't hurting him at all. One reason I say that is that there is no mention of punishment or forcing the steward to pay back what he squandered. Another is that the way Jesus told it, I can almost see the master chuckling to himself when he heard what the fired steward did. So, what is Jesus recommending we take from this story? Let's look at His two wrap up statements and try to understand them.

1. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.
2. And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home.

Although doing it for selfish reasons, the steward showed compassion to the master's debtors to gain their friendship. The master represents God, who is so rich, it is impossible for Him to become poor by us squandering his blessings. Those in debt to Him could be lost sinners, whose friendship we can try to gain by channeling some of God's blessing their direction. Maybe Jesus is saying the sons of light should use more strategy and psychology to try to gain the friendship and trust of sinners.

---

<sup>366</sup> Strong. p233. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/232/mode/2up>

The second statement, it turns out is really related to the first, if you think of “unrighteous mammon” as being worldly wealth. In fact, that is exactly what the NLT does.

[Luke 16:9](#) Here’s the lesson: Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. Then, when your earthly possessions are gone, they will welcome you to an eternal home. [Luke 16:9 NLT](#)

So, if you use your worldly wealth to gain friends and win them to Christ, they will be able to welcome you into their eternal homes.

What do you believe?

- Why do you think Jesus told this parable to the disciples, I thought He didn’t need to speak in parables to them?
- Why would the master praise the steward for his shrewdness?
- What does it mean to you that “For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light?”

## No man can serve two masters

[Luke 16:10-13](#), [Matthew 6:24](#)

[Luke 16:10](#) "He who [is] faithful in [what is] least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in [what is] least is unjust also in much. <sup>11</sup> "Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true [riches]? <sup>12</sup> "And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?"

<sup>13</sup> "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." [Matthew 6:24](#) "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. [Matthew 6:24 NKJV](#)

<sup>14</sup> Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him. <sup>15</sup> And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. [Luke 16:10-15 NKJV](#)

Before we go into the main topic of serving two masters, Jesus made another oft quoted statement, “He who [is] faithful in [what is] least is faithful also in much.” This a general principle of life and someone may very well have uttered it before Jesus. However, as He does with the next principle, He applies it to our spiritual life. In the previous discussion on [the shrewd steward](#), we interpreted “unrighteous mammon,” to mean worldly wealth. I believe in this case “unrighteous mammon,” has the same meaning. The NLT confirms this, and interprets “true riches,” as “true riches of heaven.” Now what is Jesus saying here? Is true riches of heaven something given on this earth, or is this something we receive in heaven? I don’t believe Jesus is saying that those who are not good managers of their money on earth will not make it to heaven. There are many people who are unfaithful in the use of worldly wealth, but does that mean they cannot be trusted with heavenly wealth? I think what Jesus may be saying here is that if a person is not faithful in using their worldly wealth to benefit those on earth who need help, that shows them to be unfit for heavenly wealth.

The title of this chapter, “no man can serve two masters,” sounds like a principle of life that has been around forever. I guess we can’t really know if Jesus was the first to say it or not. In any case, Jesus extended the principal to say, “You

cannot serve God and mammon." As I have stated before, I do not believe that a person with great worldly wealth cannot be taken to heaven. But I would be comfortable saying as Jesus did, that it is hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Many people think of wealth as something that can serve them, to give them things, to make them happy. But what often happens is that those with great wealth are consumed with acquiring more of it, and with not losing it. So, if wealth is like a master to those consumed with acquiring it, and that person also wishes to serve God, there will often be a conflict. As a side note to this conversation, one of the biggest problems with worldly wealth is that a person who can buy anything they want may feel need for nothing including God. Having said all of that I am not saying a wealthy person cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but as Jesus said, it is hard. If you feel God has given you the ability to earn great wealth, by freely giving of it to help others, you may avoid falling into the trap of becoming a slave to acquiring it.

The last principle covered in this chapter is that, whatever is highly desirable to us is detestable to God. This is generally true unless you have God living in your heart and your desires are influenced by His.

---

What do you believe?

- Can you think of someone who has demonstrated the principle that being faithful in little things means they can be trusted with big things?
- Do you think it is possible to be consumed with acquiring wealth and to serve God whole heartedly?
- Can you think of exceptions to the principle that things that are desirable to people are detestable to God?

## The rich man and Lazarus

[Luke 16:19-31](#)<sup>367</sup>

[Luke 16:19](#) "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. <sup>20</sup> "But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, <sup>21</sup> "desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. <sup>22</sup> "So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. <sup>23</sup> "And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

<sup>24</sup> "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' <sup>25</sup> "But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. <sup>26</sup> 'And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

<sup>27</sup> "Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, <sup>28</sup> 'for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' <sup>29</sup> "Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' <sup>30</sup> "And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' <sup>31</sup> "But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.' " [Luke 16:19-31 NKJV](#)

---

<sup>367</sup> Strong. p235. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/234/mode/2up>



For people who believe that we do not go immediately to heaven or hell when we die, this is one of those parts of the Bible that needs explanation. I wrote a whole chapter discussing what the Bible tells us about [what happens after death](#). In that chapter we mentioned this parable and rather than try to write something new about it I will include that text here.

The story of the rich man and Lazarus, might possibly be the Bible passage quoted most often to support the idea that people go directly to heaven or hell when they die. I believe this story to be a parable which doesn't really tell us whether it was something that actually happened or not, but we can see from [Luke 16:31](#) that Jesus had a main point to draw from this parable. If they don't believe Moses and the prophets, then they would not believe even if someone came back from the dead to warn them. The doubters were asking Jesus for a sign, a miracle, possibly even the resurrection of someone from the dead to convince them of who He was. This story and His conclusion were in response to this. In order to make His main point, His parable involved some people who were conscious after death. In that chapter on [what happens after death](#), I showed a lot of evidence that [there is no consciousness in death](#), [there is a resurrection for both the righteous](#) and [the wicked](#) when Jesus comes back. There are also many other details in the story which would not make sense if it were a true story of two real individuals.

Based on the conclusions that I have drawn, I believe that taking this story literally would be inconsistent with what the Bible teaches. Hence, it must be simply a story that Jesus made up or borrowed to make a point. A point which would shortly be proven true when he literally brought Lazarus back to life. In fact, instead of believing, the Pharisees plotted to kill the very man brought to life in order to silence him. Do you think Jesus specifically named the poor man Lazarus because He knew he would be bringing a real-life Lazarus back to life?

The following questions are partially obtained from a small booklet devoted entirely to this topic.<sup>368</sup>

---

What do you believe?

- Why is Lazarus resting in Abraham's bosom? Does everyone rest in his bosom?
- How could someone in hell simply talk to people in heaven? If such were the case, how would anyone in heaven have any peace or enjoyment, if people from hell could be pestering them for eternity? What if a friend or family member kept calling out to you from hell?
- We know that people's bodies decay after they die. So how would Lazarus have a finger and the rich man a tongue if they were spirits in heaven and hell?

## The persistent widow

[Luke 17:20-21](#), [Luke 18:1-8](#)<sup>369</sup>

[Luke 17:20](#) Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; <sup>21</sup> "nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." [Luke 17:20-21 NKJV](#)

[Luke 18:1](#) Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, <sup>2</sup> saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. <sup>3</sup> "Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' <sup>4</sup> "And he would not for a while; but afterward he

---

<sup>368</sup> Crews, Dennis, [The Rich Man and Lazarus](#), Amazing Facts, Roseville CA, 2009, p11-12. [\[online pdf\]](#)

<sup>369</sup> Strong. p237. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/236/mode/2up>

said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, <sup>5</sup> 'yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.' "

<sup>6</sup> Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. <sup>7</sup> "And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? <sup>8</sup> "I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" [Luke 18:1-8 NKJV](#)

After reading this parable, I struggled to understand the true meaning of it, even though it seems that Jesus straight up explained it. The two possible lessons here are:

1. Be persistent in praying
2. God will bring justice quickly

The two points seem to be somewhat at odds with each other. Why must we be persistent if God will bring justice quickly? The story seems to be teaching that the widow only had to be persistent because the judge was unjust, but there are other places where Jesus taught prayer persistence. In fact, this other illustration from Jesus seems to be teaching very similar lessons.

[Luke 11:5](#) And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; <sup>6</sup> 'for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; <sup>7</sup> "and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'? <sup>8</sup> "I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.

<sup>9</sup> "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

<sup>10</sup> "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. [Luke 11:5-10 NKJV](#)

Jesus straight up explained the first parable in [verse 8](#), but I think His explanation, "God will bring about justice for them quickly," needs explaining. The reason I say this is that I think we all know of instances when we or others have cried out to God for justice and did not get the immediate relief from the oppression. In fact, in this sinful world, many would argue, justice is more often than not denied to those who are poor and powerless. In the second story or parable, Jesus said, "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened." [\[Luke 11:9-10\]](#) I think this is also far from the experience many people have with prayer. Let's look at some more verses:

[1 John 5:14](#) Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

<sup>15</sup> And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. [1 John 5:14-15 NKJV](#)

[James 4:3](#) You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend [it] on your pleasures. [James 4:3 NKJV](#)

I will admit that there are more verses without conditions that say, ask and you will receive. But let's look at the relationship between parent and child which is a pretty good analogy for the relationship between God and us. Does a good parent give a child any and everything they ask for? Do they immediately grant requests that they know are good for their child? What usually becomes of a child who gets everything they want? Don't they usually become spoiled and worse off for it in the end? If God loves us more than our parents do, and can more clearly see the big picture, does it

make sense why He doesn't grant every request? But this still doesn't answer or explain why God doesn't always give justice immediately to those that ask. Clearly justice is one of those types of requests that a good parent would always grant a child. I can come up with one explanation, but it is a little unsatisfactory. The word that was translated to "speedily" is [τάχος, tachos](#)<sup>370</sup>, is used in Revelation as "shortly."

[Revelation 1:1](#) The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants--things which must **shortly** take place. And He sent and signified [it] by His angel to His servant John, [Revelation 1:1 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 22:6](#) Then he said to me, "These words [are] faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must **shortly** take place. [Revelation 22:6 NKJV](#)

I realize it may be like chasing myself in circles to use these verses to explain that God's definition of speedily or shortly is not the same as ours. But if we believe that God will return to take us to heaven, it seems that we may need to do just that. If I come up with a better explanation, I will revisit this, but for the time being, that is the best I have.

I think using this parent child relationship as an analogy flows nicely into the discussion of prayer persistence. We can probably all think of cases where a child repeatedly asks for something a parent does not want to give. The term nagging immediately comes to mind. A good parent will usually resist giving in to the nagging, or they will eventually grant and then hopefully try to use it as a teaching experience when it turns out as they knew it would. So why would one need to be persistent when praying for something according God's will? If we are praying for change in ourselves, perhaps repeating our request over and over has an effect on our own minds and actions. Maybe God is granting but we are not accepting, or perhaps need to keep reminding ourselves that we are making this request for our own good. Here's one more thought. If you think of prayer as a means to give God permission to intervene without violating our free will, then perhaps continually praying for the same thing over and over could give Him more permission to take action.

What do you believe?

- So, do you think we can affect God's actions by nagging Him in prayer?
- Can you come up with a better explanation or understanding of the promise for a quick response to the prayer for justice?
- Do you think prayer has value if God already knows what is best for you?

## The Pharisee and the tax collector

[Luke 18:9-14](#)<sup>371</sup>

[Luke 18:9](#) Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: <sup>10</sup> "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup> "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. <sup>12</sup> 'I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' <sup>13</sup> "And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise [his] eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' <sup>14</sup> "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified [rather] than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." [Luke 18:9-14 NKJV](#)

<sup>370</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg5034&t=NASB>

<sup>371</sup> Strong. p238. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/238/mode/2up>

Jesus' message is pretty clear: we are not justified by our own actions, but by our repentance and God's forgiveness. The Pharisee apparently felt no need for forgiveness and assumed that his "good works" justified himself. The tax collector realized his unworthiness and saw that his only hope was to receive God's mercy. The Pharisee was not only guilty of thinking his own works justified him but he was proud of it. Let's look at a few of the many verses in the Bible about pride.

[Proverbs 11:2](#) When pride comes, then comes shame;  
But with the humble [is] wisdom. [Proverbs 11:2 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 16:18](#) Pride [goes] before destruction,  
And a haughty spirit before a fall. [Proverbs 16:18 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 29:23](#) A man's pride will bring him low,  
But the humble in spirit will retain honor. [Proverbs 29:23 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 13:9](#) "Thus says the LORD: 'In this manner I will ruin the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem.'  
[Jeremiah 13:9 NKJV](#)

[Mark 7:21](#) "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,  
<sup>22</sup> "thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. <sup>23</sup> "All these  
evil things come from within and defile a man." [Mark 7:21-23 NKJV](#)

[1 John 2:16](#) For all that [is] in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the  
Father but is of the world. [1 John 2:16 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 16:5](#) Everyone proud in heart [is] an abomination to the LORD;  
[Though they join] forces, none will go unpunished. [Proverbs 16:5 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 2:12](#) For the day of the LORD of hosts  
[Shall come] upon everything proud and lofty,  
Upon everything lifted up--  
And it shall be brought low-- [Isaiah 2:12 NKJV](#)

[Habakkuk 2:4](#) "Behold the proud,  
His soul is not upright in him;  
But the just shall live by his faith. [Habakkuk 2:4 NKJV](#)

[James 4:6](#) But He gives more grace. Therefore He says:

"God resists the proud,  
But gives grace to the humble." [James 4:6 NKJV](#)

I think some of these statements about pride are general life principles, meaning that people who don't even believe in God or the Bible would agree with. As for the sin of pride, it is listed right alongside murder, adultery, coveting, deceit,

sensuality and lust. The thing is, in addition to pride, the Pharisees were even guilty of the other sins they accused other of.

[Matthew 23:23](#) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier [matters] of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. [Matthew 23:23 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 23:25](#) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. [Matthew 23:25 NKJV](#)

It seems that these Pharisees were proud that they were keeping their thousands of laws, and yet were breaking the spirit of God's Law.

What do you believe?

- Is there such thing as a good pride?
- Do you think you look differently on a murderer than on a proud person?
- Is it possible to be proud of yourself for sharing the Gospel or doing good deeds for the poor?
- Is it possible to be proud of your own humility?

## Is it lawful to divorce your spouse?

[Matthew 19:3-12](#), [Matthew 5:31-32](#), [Mark 10:2-12](#), [Luke 16:18](#)<sup>372</sup>

[Matthew 19:3](#) The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for [just] any reason?"

[Mark 10:2](#) The Pharisees came and asked Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce [his] wife?" testing Him. <sup>3</sup> And He answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?"—<sup>6</sup> "But from the beginning of the creation, ...

<sup>4</sup> And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made [them] at the beginning 'made them male and female,'

[Genesis 1:27](#) So God created man in His [own] image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. [Genesis 1:27 NKJV](#)

[Mark 10:6](#) ...

God 'made them male and female.'

<sup>5</sup> "and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?

[Genesis 2:24](#) Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. [Genesis 2:24 NKJV](#)

[Mark 10:7](#) 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, <sup>8</sup> 'and the two shall become one flesh'; ...

<sup>372</sup> Strong. p239. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/238/mode/2up>

<sup>6</sup> "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh.

Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." <sup>7</sup> They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?"

<sup>8</sup> He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

<sup>9</sup> "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

<sup>10</sup> His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with [his] wife, it is better not to marry."

<sup>11</sup> But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only [those] to whom it has been given: <sup>12</sup> "For there are eunuchs who were born thus from [their] mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept [it], let him accept [it]." [Matthew 19:3-12 NKJV](#)

This question about the sin of divorce has been a sticky situation ever since Jesus spoke these words. The Law of Moses allowed a man to divorce his wife for just about any reason. There are two notable cases where a man was not allowed to divorce his wife. 1) If a man falsely accused his bride of not being a virgin [[Deuteronomy 22:13-19](#)]. 2) If a man had sex with a virgin, (it doesn't say whether consensual or rape) and they are discovered, he must marry her and can never divorce her [[Deuteronomy 22:28-29](#)]. It sounded like a divorced woman could be remarried but could not marry a former husband if she had been married to someone else after [[Deuteronomy 24:4](#)]. I didn't see anywhere in the old testament where a woman could divorce her husband, which is not surprising given their status in that culture.<sup>373</sup>

Jesus, the Law giver, gave His interpretation of the Law of marriage and divorce. Interestingly as a side note, He actually mentioned the case of a woman divorcing her husband in [Mark 10:12](#). Unlike the Law of Moses which allowed a man to divorce his wife for almost any reason, Jesus said the only valid grounds were sexual unfaithfulness. According to Jesus, if there was no sexual infidelity, then remarriage on either side would be adulterous. Not meaning to contradict Jesus,

[Mark 10:8](#) ...

[Deuteronomy 24:1](#) "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts [it] in her hand, and sends her out of his house, [Deuteronomy 24:1 NKJV](#)

so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. <sup>9</sup> "Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."—<sup>4</sup> They said, "Moses permitted [a man] to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss [her]." <sup>5</sup> And Jesus answered and said to them, "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.—

[Matthew 5:31](#) "Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' [Matthew 5:31 NKJV](#)

[Luke 16:18](#) "Whoever divorces his wife

[Mark 10:11](#) So He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife

[Matthew 5:32](#) "But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from [her] husband commits adultery.

and marries another commits adultery against her. <sup>12</sup> "And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."—<sup>10</sup> In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same [matter]. [Mark 10:2-12 NKJV](#)

[Luke 16:18 NKJV](#)

<sup>373</sup> <http://www.biblestudytools.com/encyclopedias/isbe/divorce-in-the-old-testament.html>

thing are rarely as global or simple as that. The Apostle Paul repeated Jesus' interpretation, but then added his own counsel (not the Lord's) in the case of a marriage between believer and unbeliever.

[1 Corinthians 7:10](#) Now to the married I command, [yet] not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from [her] husband.

<sup>11</sup> But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to [her] husband. And a husband is not to divorce [his] wife.

<sup>12</sup> But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. <sup>13</sup> And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. <sup>14</sup> For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.

<sup>15</sup> But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such [cases]. But God has called us to peace. <sup>16</sup> For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save [your] husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save [your] wife? [1 Corinthians 7:10-16 NKJV](#)

It seems that Paul is saying that if an unbelieving spouse leaves, the believer can remarry without committing adultery, through his statement "the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases." But he was clear to say these were not God's words. He also said earlier in verses [8](#), [11](#) that it is better not to remarry, but not if you will be burning with passion [[verse 9](#)]. Now this is me speaking, not Paul and not Jesus. I think Paul's position could also apply to the case where there is abuse by one spouse against the other. I believe the problem with remarriage in this case is the person who marries an abuser, often tends to be attracted to that type of person, and hence keeps ending up in the same type of relationship. I think acknowledgement and counseling may help in selection of future relationships.

Now the reason I think this has been such a sticky situation in the Church down through the years is because it's not really clear what Jesus means when He says the person who remarries is an adulterer. I know it sounds pretty clear, but I think, often churches have treated divorced people as continuing sinners and shunned them. Is that what Jesus meant or intended? Did He mean the person is in a continuing state of adultery as long as they continue in that marriage, or have they committed adultery but can be forgiven if they ask without compounding the problem by dissolving the marriage? I lean toward the latter but again this is me and not the Bible's elaborated position. Does this thinking lower the barrier or incentive to not divorce? It used to be that if there was a divorce without infidelity, if one person waited until the other married, the other could be considered an adulterer and hence make the waiting one free to remarry without the stigma of adultery themselves. Do you think this little gamesmanship makes any difference in God's eyes? As with so many of Jesus' commands, there was an underlying reason for them, above and beyond the simple prohibition. I think the biggest casualty of divorce is children. Think of the lifelong impact of divorce on children, compounded with remarriage.

---

What do you believe?

- Do you think in this day and age that it is still reasonable to expect marriage for life?
- Why do you think God intended marriage to last a lifetime?
- Do you think being loving and accepting of divorced people lowers the barrier to divorce?

## Do not block the children from coming to me

[Mark 10:13-16](#), [Matthew 19:13-15](#), [Luke 18:15-18](#)<sup>374</sup>

[Mark 10:13](#) Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought [them]. <sup>14</sup> But when Jesus saw [it], He was greatly displeased and said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. <sup>15</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." <sup>16</sup> And He took them up in His arms, laid [His] hands on them, and blessed them.

[Mark 10:13-16 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 19:13](#) Then little children were brought to Him that He might put [His] hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them.

<sup>14</sup> But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

<sup>15</sup> And He laid [His] hands on them and departed from there. [Matthew 19:13-15](#)

[NKJV](#)

[Luke 18:15](#) Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw [it], they rebuked them.

<sup>16</sup> But Jesus called them to [Him] and said,

"Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. <sup>17</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." [Luke 18:15-17 NKJV](#)

Three of the four Gospel writers thought this incident was important enough to include it in their account. Is this where the religious concept of baby dedications comes from? Matthew and Mark say children but Luke says infants. I would guess it was mostly mothers who were bringing both little children and babies to Jesus. When the disciples rebuked "them," I interpret that to mean they rebuked the mothers, essentially telling them Jesus was too busy and they and their children were not important enough. But Jesus turned the rebuke back onto his own disciples, saying permit them to come, in fact He even added, "do not hinder them." This brings to mind another verse:

[Matthew 18:2](#) Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, <sup>3</sup> and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup> "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>5</sup> "Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.

<sup>6</sup> "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. [Matthew 18:2-6 NKJV](#)

There are three main points in this story.

- Every human being, no matter how small, is important to Jesus
- We must receive the Kingdom of God as a child
- Jesus laid hands on the children and blessed them

It is pretty natural for us to think of some people as more important than others. For example, comparing the president of a country with a homeless person, or comparing a billionaire with a baby, or a well-respected person with a criminal. But I believe that every single person who has ever existed in this world is unique to God and is of equal and irreplaceable importance to Him. It would be better if we were dead than to ever impede someone's path to God.

<sup>374</sup> Strong. p241. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/240/mode/2up>



What does Jesus mean when He says we must accept the Kingdom of God as a child? Is He talking about the Kingdom of God on earth or in Heaven? I think of a child being read Bible stories and singing Sabbath School songs. Their trust and belief in the truth of the stories and the existence of God is implicit. It is only as they get older that they start questioning these things.

Finally, Jesus gave us the example of laying hands on a child and blessing them. Is there actually an effect from laying hands on someone? How does blessing someone, especially when they can't even comprehend what is happening, benefit them? There is also the tradition in laying hands on deacons, elders and pastors when they are commissioned or ordained. Is there a difference between blessing someone with and without touching them? Finally, it is clear how Jesus can pronounce a blessing on someone, but does He want us to follow His example even though it is not within our power to grant a blessing. I guess I have many more questions than answers on this last point. Let's start by stating and hopefully agreeing that there is lots of evidence that physical touch is incredibly important in a baby's physical and emotional development. A Scientific American article states:

Many children who have not had ample physical and emotional attention are at higher risk for behavioral, emotional and social problems as they grow up.<sup>375</sup>

An article in Pediatrics and Child Health states:

Touch has emerged as an important modality for the facilitation of growth and development; positive effects of supplemental mechanosensory stimulation have been demonstrated in a wide range of organisms, from worm larvae to rat pups to human infants.<sup>376</sup>

An article in Psychology Today stated:

A study released on October 8, 2013 confirms the importance of human touch to healthy brain development. Researchers in the UK found that loving touch, characterized by a slow caress or gentle stroking increases the brain's ability to construct a sense of body ownership and plays a big part in creating and sustaining a healthy sense of self.<sup>377</sup>

Studies also show the importance of talking to babies.

New research from Stanford psychologists shows that by talking more to their toddler, parents help the child learn to process language more quickly, which accelerates vocabulary growth.<sup>378</sup>

Are these developmental benefits from touching and speaking, (laying on hands and blessing) all we should expect, or is there a spiritual element to it as well? I guess I don't really know that answer to that, but I would think the words of blessing have an effect on the parents and caregivers of the child.

---

<sup>375</sup> Harmon, Katherine. 2010. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/infant-touch/>

<sup>376</sup> Rankin, Cathrine H, Ardiel, Evan L. 2010. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2865952/>

<sup>377</sup> Berglund, Christopher. 2013. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-athletes-way/201310/loving-touch-is-key-healthy-brain-development>

<sup>378</sup> Stanford Report. 2013. <http://news.stanford.edu/news/2013/october/ferald-vocab-development-101513.html>

What do you believe?

- Do you think dedicating a child to God as an infant in any way takes away from their freedom to choose whether they will accept or reject God? If not, what good does it do?
- What does it mean to you to need to become like a little child in order to accept the Kingdom of God?
- Are there people that you struggle to see how God can love them as much as He loves you?

## The rich young ruler

[Mark 10:17-29](#), [Matthew 19:16-28](#), [Luke 18:18-29](#)<sup>379</sup>

[Mark 10:17](#) Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"<sup>18</sup> So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one [is] good but One, [that is], God.<sup>19</sup> "You know the commandments:

[Matthew 19:16](#) Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"<sup>17</sup> So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one [is] good but One, [that is], God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."<sup>18</sup> He said to Him, "Which ones?" Jesus said,

[Luke 18:18](#) Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"<sup>19</sup> So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one [is] good but One, [that is], God.<sup>20</sup> "You know the commandments:

'Do not commit adultery,'	<a href="#">Exodus 20:13</a> "You shall not murder.	"You shall not murder,'	'Do not commit adultery,'
'Do not murder,'	<sup>14</sup> "You shall not commit adultery.	'You shall not commit adultery,'	'Do not murder,'
'Do not steal,'	<sup>15</sup> "You shall not steal.	'You shall not steal,'	'Do not steal,'
'Do not bear false witness,'	<sup>16</sup> "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor..—	'You shall not bear false witness,'	'Do not bear false witness,'
'Do not defraud,'	<sup>12</sup> "Honor your father and your mother, ... <a href="#">Exodus 20:12-16 NKJV</a>	<sup>19</sup> 'Honor your father and [your] mother,' and,	'Honor your father and your mother.' "
'Honor your father and your mother.' "	<a href="#">Leviticus 19:18</a> ... but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: ...	'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' "	
	<a href="#">Leviticus 19:18 NKJV</a>		

<a href="#">Mark 10:20</a> And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth."	<a href="#">Matthew 19:20</a> The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?"	<a href="#">Luke 18:21</a> And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth."
--	--	---

<a href="#">Mark 10:21</a> Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."	<a href="#">Matthew 19:21</a> Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."	<a href="#">Luke 18:22</a> So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."
--	---	--

<sup>379</sup> Strong. p242. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/242/mode/2up>

Mark 10:22 But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Matthew 19:22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Luke 18:23 But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich.

Mark 10:23 Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!"  
 24 And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!

Matthew 19:23 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Luke 18:24 And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!

Mark 10:25 "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."  
 26 And they were greatly astonished, saying among themselves, "Who then can be saved?"  
 27 But Jesus looked at them and said, "With men [it is] impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible."

Matthew 19:24 "And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."  
 25 When His disciples heard [it], they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?"  
 26 But Jesus looked at [them] and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Luke 18:25 "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."  
 26 And those who heard it said, "Who then can be saved?"  
 27 But He said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

Mark 10:28 Then Peter began to say to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You."  
 29 So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, ...

Matthew 19:27 Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?"  
 28 So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Luke 18:28 Then Peter said, "See, we have left all and followed You."  
 29 So He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, ...

Mark 10:29 ... there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's,<sup>30</sup> "who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time--houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions--and in the age to come, eternal life.<sup>31</sup> "But many [who are] first will be last, and the last first." [Mark 10:17-31 NKJV](#)

Matthew 19:29 "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.<sup>30</sup> "But many [who are] first will be last, and the last first." [Matthew 19:16-28 NKJV](#)

Luke 18:28 ... there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God,<sup>30</sup> "who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life." [Luke 18:18-30 NKJV](#)

A few things that I found interesting about this story are:

- In the Bible, the answers to the question of how to be saved varied.

- This young man wanted to know what good things he could do to inherit eternal life. Even though in some places Bible teaches that we cannot earn our salvation with good works, Jesus said to keep the commandments, and followed that up with give everything to the poor.
- In at least a couple instances when asked this question about salvation, Jesus started with keeping the commandments and then expounded from there.
- In more than a couple cases, Jesus ended up answering this question with, “acts of love and mercy for the poor and needy.”

Let’s look at some of the answers given in the Bible to the question of how to be saved.

[Matthew 10:22](#) "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

[Matthew 10:22 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 13:13](#) "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

[Matthew 13:13 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 24:13](#) "But he who endures to the end shall be saved. [Matthew 24:13 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 19:16](#) Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" <sup>17</sup> So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one [is] good but One, [that is], God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments." [Matthew 19:16-17 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 19:29](#) "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. [Matthew 19:29 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 25:44](#) "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' <sup>45</sup> "Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do [it] to one of the least of these, you did not do [it] to Me.' <sup>46</sup> "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." [Matthew 25:44-46 NKJV](#)

[Mark 16:16](#) "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. [Mark 16:16 NKJV](#)

[Luke 10:25](#) And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>26</sup> He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading [of it]?" <sup>27</sup> So he answered and said, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'" <sup>28</sup> And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." [Luke 10:25-28 NKJV](#)

[Luke 13:23](#) Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?" And He said to them, <sup>24</sup> "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. [Luke 13:23-24 NKJV](#)

[John 3:16](#) "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. [John 3:16 NKJV](#)

[John 3:36](#) "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." [John 3:36 NKJV](#)

[John 4:14](#) "but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." [John 4:14 NKJV](#)

[John 5:24](#) "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. [John 5:24 NKJV](#)

[John 6:40](#) "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." [John 6:40 NKJV](#)

[John 6:47](#) "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. [John 6:47 NKJV](#)

[John 6:54](#) "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. [John 6:54 NKJV](#)

[John 10:27](#) "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. <sup>28</sup> "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. [John 10:27-28 NKJV](#)

[John 10:9](#) "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. [John 10:9 NKJV](#)

[Acts 2:21](#) And it shall come to pass [That] whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved.' [Acts 2:21 NKJV](#)

[Acts 4:12](#) "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." [Acts 4:12 NKJV](#)

[Acts 15:11](#) "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they." [Acts 15:11 NKJV](#)

[Acts 16:30](#) And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" <sup>31</sup> So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." [Acts 16:30-31 NKJV](#)

[Romans 6:22](#) But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. <sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin [is] death, but the gift of God [is] eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. [Romans 6:22-23 NKJV](#)

[Romans 5:9](#) Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. [Romans 5:9 NKJV](#)

[Romans 10:9](#) that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. <sup>11</sup> For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." <sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. <sup>13</sup> For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." [Romans 10:9-13 NKJV](#)

[Ephesians 2:8](#) For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God, [Ephesians 2:8 NKJV](#)

[Titus 3:5](#) not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, [Titus 3:5 NKJV](#)

[Titus 3:7](#) that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. [Titus 3:7 NKJV](#)

[1 John 5:9](#) If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. <sup>10</sup> He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. <sup>11</sup> And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. <sup>12</sup> He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. <sup>13</sup> These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may [continue to] believe in the name of the Son of God. [1 John 5:9-13 NKJV](#)

[James 1:12](#) Blessed [is] the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. [James 1:12 NKJV](#)

There are many more verses that talk about how to be saved but I think this is a good sample to work with. Based on these verses, my bullet list of how to be saved is:

- Statements by Jesus
  - Keep the commandments
    - Love God
      - With all your heart, soul, mind, strength
      - More than your own family
      - More than your own life
    - Love your neighbor
      - Be kind and compassionate to those who are in need
      - Give your money to the poor
  - Endure to the end
    - Endure hatred by men as they hated Me
  - Through Me
    - Believe
    - Drink the water of life I offer
    - Eat My flesh and drink My blood
  - Be baptized
- Statements by the Apostles
  - Call on the name of the Lord
  - Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ
  - By grace
  - Through faith
  - Justified by His blood
  - It is a free gift
  - Persevere through trial
  - Not through good works or by anything we have done

So, do you feel like Jesus taught truly keeping the commandments, while the Apostles focused more on belief in Jesus and the free gift of salvation that cannot be earned? Clearly the Jews were very works oriented and maybe Jesus was trying to meet them where they were. They were keeping commandments and laws that scarcely resembled the

commands He had given on Mt. Sinai. Jesus' emphasis on loving their neighbor and caring for the poor and needy seemed to have little to do with commandment keeping. To be fair, keeping the commandments was not the entire answer, because Jesus also said to follow Him. In another conversation, He did say that He was the only way to the Father. Maybe an analogy could be made that keeping the commandments is like getting your cart going in the right direction. You could push your cart which wouldn't get you very far very fast, or you could attach it to the horse who could pull you all the way. In this analogy, attaching your cart to the horse will keep your cart going in the right direction which implies the commandment keeping. I think to get the best picture of how to be saved, we should put together all the answers in the proper order. It is only through Jesus and His sacrifice that we can be saved. If we truly love Him and accept the free gift of salvation, we will naturally keep the commandments which means we will love our neighbor and care for the needy.

What do you believe?

- We cannot be good enough, and all you need to do is believe and claim the free gift. On the other hand, there are statements about the persecution, and persevering and few being saved. Is it easy or hard to be saved?
- Do you think a person who truly loved their neighbor, but never heard about Jesus, can be saved?
- Do you think you can truly be keeping the commandments if you are unwilling to give up everything and follow Jesus?

### **Day laborers in the vineyard (the last will be first and the first will be last)**

[Luke 17:7-10](#), [Matthew 20:1-16](#), [Matthew 19:30](#), [Mark 10:31](#)<sup>380</sup>

[Luke 17:7](#) "And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'?<sup>8</sup> "But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'?<sup>9</sup> "Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not.<sup>10</sup> "So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.' " [Luke 17:7-10 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 20:1](#) "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.<sup>2</sup> "Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard.<sup>3</sup> "And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,<sup>4</sup> "and said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went.<sup>5</sup> "Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise.<sup>6</sup> "And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day?'<sup>7</sup> "They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.'

<sup>8</sup> "So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and give them [their] wages, beginning with the last to the first.'<sup>9</sup> "And when those came who [were hired] about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius.<sup>10</sup> "But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius.<sup>11</sup> "And when they had received [it], they complained against the landowner,<sup>12</sup> "saying, 'These last [men] have worked [only] one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.'<sup>13</sup> "But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no

<sup>380</sup> Strong. p245. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/244/mode/2up>

wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? <sup>14</sup> 'Take [what is] yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man [the same] as to you. <sup>15</sup> 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?'

<sup>16</sup> "So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen." [Matthew 20:1-16 NKJV](#) [Matthew 19:30](#) "But many [who are] first will be last, and the last first." [Matthew 19:30 NKJV](#) [Mark 10:31](#) "But many [who are] first will be last, and the last first." [Mark 10:31 NKJV](#)

The verses in Luke that we started out with don't really have anything to do with the main story. I included them there because Strong chose to place those words of Jesus chronologically before the parable of the laborers in the field and I didn't want to make a chapter out of it. I don't think there is really much to say about it so I will move on to the main topic.

Depending on your perspective, the landowner in this story could be considered generous, or a mischievous trouble maker. You could say there was unfairness, but clearly no injustice was done in payment to any of the workers because they all got a fair day's wage which they agreed to when they began working. This story is another one of the many teachings of Jesus that point out the upside down (to our way of thinking) nature of grace and salvation. Jesus suffered what He didn't deserve, so we can receive what we don't deserve. Ellen White said it well in the *Desire of Ages*.

Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. [Desire of Ages, p25](#).<sup>381</sup>

You can look at following Jesus as the labor in the parable. He did not promise an easy life and He said His followers would be persecuted for their beliefs. He said we would have to endure to the end. But the reward of eternal life so outweighs any cost in this comparatively short life on earth. The workers who only worked one hour might be seen as people who enjoy life's pleasures and on their deathbed accept Jesus. The thing is, I think chasing life's pleasures may be overrated. I would never say that there are not sinful pleasures to be had for one who is not a disciple of Jesus, but I believe they do not truly leave you fulfilled. In fact, many leave you worse off than before, feeling empty and lacking. So, while choosing to be a follower of Jesus may be labor, it is also fulfilling and a privilege.

However you choose to look at it, the message is clear. Whether you have the privilege of laboring with Christ for your whole life, or whether you live a life of sinful pleasure and surrender to Him on your deathbed, the pay is the same in the end.

---

What do you believe?

- If you are a follower of Jesus, do you look at it as labor that is causing you to miss out on life's pleasures?
- Can you think of an example of doing something that is hard and painful but rewarding and fulfilling in the end?
- Can you think of an example of a sinful pleasure that does not leave you empty or guilty in the end?

---

<sup>381</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p25.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=25>



## James and John request the top two positions in the kingdom

[Mark 10:32-45](#), [Matthew 20:17-28](#), [Luke 18:31-34](#)<sup>382</sup>

[Mark 10:32](#) Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed. And as they followed they were afraid. Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him: <sup>33</sup> "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem,

and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; <sup>34</sup> "and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again."

<sup>35</sup> Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask."

<sup>36</sup> And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

<sup>37</sup> They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory."

<sup>38</sup> But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

<sup>39</sup> They said to Him, "We are able." So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; <sup>40</sup> "but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but [it is for those] for whom it is prepared."

[Matthew 20:17](#) Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem,

took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them, <sup>18</sup> "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem,

and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, <sup>19</sup> "and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again." [Matthew 20:17-19 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 20:20](#) Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him.

[Matthew 20:21](#) And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him,

"Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom."

[Matthew 20:22](#) But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

They said to Him, "We are able." <sup>23</sup> So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but [it is for those] for whom it is prepared by My Father."

[Luke 18:31](#) Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished.

<sup>32</sup> "For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. <sup>33</sup> "They will scourge [Him] and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again."

<sup>34</sup> But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know the things which were spoken. [Luke 18:31-34 NKJV](#)

<sup>382</sup> Strong. p247. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/246/mode/2up>

<sup>41</sup> And when the ten heard [it], they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. <sup>42</sup> But Jesus called them to [Himself] and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup> "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. <sup>44</sup> "And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. <sup>45</sup> "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." [Mark 10:32-45 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 20:24](#) And when the ten heard [it], they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. <sup>25</sup> But Jesus called them to [Himself] and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. <sup>26</sup> "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. <sup>27</sup> "And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—<sup>28</sup> "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." [Matthew 20:20-28 NKJV](#)

This is not the first time Jesus has predicted His soon coming death, but He did get very detailed and graphic this time. It's hard to image how the disciples could have misunderstood Him, but once again, they seemed to have completely ignored these statements that didn't fit in with their own plans. We know this because of the very next thing that occurred.

Mark simply says that James and John approached Jesus and directly asked for the top two position in His Kingdom. Matthew says their Mom made this request for them. Perhaps these requests are two different occasions, or one writer simply left out some detail. In either case, the conversation went mostly the same in both cases. Now if you knew Jesus was going to be crucified and there was not going to be an earthly kingdom, why would you be asking for the top two positions? The next verses in both Mark and Matthew say, the rest of the disciples were indignant with James and John because of this request. I think they were indignant because they all wanted the same thing for themselves.

---

What do you believe?

- How could the disciples not understand what Jesus was saying about His torture and death?
- How could the disciples, this close to the end of their time with Jesus, still be so out of sync with Him?
- How do you think this made Jesus feel?

## Blind men by the road request healing

[Mark 10:46-52](#), [Luke 18:35-43](#), [Matthew 20:29-34](#), [Luke 19:1](#)<sup>383</sup>

[Mark 10:46](#) Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging.

[Luke 18:35](#) Now as Jesus was approaching Jericho, a man who was blind was sitting by the road, begging. <sup>36</sup> But when he heard a crowd going by, he [began] inquiring what this was.

[Luke 19:1](#) Then [Jesus] entered and passed through Jericho. [Luke 19:1 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 20:29](#) Now as they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him.

<sup>30</sup> And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, ...

---

<sup>383</sup> Strong. p249. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/248/mode/2up>

Mark 10:47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" 48 Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" 49 So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, "Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you." 50 And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus. 51 So Jesus answered and said to him, "What do you want Me to do for you?" The blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight." 52 Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.

[Mark 10:46-52 NKJV](#)

Luke 18:37 They told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. 38 And he called out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" 39 Those who led the way were sternly telling him to be quiet; but he kept crying out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" 40 And Jesus stopped and commanded that he be brought to Him;

and when he came near,

He asked him,

41 "What do you want Me to do for you?"

And he said, "Lord, [I want] to regain my sight!" 42 And Jesus said to him, "Regain your sight; your faith has made you well."

43 And immediately he regained his sight and [began] following Him, glorifying God; and when all the people saw [it,] they gave praise to God. [Luke 18:35-43 NKJV](#)

Matthew 20:30 ... when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"

31 Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!" 32 So Jesus stood still and called them,

and said, ...

Matthew 20:32 ... "What do you want Me to do for you?" 33 They said to Him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened." 34 So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.

[Matthew 20:29-34 NKJV](#)

[Luke 18](#), has Jesus and the disciples meeting a blind man as they were entering Jericho, but the [Matthew](#) and [Mark](#) have the encounter on the way out of Jericho. I suppose it is possible that Jesus healed a blind man on the way into Jericho and another one or two on the way out. Mark and Luke only mention one blind man and only Mark names him, while Matthew mentions two. We don't really know if all three accounts were the same incident but because of the great similarity in conversation, surrounding events and proximity to Jericho, I will treat them as the same.

Believe it or not, people directly addressing Jesus with the title "Son of David," is not as common as you might think. Aside from the Hosanna's to the Son of David at the triumphal entry, the Canaanite woman [[Mark 7:24-30](#)] and blind men [the ones included above and [Matthew 9:27](#)] were the only ones who directly addressed Jesus with this title. How is it, that blind men and a Canaanite woman were the only ones who directly addressed Jesus with this title in all the recorded Gospels?

---

What do you believe?

- Why was the crowd telling the blind man/men to be quiet rather than bringing them to Jesus?
- Why do you think they addressed Jesus as "Son of David?"
- Why do you think Jesus asked what the man wanted, wasn't it kind of obvious?

## Zaccheus

[Luke 19:2-9](#)<sup>384</sup>

[Luke 19:2](#) Now behold, [there was] a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. <sup>3</sup> And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. <sup>4</sup> So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that [way]. <sup>5</sup> And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house." <sup>6</sup> So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. <sup>7</sup> But when they saw [it], they all complained, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner."

<sup>8</sup> Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold." <sup>9</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; [Luke 19:2-9 NKJV](#)

People who went to Sabbath or Sunday school as a child may remember a song about Zaccheus being a wee little man. Verse 3 is where this idea comes from, because it says he was small in stature. It doesn't say how small he was but considering it was worth mentioning, I would guess he was pretty short. Zaccheus must have been very good at collecting taxes for Rome, because they made him the chief. I wonder if that meant he didn't even have to collect directly from the people anymore but only from other tax collectors. The following are small excerpts from a very comprehensive article on taxation throughout Israel's history. It is specifically from the section pertaining to the time of Jesus.

The publicans of the New Testament "examined the goods and collected tolls on roads and bridges" (Stapfer, op. cit., 216; compare Mt 9:9). These tolls (Latin, portoria; Greek tele) were collected in Israel at Caesarea, Capernaum and Jericho (Josephus, BJ, II, xiv, 4). Those collected at Capernaum went into the treasury of Herod Antipas. At Jericho there was a chief publican (architelones), but most of the publicans mentioned in the New Testament were probably subordinate to men higher in authority.

...

The tax-gatherer, if a Jew, was a renegade in the eyes of his patriotic fellows. He paid a fixed sum for the taxes, and received for himself what he could over and above that amount. The ancient and widespread curse of arbitrariness was in the system. The tariff rates were vague and indefinite (see Schurer, HJP, I, ii, 67 f). The collector was thus always under the suspicion of being an extortioner and probably was in most instances. <http://www.bible-history.com><sup>385</sup>

It seems possible that Zaccheus was the chief publican described above, considering that he lived in the outskirts of Jericho and was called the chief tax collector by Luke. In any case, he must have been a very wise investor, to give away half his wealth and still be able to repay four times what he unjustly collected. He may not have been left with very much at the end, but it seems he passed the test of being able to sell what he owned and give it to the poor.

<sup>384</sup> Strong. 251. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/250/mode/2up>

<sup>385</sup> <http://www.bible-history.com/isbe/T/TAX;+TAXING/>

There was precedent in Jewish culture to repay four times for something stolen.

[Exodus 22:1](#) "If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep. [Exodus 22:1 NKJV](#)

What do you believe?

- What do you think gave Zaccheus the idea that maybe there was hope for him when the Jews treated him as the worst kind of sinner?
- Do you think Zaccheus would still have given half his money to the poor and made amends if Jesus hadn't stopped to speak to him?
- Is there any precedent for paying back multiple times to make restitution today?

## He who is faithful in small things will also be faithful with more important matters

[Matthew 25:14-29](#), [Luke 19:11-27](#),<sup>386</sup>

[Matthew 25:14](#) "For [the kingdom of heaven is] like a man traveling to a far country, [who] called his own servants and delivered his goods to them.

[Luke 19:11](#) Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. <sup>12</sup> Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. <sup>13</sup> "So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' <sup>14</sup> "But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this [man] to reign over us.'

<sup>15</sup> "And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. <sup>16</sup> "Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. <sup>17</sup> "And likewise he who [had received] two gained two more also. <sup>18</sup> "But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money.

<sup>19</sup> "After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

[Luke 19:15](#) "And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

<sup>20</sup> "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.'

<sup>16</sup> "Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.'

<sup>21</sup> "His lord said to him, 'Well [done], good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

<sup>17</sup> "And he said to him, 'Well [done], good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.'

<sup>386</sup> Strong. p252. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/252/mode/2up>

<sup>22</sup> "He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' <sup>23</sup> "His lord said to him, 'Well [done], good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

<sup>Luke 19:18</sup> "And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' <sup>19</sup> "Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.'

<sup>24</sup> "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. <sup>25</sup> 'And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, [there] you have [what is] yours.'

<sup>Luke 19:20</sup> "Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. <sup>21</sup> 'For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.'

<sup>26</sup> "But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. <sup>27</sup> 'So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. <sup>28</sup> 'Therefore take the talent from him, and give [it] to him who has ten talents.'

<sup>Luke 19:22</sup> "And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, [you] wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. <sup>23</sup> 'Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' <sup>24</sup> "And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give [it] to him who has ten minas.' <sup>25</sup> ("But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.')

<sup>29</sup> 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.'

<sup>26</sup> 'For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. <sup>27</sup> 'But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay [them] before me.' " [Luke 19:11-27 NKJV](#)

<sup>30</sup> 'And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' [Matthew 25:14-30 NKJV](#)

The first observation is that these stories are pretty similar but differ in some details. My guess is that Jesus reused stories in different settings and they need not have been exactly the same every time. For our purpose it makes sense to put them in parallel because clearly the lessons are the same. Let's list them:

- Each is given something according to their ability
- Those who are faithful with the little they have will be faithful with more and will be given more
- Those who do not use what they have been given will be cast out

The slaves were given talents or minas, both of which were forms of money. They were expected to do business with the money and hopefully end up with more. It was to be like a grant, for there is no indication that the first two slaves had to return the money. I suspect the nobleman would not have been upset if the third man had tried and failed, but the fact that he did nothing and didn't even earn interest on the money apparently angered him.

With the Matthew version using the word talent, it has become very easy to apply the principle to ourselves, using the modern English definition of the word. Obviously, God doesn't give most of us cash, but we each have certain abilities or talents. We should all be aware of the concept of working on your talents and honing them or improving them, so they grow or get better.

What do you believe?

- Most of us will eventually be placed in a position to decide whether to hire someone for a job. Do you feel that judging from how they handle small or insignificant things is a good way to decide?
- When Jesus said, "For to everyone who has, more shall be given," do you think He was giving a spiritual or general life principle?
- Do you think that not using our God-given talents is grounds for not being allowed into heaven?

## Mary anoints Jesus' head and feet with the expensive ointment of Spikenard

[John 11:55-57](#), [John 12:1-11](#), [Matthew 26:6-13](#), [Mark 14:3-9](#)<sup>387</sup>

[John 11:55](#) And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. <sup>56</sup> Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, "What do you think--that He will not come to the feast?" <sup>57</sup> Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report [it], that they might seize Him. [John 11:55-57 NKJV](#)

[John 12:1](#) Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead.—<sup>9</sup> Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. <sup>10</sup> But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, <sup>11</sup> because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.—

<sup>2</sup> There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him.

[Matthew 26:6](#) And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper,

[Mark 14:3](#) And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, ...

<sup>3</sup> Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

[Matthew 26:7](#) a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured [it] on His head as He sat [at the table].

[Mark 14:3](#) ... a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured [it] on His head.

<sup>4</sup> But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's [son], who would betray Him, said,

[Matthew 26:8](#) But when His disciples saw [it], they were indignant, saying, ...

[Mark 14:4](#) But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, ...

<sup>5</sup> "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" <sup>6</sup> This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

[Matthew 26:8](#) ... "Why this waste? <sup>9</sup> "For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to [the] poor."

[Mark 14:4](#) ... "Why was this fragrant oil wasted? <sup>5</sup> "For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they criticized her sharply.

<sup>387</sup> Strong. p256. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/256/mode/2up>

<sup>7</sup> But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. <sup>8</sup> "For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always." [John 12:1-11 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 26:10](#) But when Jesus was aware of [it], He said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. <sup>11</sup> "For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. <sup>12</sup> "For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did [it] for My burial. <sup>13</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her." [Matthew 26:6-13 NKJV](#)

[Mark 14:6](#) But Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. <sup>7</sup> "For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. <sup>8</sup> "She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. <sup>9</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her." [Mark 14:3-9 NKJV](#)

I have pointed out in an earlier chapter that there was potentially another occasion that Jesus' feet were anointed by a woman in a Simon's house, [Simon the Pharisee invites Jesus to his house](#). There are similarities and differences in the two accounts. Some believe it to be the same incident as portrayed in the three parallel accounts in this chapter. Luke's account is so early in his book, and different enough that I went with Strong's chronology. I do believe it is likely that it was the same woman who anointed His feet in all four accounts. The host in In Luke's earlier account was Simon the Pharisee, but in this account, was someone called Simon the leper. It was unlikely that a leper would be inviting people to his house, so there is the assumption that he must have been previously healed of leprosy by Jesus. If it was the same Simon, he may have been more of a believer, especially if he had been healed by Jesus, and he didn't criticize Mary this time.

Let's begin by mentioning that the chief priests at least had some accusations against Jesus, to back their desire to kill Him. But their intent to murder an innocent man, Lazarus, just because his resurrection caused many to believe in Jesus, showed their desperation. If Simon was a Pharisee, it is possible that other priests and Pharisees may have been invited or invited themselves to be present at this supper.

It would typically be the wife of the host who would be the serving as the hostess, but we have little to no reason to believe that Martha was the wife of Simon. So, when we read between the lines, we think there must have been some kind of connection, or familial relationship between Simon and the three siblings, Lazarus, Martha and Mary. It has been assumed by many that Martha and Mary were unmarried, which begs the question why, because most women their age would have been married. Some of these assumptions are also based on the other mentions in the Gospels of the three siblings, which pictured them as living together.

There was no mention of Mary being a sinner here, but clearly she was expressing her gratitude and love to Jesus in an extravagant way. In fact, Mary was a very common name and while John did choose to mention the name, he didn't clarify which Mary he was talking about. It is also a little strange that in the chapter prior to this one, John says that Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus was the one who anointed Jesus with ointment.

[John 11:1](#) Now a certain [man] was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup> It was [that] Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. [John 11:1-2 NKJV](#)

This is one of the reasons some assume there was an earlier anointing by Mary. In any case, the fact that Lazarus and Martha are also mentioned, leads me to believe that the Mary in John 12 was their sister and hence needed no clarification.



Why would the disciples be indignant of someone showing love and gratitude to their Master? Indignant is a pretty strong word, and I wonder if there was some hostility toward Mary by the disciples. According to the text, the perfume was worth over three hundred denarii. In the parable of the day laborers, we can see that a denarius was an acceptable pay for a day's work [[Matthew 20:1-16](#)]. If we equated that to minimum wage today and used the round numbers of \$10/hour 8 hr/day and 300 days, that would make the ointment worth \$24000 in today's terms. That's a lot of money but it doesn't explain why the disciples would be indignant about \$24000 being spent on their Master. I doubt they really cared more about the poor than their Master whom they claimed to love. I suspect they may have known something about Mary and couldn't understand how Jesus could love her and accept her the way He did. They might have been protective of their Master and jealous of Mary at the same time, causing them to be critical of anything she did.

What do you believe?

- Do you think Simon was currently a leper, or if he had been healed, why was he still called a leper?
- How do you think Mary could have gotten her hands on that much money?
- Why do you think John mentioned a Mary who anointed Jesus before he tells the story?

## Triumphal entry to Jerusalem

[Matthew 21:1-9](#), [Mark 11:1-10](#), [Luke 19:29-44](#), [John 12:12-16,19](#)<sup>388</sup>

[Matthew 21:1](#) Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose [them] and bring [them] to Me. <sup>3</sup> "And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them."—  
<sup>6</sup> So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them.

[Mark 11:1](#) Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples; <sup>2</sup> and He said to them, "Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring [it]. <sup>3</sup> "And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it,' and immediately he will send it here." <sup>4</sup> So they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it. <sup>5</sup> But some of those who stood there said to them, "What are you doing, loosing the colt?" <sup>6</sup> And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go.

[Luke 19:29](#) And it came to pass, when He drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mountain called Olivet, [that] He sent two of His disciples, <sup>30</sup> saying, "Go into the village opposite [you], where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose it and bring [it here]. <sup>31</sup> "And if anyone asks you, 'Why are you loosing [it]?' thus you shall say to him, 'Because the Lord has need of it.' "  
<sup>32</sup> So those who were sent went their way and found [it] just as He had said to them. <sup>33</sup> But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, "Why are you loosing the colt?" <sup>34</sup> And they said, "The Lord has need of him."

<sup>388</sup> Strong. p258. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/258/mode/2up>

<p><sup>7</sup> They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set [Him] on them.—</p>	<p>Mark 11:7 Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it.</p>	<p>Luke 19:35 Then they brought him to Jesus. And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him.</p>	<p><a href="#">John 12:14</a> Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; ...</p>
---	---	--	--

<sup>4</sup> All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: John 12:14 ... as it is written:

<p><sup>5</sup> "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.' "—</p>	<p><a href="#">Zechariah 9:9</a> "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He [is] just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey. <a href="#">Zechariah 9:9 NKJV</a></p>	<p>John 12:15 "Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, Sitting on a donkey's colt."</p>
--	--	--

<sup>16</sup> His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and [that] they had done these things to Him.—

<p>Matthew 21:8 And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread [them] on the road. <sup>9</sup> Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying:</p>	<p>Mark 11:8 And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread [them] on the road. <sup>9</sup> Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying:</p>	<p>Luke 19:36 And as He went, [many] spread their clothes on the road. <sup>37</sup> Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, <sup>38</sup> saying: " ...</p>	<p><a href="#">John 12:12</a> The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, <sup>13</sup> took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: ...</p>
--	--	--	---

<p>"Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed [is] He who comes in the name of the LORD!  Hosanna in the highest!" <a href="#">Matthew 21:1-9 NKJV</a></p>	<p>Mark 11:9 ... "Hosanna!  'Blessed [is] He who comes in the name of the LORD!' <sup>10</sup> Blessed [is] the kingdom of our father David That comes in the name of the Lord!  Hosanna in the highest!" <a href="#">Mark 11:1-10 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Psalm 118:26</a>  Blessed [is] he who comes in the name of the LORD! ... <a href="#">Psalm 118:26 NKJV</a></p>	<p>Luke 19:38 ...  'Blessed [is] the King who comes in the name of the LORD!' Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" <a href="#">Luke 19:29-38 NKJV</a></p>	<p>John 12:13 ... "Hosanna!  'Blessed [is] He who comes in the name of the LORD!' The King of Israel!" <a href="#">John 12:12-16 NKJV</a></p>
--	---	---	---	---

[John 12:19](#) The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, "You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!" [John 12:19 NKJV](#)

[Luke 19:39](#) And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples."

<sup>40</sup> But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

<sup>41</sup> Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, <sup>42</sup> saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things [that make] for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. <sup>43</sup> "For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, <sup>44</sup> "and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation." [Luke 19:39:44 NKJV](#)

I wonder how many of you realized that Matthew said the disciples brought both the donkey and its colt. Mark and Luke only mention a colt and John a young donkey. It makes sense to me that the donkey and its colt would not want to be separated from each other. But why a donkey and not a war horse? And why a colt, or foal and not the full-grown animal? Well, in addition to the prophecy, there was somewhat of a precedent for using a pack animal for this type of thing.

[1 Kings 1:33](#) The king also said to them, "Take with you the servants of your lord, and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, and take him down to Gihon. <sup>34</sup> "There let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel; and blow the horn, and say, '[Long] live King Solomon!' <sup>35</sup> "Then you shall come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne, and he shall be king in my place. For I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and Judah." [1 Kings 1:33-35 NKJV](#)

Emotions were running very high in the crowd and they probably had one thing on their mind, the restoration of David's kingdom to Israel. While most Israelites were looking forward to this event, the leadership in Jerusalem were not in favor of Jesus being the one. I would guess that in addition to putting Rome in its place, some looked forward to Jesus as king putting the current Jewish leadership in their place as well. After shying away from the adulation of the crowd in the past and showing no interest in the throne of Israel, the disciples must have been both surprised and elated at this turn of events. They probably could see no other purpose to this parade than to march Jesus into Jerusalem and place a crown on His head. On the contrary, Jesus knew this would strengthen the resolve of the priests to put Him to death. John tells us that the supper at Simon's house the previous day was only six days before Passover. We know this to be the last Passover of Jesus' life on earth because that was when He would be sacrificed as the true substitute for our sins. I believe Jesus knew this as well.

---

What do you believe?

- We know this triumphal entry was a fulfillment of prophecy, but did it serve any other purpose?
- What do you think it would be like to know your actions were prophesied but also to know they would lead to your death?
- Do you think Jesus was tempted to take the throne rather than the cross?

## The second cleansing of the Temple

[Matthew 21:10-17](#), [Mark 11:11,15-17](#), [Luke 19:45-46](#)<sup>389</sup>

[Matthew 21:10](#) And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?" <sup>11</sup> So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee."

[Mark 11:15](#) So they came to Jerusalem. ...

<sup>12</sup> Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.

[Luke 19:45](#) Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it,

[Mark 11:15](#) ... Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.

[Mark 11:16](#) And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple.

<sup>13</sup> And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,'

[Isaiah 56:7](#) ... For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." [Isaiah 56:7](#)

[Luke 19:46](#) saying to them, "It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' ...

[Mark 11:17](#) Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations?'"

[NKJV](#)

but you have made it a 'den of thieves.' " [Jeremiah 7:11](#) "Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? ...

[Luke 19:46](#) ... but you have made it a 'den of thieves.' "

[Mark 11:17](#) ... But you have made it a 'den of thieves.' "

[Jeremiah 7:11 NKJV](#)

<sup>14</sup> Then [the] blind and [the] lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. <sup>15</sup> But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant <sup>16</sup> and said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise?'"

[Psalm 8:2](#) Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, ... [Psalm 8:2 NKJV](#)

<sup>17</sup> Then He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there. [Matthew 21:10-17 NKJV](#)

[Mark 11:11](#) ... He went out to Bethany with the twelve. [Mark 11:11 NKJV](#)

Once before at the start of His ministry, Jesus cleansed the Temple [[Jesus cleanses the Temple at the first Passover of His public ministry](#)]. I'm pretty sure the merchants were ashamed of themselves for running from a humble homeless man the first time Jesus cleansed the Temple. They may even have said to themselves that they would never let it happen again. White describes this potential conversation with themselves in the *Desire of Ages*.

Again the piercing look of Jesus swept over the desecrated court of the temple. All eyes were turned toward Him. Priest and ruler, Pharisee and Gentile, looked with astonishment and awe upon Him who stood before them with the majesty of heaven's King. Divinity flashed through humanity, investing Christ with a dignity and glory He had never manifested before. Those standing nearest Him drew as far away as the crowd would permit. Except for a few of His disciples, the Saviour stood alone. Every sound was hushed. The deep silence seemed unbearable. Christ spoke with a power that swayed the people like a mighty tempest: "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." His voice sounded like a trumpet

<sup>389</sup> Strong. p262. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/262/mode/2up>

through the temple. The displeasure of His countenance seemed like consuming fire. With authority He commanded, "Take these things hence." John 2:16.

Three years before, the rulers of the temple had been ashamed of their flight before the command of Jesus. They had since wondered at their own fears, and their unquestioning obedience to a single humble Man. They had felt that it was impossible for their undignified surrender to be repeated. Yet they were now more terrified than before, and in greater haste to obey His command. There were none who dared question His authority. Priests and traders fled from His presence, driving their cattle before them. [\*Desire of Ages\*, p590-591](#)<sup>390</sup>

I know that [John 2:16](#) was about the first cleansing, but I'm sure similar language was used. If Jesus called it a "den of thieves", clearly the practice of selling sacrifices and exchanging money had become a corrupt business that took advantage of the people. The religious leaders taught that donations must be made, and sacrifices offered or the people would not receive God's blessings or forgiveness.

Every Jew was required to pay yearly a half shekel as "a ransom for his soul;" and the money thus collected was used for the support of the temple. [Exodus 30:12-16](#). Besides this, large sums were brought as freewill offerings, to be deposited in the temple treasury. And it was required that all foreign coin should be changed for a coin called the temple shekel, which was accepted for the service of the sanctuary. The money changing gave opportunity for fraud and extortion, and it had grown into a disgraceful traffic, which was a source of revenue to the priests.

The dealers demanded exorbitant prices for the animals sold, and they shared their profits with the priests and rulers, who thus enriched themselves at the expense of the people. The worshipers had been taught to believe that if they did not offer sacrifice, the blessing of God would not rest on their children or their lands. Thus a high price for the animals could be secured; for after coming so far, the people would not return to their homes without performing the act of devotion for which they had come. [\*Desire of Ages\*, p155](#)<sup>391</sup>

We have probably all at one time or another experienced righteous indignation. That feeling when you saw another person being taken advantage of, either in person or in a movie or the news. Human trafficking and physical or sexual abuse are some of the big ones today. In His own way, this is what Jesus experienced, and that is why He chased these people out of the Temple courtyard.

As soon as the Temple courtyard was cleared, it was filled with people who were not afraid of Jesus. The blind and lame and probably many others who desired healing came. Children and mothers with infants came. And probably many other people who were typically excluded from the Temple courtyard by the priests for one reason or another. There was probably plenty of commotion, disorder, and children shouting, "Hosanna to the son of David." When the priests finally had the courage to return and found the Temple courtyard in this condition, I think they were angry that all this ruffraff, these "sinners," and children had invaded their space. The Bible says they were indignant over what the children were shouting.

---

<sup>390</sup> White. *Desire of Ages*. p590-591.

<http://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=590>

<sup>391</sup> White. *Desire of Ages*. p155.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=155>

What do you believe?

- If the priests who hated Him were behind the “den of thieves,” why did Jesus cleanse the Temple, knowing it would endanger His life, and that they would just return the next time He wasn’t there?
- Why were the priests specifically angry that the children were shouting “Hosanna to the son of David?”
- Why do you think Jesus has such a soft spot for the poor, the unpopular, the sick, the abused, the helpless, ...?

## The barren fig tree

[Mark 11:12-15,18-24](#), [Matthew 21:18-22](#), [Luke 21:37-38](#), [Luke 19:47-48](#)<sup>392</sup>

[Mark 11:12](#) Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. <sup>13</sup> And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. <sup>14</sup> In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again." And His disciples heard [it].

<sup>15</sup> So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple ... [Mark 11:12-15 NKJV](#)

[Mark 11:19](#) When evening had come, He went out of the city.—

<sup>18</sup> And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching.—

<sup>20</sup> Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. <sup>21</sup> And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away."

<sup>22</sup> So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God.

<sup>23</sup> "For assuredly, I say to you,

whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.

[Matthew 21:18](#) Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. <sup>19</sup> And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Immediately the fig tree withered away. [Matthew 21:18-19 NKJV](#)

[Luke 21:37](#) And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, ...

<sup>38</sup> Then early in the morning all the people came to Him in the temple to hear Him.—

[Luke 21:37](#) ... but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet. [Luke 21:37-38 NKJV](#)

[Luke 19:47](#) And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, <sup>48</sup> and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him. [Luke 19:47-48 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 21:20](#) Seeing [this,] the disciples were amazed and asked, "How did the fig tree wither [all] at once?"

[Matthew 21:21](#) And Jesus answered and said to them,

"Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what [was done] to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,'

it will happen.

<sup>392</sup> Strong. p263. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/262/mode/2up>

<sup>24</sup> "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive [them], and you will have [them]. [Mark 11:18-24 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 21:22](#) "And whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive it all." [Matthew 21:20-22 NKJV](#)

There seems to be a difference in the stories between Matthew and Mark, but I do not find this to be a problem. Matthew doesn't mention the day's activities in the Temple at all and just went from the cursing of the tree to the end result. As slow as trees grow, completely withering up in one day could have been considered "all at once."

The bigger question to me is, what is Jesus doing cursing the tree? I would guess this seemed very out of character to the disciples. Some might try to portray this as a case of Jesus getting mad and cursing something, like people sometimes do. I do not believe this at all. I actually think Jesus may have done the owner a favor, making it easier for them to make the decision to remove the tree and replace it. The following parable of Jesus showed this decision making process, but I think it is also related to our current fig tree story.

[Luke 13:6](#) He also spoke this parable: "A certain [man] had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. <sup>7</sup> "Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' <sup>8</sup> "But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize [it]. [Luke 13:6-8 NKJV](#)

I believe in both cases; Jesus was using the tree as a symbol for the nation of Israel. The fact that the tree was barren symbolized that Israel was not bearing the fruit for which it was planted. The second parable showed that it had received extra time, care and attention, but still did not bear fruit.

Looking at the growth of the early Christian Church, is that is what God had intended for the nation of Israel? Whether God actually intended them to bear fruit by converting people to Judaism or not, clearly, He intended for them to spread the knowledge of Him.

I think this story was an enacted parable of what would happen to Israel if they did not start bearing fruit.

The end of the story is a topic that I believe has always been somewhat controversial. Jesus said to ask for anything in prayer and if you have enough faith, you will receive? I know that many times people have tried to explain some of Jesus' statements about prayer by saying that if we ask according to His will, we will receive. Some also have said that if it is forgiveness we ask for, He always grants our request immediately. But Jesus didn't say that in this case, in fact He gave an outlandish example that seemed to have nothing to do with forgiveness, or His will, or even anything useful. Does that mean I can ask for a million-dollar mansion, and if I don't doubt, I will receive it? Does that mean I can ask for healing from cancer for myself or someone else, and don't doubt, it will happen? Does that mean I can ask for God to stop an evil person from abusing the helpless under his power, and don't doubt, it will just happen? Is not having doubt a black and white thing? Either you have it or you don't, or is it more of a grey area and more subjective? I know this is a whole other topic, but if Jesus was human and didn't use His own power to perform miracles, then He is the best example of asking and receiving miraculous results. It seems that everything He asked for, He received. But what about His prayer in Gethsemane, that the cup be taken from Him?

[Matthew 26:39](#) He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You [will]." [Matthew 26:39 NKJV](#)

The key to this prayer request by Jesus is that He surrendered to God's will. One way I can reconcile this statement of Jesus is that if we have the kind of faith that has absolutely no doubt in God's power to grant any request, then maybe we are also at the place where our requests will be what God wills.

What do you believe?

- When the disciples asked about the withered tree, why did Jesus talk about their ability to do the same rather than explain why He did it?
- Have you ever prayed for something and then when you didn't receive it, think to yourself, I didn't really think it was going to happen? Would that be considered doubt?
- Do you think it is easier to have pure un-doubting faith as a child?

## Authority of Jesus questioned, parable of the two sons and the vineyard

[Matthew 21:23-32](#), [Mark 11:27-33](#), [Luke 20:1-8](#)<sup>393</sup>

[Matthew 21:23](#) Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?"

<sup>24</sup> But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things:

<sup>25</sup> "The baptism of John--where was it from? From heaven or from men?" And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?'" <sup>26</sup> "But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet." <sup>27</sup> So they answered Jesus and said, "We do not know." And He said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

[Mark 11:27](#) Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him. <sup>28</sup> And they said to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority to do these things?"

[Mark 11:29](#) But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one question; then answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things:

<sup>30</sup> "The baptism of John--was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me." <sup>31</sup> And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?'" <sup>32</sup> "But if we say, 'From men' "--they feared the people, for all counted John to have been a prophet indeed. <sup>33</sup> So they answered and said to Jesus, "We do not know." And Jesus answered and said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

[Mark 11:27-33 NKJV](#)

[Luke 20:1](#) Now it happened on one of those days, as He taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, [that] the chief priests and the scribes, together with the elders, confronted [Him] <sup>2</sup> and spoke to Him, saying, "Tell us, by what authority are You doing these things? Or who is he who gave You this authority?"

[Luke 20:3](#) But He answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, and answer Me:

<sup>4</sup> "The baptism of John--was it from heaven or from men?" <sup>5</sup> And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?'" <sup>6</sup> "But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet." <sup>7</sup> So they answered that they did not know where [it was] from. <sup>8</sup> And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things." [Luke 20:1-8](#)

<sup>28</sup> "But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.' <sup>29</sup> "He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went. <sup>30</sup> "Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I [go], sir,' but he did not go. <sup>31</sup> "Which of the two did the will of [his] father?" They said to Him, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. <sup>32</sup> "For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you

<sup>393</sup> Strong. p266. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/266/mode/2up>



did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw [it], you did not afterward relent and believe him. [Matthew 21:23-32 NKJV](#)

The priests and scribes and elders were always trying to trap Jesus into saying something they could use against Him. This almost sounded like an honest question, but Jesus must have seen through it. He knew that giving them an answer would not change their minds about Him, so He turned the tables on them. He did to them what they often tried to do to Him, by asking them a question that only had answers that could be used against them. But I think it was more than that. Jesus essentially took their question about where His authority came from and asked them the same question about John. If they believed John's authority came from heaven, then they would have the answer to their original question. Here is what John said about Jesus.

[John 1:29](#) The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"<sup>30</sup> "This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.'<sup>31</sup> "I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water."

<sup>32</sup> And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him."<sup>33</sup> "I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'[John 1:29-34 NKJV](#)

Clearly they didn't believe John's or Jesus' authority came from heaven, otherwise it would have been an easy answer for them.

We can't really say whether the following conversation starting with [Matthew 21:28](#), was with the same people, but the interpretation of the parable including the mention of the rejection of John, seems to make it a possibility. I don't believe Jesus was telling them it was too late for them to repent and be saved, but rather that if they did not, they would not be saved. Finally, I don't believe there are degrees of getting into heaven, or that some will be more worthy than others. I do not take the saying that the tax-collectors and prostitutes would get into heaven before the religious leaders, to mean that the former would get in based on their repentance and the latter on their credentials, and that those who get in by repentance would be better. I think Jesus meant that regardless of one's religious credentials, they would not get in unless they repent.

---

What do you believe?

- Why do you think the priests, scribes and elders wanted to know whose authority Jesus acted on?
- Why would the priests, scribes and elders be afraid of what the people thought of their beliefs? Was it not already obvious what they believed?
- Why do you think Jesus didn't say whose authority He was acting on?

## The parable of the vineyard and the wicked caretakers

[Matthew 21:33-46](#), [Mark 12:1-12](#), [Luke 20:9-18](#)<sup>394</sup>

[Matthew 21:33](#) "Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country.<sup>34</sup> "Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit.

<sup>35</sup> "And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another.

<sup>36</sup> "Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them.

<sup>37</sup> "Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

<sup>38</sup> "But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.'<sup>39</sup> "So they took him and cast [him] out of the vineyard and killed [him].

<sup>40</sup> "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?"

<sup>41</sup> They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease [his] vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons."

[Mark 12:1](#) Then He began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard and set a hedge around [it], dug [a place for] the wine vat and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country.

<sup>2</sup> "Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that he might receive some of the fruit of the vineyard from the vinedressers.

<sup>3</sup> "And they took [him] and beat him and sent [him] away empty-handed.

<sup>4</sup> "Again he sent them another servant, and at him they threw stones, wounded [him] in the head, and sent [him] away shamefully treated.

<sup>5</sup> "And again he sent another, and him they

[Mark 12:6](#) "Therefore still having one son, his beloved, he also sent him to them last, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

<sup>7</sup> "But those vinedressers said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'<sup>8</sup> "So they took him and killed [him] and cast [him] out of the vineyard.

[Mark 12:9](#)

"Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do?

He will come and destroy the vinedressers, and give the vineyard to others.

[Luke 20:9](#) Then He began to tell the people this parable: "A certain man planted a vineyard, leased it to vinedressers, and went into a far country for a long time.<sup>10</sup> "Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard.

But the vinedressers beat him and sent [him] away empty-handed.

<sup>11</sup> "Again he sent another servant; and they beat him also, treated [him] shamefully, and sent [him] away empty-handed.

<sup>12</sup> "And again he sent a third; and they wounded him also and cast [him] out.

[Luke 20:13](#) "Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect [him] when they see him.'<sup>14</sup> "But when the vinedressers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.'<sup>15</sup> "So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed [him]. ...

[Luke 20:15](#) ...

Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do to them?

<sup>16</sup> "He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others." And when they heard [it] they said, "Certainly not!"

<sup>394</sup> Strong. p268. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/268/mode/2up>

<sup>42</sup> Jesus said to them, "Have you never <sup>10</sup> "Have you not even read this Scripture: ... Luke 20:17 Then He looked at them and said, "What then is this that is written: ...  
read in the Scriptures:

<p>'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD's doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes'?</p>	<p><a href="#">Psalm 118:22</a> The stone [which] the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. <a href="#">Psalm 118:22 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Mark 12:10</a> ... 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. <sup>11</sup> This was the LORD's doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes'?"</p>	<p><small>Luke 20:17</small> ... 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone'?</p>
--	---	--	--

<sup>43</sup> "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.

<sup>44</sup> "And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." Luke 20:18 "Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." [Luke 20:9-18 NKJV](#)

<sup>45</sup> Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them. Mark 12:12 ... for they knew He had spoken the parable against them. ...

<sup>46</sup> But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet. And they sought to lay hands on Him, but feared the multitude, ... So they left Him and went away. [Mark 12:1-12 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 21:33-46 NKJV](#)

Perhaps Jesus was thinking of the following passage when He told this parable.

[Isaiah 5:1](#) Now let me sing to my Well-beloved  
A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard:  
My Well-beloved has a vineyard  
On a very fruitful hill.  
<sup>2</sup> He dug it up and cleared out its stones,  
And planted it with the choicest vine.  
He built a tower in its midst,  
And also made a winepress in it;  
So He expected [it] to bring forth [good] grapes,  
But it brought forth wild grapes. [Isaiah 5:1-2 NKJV](#)

While the vineyard, tower and wine press are common, the produce of the vineyard is different, and the surrounding stories are different. Both were parables of Israel, but Isaiah focused on the worthless harvest. In the parable Jesus told, the emphasis was on the evil caretakers, who were understood to be Jewish leadership up to and including the current. It was so obvious that even the condemned listeners made the connection. The sad thing is that even though they understood it, they were still willing to play their part, by wishing to arrest Jesus and ultimately kill Him.

The stone which the builders rejected is clearly about Jesus, but was it just a prophecy or was it also an actual occurrence? In the *Desire of Ages*, White tells the story of the rejected stone.

In quoting the prophecy of the rejected stone, Christ referred to an actual occurrence in the history of Israel. The incident was connected with the building of the first temple. While it had a special application at the time of Christ's first advent, and should have appealed with special force to the Jews, it has also a lesson for us. When the temple of Solomon was erected, the immense stones for the walls and the foundation were entirely prepared at the quarry; after they were brought to the place of building, not an instrument was to be used upon

them; the workmen had only to place them in position. For use in the foundation, one stone of unusual size and peculiar shape had been brought; but the workmen could find no place for it, and would not accept it. It was an annoyance to them as it lay unused in their way. Long it remained a rejected stone. But when the builders came to the laying of the corner, they searched for a long time to find a stone of sufficient size and strength, and of the proper shape, to take that particular place, and bear the great weight which would rest upon it. Should they make an unwise choice for this important place, the safety of the entire building would be endangered. They must find a stone capable of resisting the influence of the sun, of frost, and of tempest. Several stones had at different times been chosen, but under the pressure of immense weights they had crumbled to pieces. Others could not bear the test of the sudden atmospheric changes. But at last attention was called to the stone so long rejected. It had been exposed to the air, to sun and storm, without revealing the slightest crack. The builders examined this stone. It had borne every test but one. If it could bear the test of severe pressure, they decided to accept it for the cornerstone. The trial was made. The stone was accepted, brought to its assigned position, and found to be an exact fit. In prophetic vision, Isaiah was shown that this stone was a symbol of Christ. He says:

“Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. And He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.” Carried down in prophetic vision to the first advent, the prophet is shown that Christ is to bear trials and tests of which the treatment of the chief cornerstone in the temple of Solomon was symbolic. “Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.” Isaiah 8:13-15; 28:16. [Desire of Ages, p597-598.](#)<sup>395</sup>

Unfortunately, I do not have a non-biblical historical reference for this story but Jesus spoke of it as something all His hearers would have been familiar with. Assuming the Psalm was written by David, he was not writing of the event described from the building of the Temple as historical. I think the Psalm has the sound of a Messianic prophecy but that doesn't mean the story didn't literally happen. Isaiah and Zechariah also had cornerstone prophecies of Jesus.

[Isaiah 28:16](#) Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

"Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation,  
A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation;  
Whoever believes will not act hastily. [Isaiah 28:16 NKJV](#)

[Zechariah 10:4](#) From him comes the cornerstone,  
From him the tent peg,  
From him the battle bow,  
From him every ruler together. [Zechariah 10:4 NKJV](#)

Clearly Jesus is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. If He didn't say and do the things the Bible says, if He wasn't who He said He was, then our whole faith is meaningless. Some who are not Christian but believe in the historical character

<sup>395</sup> White. *Desire of Ages*. p597-598.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&collection=2&section=all&pagenumber=597>

may say he was a charismatic leader, a good man, or even a prophet. But this is what noted Christian author C.S. Lewis had to say about that.

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.<sup>396</sup>

What do you believe?

- If the vineyard represents Israel, what do the wall, the wine press and the tower represent?
- What is the difference between being broken to pieces and being scattered like dust in [Matthew 21:44](#)? Which is better?
- How could the caretakers think they would inherit the vineyard if they murdered the owner's son?

## Is it lawful to pay tax to Caesar

[Matthew 22:15-22](#), [Mark 12:13-17](#), [Luke 20:20-26](#)<sup>397</sup>

[Matthew 22:15](#) Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in [His] talk. <sup>16</sup> And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians,

saying,

"Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. <sup>17</sup> "Tell us, therefore, what do You think?

Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"

<sup>18</sup> But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, [you] hypocrites? <sup>19</sup> "Show Me the tax money." So they brought Him a denarius. <sup>20</sup> And He said to them,

[Mark 12:13](#) Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in [His] words.

<sup>14</sup> When they had come, they said to Him,

"Teacher, we know that You are true, ... but teach the way of God in truth. ... and care about no one; for You do not regard the person of men, ...

Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"

<sup>15</sup> "Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?"

But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why do you test Me? Bring Me a denarius that I may see [it]."

<sup>16</sup> So they brought [it]. And He said to them,

[Luke 20:20](#) So they watched [Him], and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, that they might seize on His words, in order to deliver Him to the power and the authority of the governor. <sup>21</sup> Then they asked Him, saying,

"Teacher, we know that You say and teach rightly, ... but teach the way of God in truth: ... and You do not show personal favoritism, ...

<sup>22</sup> "Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

<sup>23</sup> But He perceived their craftiness, and said to them, "Why do you test Me?"

<sup>24</sup> "Show Me a denarius.

<sup>396</sup> Lewis, C.S., *Mere Christianity*, London: Collins, 1952, pp. 54–56. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewis's\\_trilemma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewis's_trilemma)

<sup>397</sup> Strong. p270. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/270/mode/2up>

"Whose image and inscription [is] this?"

<sup>21</sup> They said to Him, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

<sup>22</sup> When they had heard [these words], they marveled, and left Him and went their way. [Matthew 22:15-22 NKJV](#)

"Whose image and inscription [is] this?"

They said to Him, "Caesar's." <sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered and said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

And they marveled at Him. [Mark 12:13-17 NKJV](#)

Whose image and inscription does it have?" They answered and said, "Caesar's." <sup>25</sup> And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." <sup>26</sup> But they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people. And they marveled at His answer and kept silent. [Luke 22:20-26 NKJV](#)

Here Jesus gave to Christians a principle that whether or not we agree with the government whose protection and laws we are living under; we should pay the taxes they require. The modern definition of a poll tax is a fixed tax without regard to income or wealth. They didn't mention it, but the Jews were contrasting the Roman poll tax and their own Temple poll tax. I don't think they thought this one through very well, but they gave Jesus a yes/no question and were planning to imply things from His answer. If Jesus had said to pay the Roman tax, they would have claimed He was against paying the Temple tax, and if He had said to not pay the Roman tax, He would be in trouble with the Romans.

My chapter entitled [Jesus cleanses the Temple at the first Passover of His public ministry](#) explains the purpose for and the amount of the temple tax. If you read into it, you can see that it fits the definition of a poll tax.

---

What do you believe?

- Does this principle also infer anything about participating in government in the way of voting or running for office?
- Does this principle mean that it is wrong to try to overthrow an oppressive government?
- Do you think the United States was being led by God when they rebelled against taxes without representation and eventually fought for independence from England?

## Whose wife will she be in the resurrection?

[Matthew 22:23-33](#), [Mark 12:18-27](#), [Luke 20:27-39](#)<sup>398</sup>

[Matthew 22:23](#) The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, <sup>24</sup> saying: "Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children,

his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. <sup>25</sup> "Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother.

<sup>26</sup> "Likewise the second also,

and the third, even to the seventh.

<sup>27</sup> "Last of all the woman died also. <sup>28</sup> "Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her."

[Matthew 22:29](#) Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. <sup>30</sup> "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.

<sup>31</sup> "But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying,

[Deuteronomy 25:5](#) "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be [married] to a stranger outside [the family];

her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. <sup>6</sup> "And it shall be [that] the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.

[Deuteronomy 25:5-6 NKJV](#)

[Mark 12:24](#) Jesus answered and said to them, "Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God? <sup>25</sup> "For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

<sup>26</sup> "But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the [burning] bush [passage], how God spoke to him, saying,

[Mark 12:18](#) Then [some] Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him; and they asked Him, saying:

<sup>19</sup> "Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, and leaves [his] wife behind, and leaves no children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.

<sup>20</sup> "Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife; and dying, he left no offspring.

<sup>21</sup> "And the second took her, and he died; nor did he leave any offspring. And the third likewise.

<sup>22</sup> "So the seven had her and left no offspring.

Last of all the woman died also.

<sup>23</sup> "Therefore, in the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife."

[Luke 20:27](#) Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came to [Him] and asked Him, <sup>28</sup> saying:

"Teacher, Moses wrote to us [that] if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.

<sup>29</sup> "Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and died without children.

<sup>30</sup> "And the second took her as wife, and he died childless.

<sup>31</sup> "Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children, and died.

<sup>32</sup> "Last of all the woman died also. <sup>33</sup> "Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife."

[Luke 20:34](#) Jesus answered and said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. <sup>35</sup> "But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; <sup>36</sup> "nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. <sup>37</sup> "But even Moses showed in the [burning] bush [passage] that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord ...

<sup>398</sup> Strong. p272. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/272/mode/2up>

<p>Matthew 22:32 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." <sup>33</sup> And when the multitudes heard [this], they were astonished at His teaching. <a href="#">Matthew 22:23-33 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Exodus 3:6</a> Moreover He said, "I [am] the God of your father--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. <a href="#">Exodus 3:6 NKJV</a></p>	<p>Mark 12:26 ... 'I [am] the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob' ? <sup>27</sup> "He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. You are therefore greatly mistaken." <a href="#">Mark 12:18-27 NKJV</a></p>	<p>Luke 20:37 ... 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' <sup>38</sup> "For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him." <sup>39</sup> Then some of the scribes answered and said, "Teacher, You have spoken well." <a href="#">Luke 20:27-39 NKJV</a></p>
---	--	--	---

I think it is worth pointing out first of all that Pharisees and Sadducees were very opposed to each other in ideology and beliefs. They were like opposing political parties, except that the politics and religion were very intertwined, so their disagreements with each other were religious in nature as well. As was pointed out in the first verse, the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection. As a matter of fact, they did not believe in angels either.

[Acts 23:8](#) For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection--and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. [Acts 23:8 NKJV](#)

At the time of Christ, the Sadducees were the party that was in religious and political power. However, as opposed to the Pharisees as they were, they were united with them in their desire to discredit and rid themselves of Jesus. He was seen as a threat to their way of life and the status quo, which happened to have them in power, such as it was under Rome.

This command of God to take a brother's widow as a wife may seem strange in some cultures today but maybe not so much in others. At the time and in the culture the command was given, women cared for their families but were not in a good position to earn the resources for that support. Polygamy also happened to be an accepted way of life. I think this arrangement may have taken different forms depending on the situation. The minimum requirement of the brother was to produce one male heir for the first born. I'm sure in some cases, after the obligation was fulfilled, no more marital relations occurred. In other cases, the older brother's widow may have become a full-fledged wife of the next brother. In either case the widow should have received the financial support of the brother or family. If we look at the role of the goel in the Old Testament, we can see that this particular command was in fact just one part of a much larger picture. The following paragraph and list were copied from the chapter on [Ruth](#).

The word goel is derived from the Hebrew גֹּאֵל, gā'a<sup>399</sup>, which is defined 'to redeem, act as kinsman-redeemer, avenge, revenge, ransom, do the part of a kinsman.' In the KJV, this word occurred 104 times and was translated to 'redeem' 50 times, 'redeemer' 18 times, 'kinsman' 13 times, 'revenger' 7 times, 'avenger' 6 times. This translation distribution along with the reading of the laws recorded by Moses gives us the following roles of the goel.<sup>400 401</sup>

1. The kinsman should buy back their relative's land that was sold. [[Leviticus 25:25-34](#)]
2. The kinsman should redeem their relative from slavery or servitude. [[Leviticus 25:47-54](#)]
3. Avenge the murder of a relative. [[Numbers 35:12,19-27](#), [Deuteronomy 19:11,12](#)]
4. To appear in a lawsuit as a helper for a relative. [[Proverbs 23:11](#), [Jeremiah 50:34](#), [Psalm 119:154](#)]

<sup>399</sup> <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=H1350&t=NKJV>

<sup>400</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goel>

<sup>401</sup> Talbot, Elizabeth Viera. *Surprised by Love*. Nampa, Idaho, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2010, p43.



5. Produce an heir for a deceased brother. [[Deuteronomy 25:5,6](#)]

Now, moving on to Jesus' response, I think the Sadducees did us all a favor by asking Jesus this question. From His answer, we understand that there will be no marriage and by implication, no reproduction in heaven. The thing that always troubled me about this as a married person is, how would the relationship with my wife change in heaven? On the surface, it seems that the relationship would be less than it is here on earth without the intimate component, even though it would be better in so many ways without all the effects of sin. I think in a way, God gave us the marriage relationship to help us understand how much He loves us, and how close and intimate we can be with Him. I think maybe the component that will be missing is the sexual lust that with sin must be so closely guarded and is so difficult for many to keep within the bounds of marriage. If we can have the relationship intimacy with God and maybe others without having to worry about inappropriate feelings of lustful desire, maybe that is a good thing. I guess the end of reproduction makes sense to me, after all there will be no death, but when I think of my children and the love I have for them, it makes me sad that people would most likely not continue to experience that in heaven. Perhaps even more clearly than in the husband and wife relationship, we can see God's love and care for us in the perfect parent child relationship. However, I think we should not get too caught up with what will not be in heaven. I think that every good thing we experience on earth now, is a shadow of something better in heaven.

Jesus' last comment to the Sadducees, I think was a jab at their unbelief in the resurrection. The first point is that since the Sadducees only accepted the writings of Moses, and not the rest of the Old Testament scripture, Jesus supported His point from the writings of Moses. There is room for a little confusion if one took this statement and tried to formulate a belief on it alone. God told Moses at the burning bush, that He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But then Jesus followed that up with, "He is not the God of the dead but of the living." But what did He mean by that because Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all dead? Some who claim the soul is immortal might say this is proof that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were all alive in heaven. But the question and answer did not say whose wife would she be when she died (implying immediately going to heaven). It was, "In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife of the seven will she be?" Jesus didn't correct them from speaking of "the resurrection" as a future event. I believe it would be completely natural for Jesus to speak of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in that way if He knew they would live again in "the resurrection."

---

What do you believe?

- In a monogamous culture, sexual relations with a woman who is not your wife would be considered adultery. How do you explain this command of God in light of the seventh commandment? Is this an example of a ceremonial law that took precedence over the 10 Commandments?
- Do you believe there is anything we experience on this earth that will not be replaced by something better in heaven?
- What do you think Jesus meant when He said God was the God of the living, not the dead?

## What is the most important commandment

[Mark 12:28-34](#), [Matthew 22:34-40](#)<sup>402</sup>

[Mark 12:28](#) Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, "Which is the first commandment of all?"

<sup>29</sup> Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments [is]:

'Hear, O Israel,  
the LORD our God, the LORD is one.

<sup>30</sup> 'And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This [is] the first commandment.

[Mark 12:31](#) "And the second, like [it, is] this:

'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

<sup>32</sup> So the scribe said to Him, "Well [said], Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. <sup>33</sup> "And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." <sup>34</sup> Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." But after that no one dared question Him. [Mark 12:28-34 NKJV](#)

This same summary of the Law came up before in answer to a question. It was given by a lawyer after he asked what he should do to inherit eternal life, and Jesus asked him what the Law said ([The Good Samaritan](#)). Neither Jesus nor the lawyer were saying anything new or revolutionary with the first part of the answer. In fact, what they both quoted was essentially the first part of the Shema, which is probably one of the most commonly recited prayers among Jews.<sup>403 404</sup> But even though the question was only asking for the most important commandment, Jesus was not willing to stop there. He proceeded to summarize the last six commandments by saying to love your neighbor as yourself. This summary must not have been revolutionary or unique, because this scribe affirmed the correctness of Jesus' answer, and the lawyer mentioned above, had also said the same thing.

This was a very good question, even if it was meant to trap Jesus in some way. Modern tradition, which dates back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century after Christ states that there are 613 commandments given in the Torah.<sup>405 406</sup> The Mishna and Talmud contain hundreds more laws or commands, many explaining or clarifying the Torah. At the time of Christ, these laws had been passed down through the centuries orally from Rabbi to student. It was thought that it was better to learn these

[Matthew 22:34](#) But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. <sup>35</sup> Then one of them,

a lawyer, asked [Him a question], testing Him, and saying,

<sup>36</sup> "Teacher, which [is] the great commandment in the law?"

<sup>37</sup> Jesus said to him,

[Deuteronomy 6:4](#) "Hear, O Israel: The

LORD our God, the LORD [is] one!

<sup>5</sup> "You shall love the LORD your God

with all your heart, with all your

soul, and with

all your strength. [Deuteronomy 6:4-](#)

[5 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 22:37](#) ...

"You shall love the LORD your God with

all your heart, with all your soul, and

with all your mind.'

<sup>38</sup> "This is [the] first and great

commandment.

[Leviticus 19:18](#) ... but you shall love

your neighbor as yourself:

I [am] the LORD. [Leviticus 19:18](#)

[NKJV](#)

<sup>39</sup> "And [the] second [is] like it: 'You shall love

your neighbor as yourself.'

<sup>40</sup> "On these two commandments hang all the

Law and the Prophets." [Matthew 22:34-40](#)

[NKJV](#)

<sup>402</sup> Strong. p274. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/274/mode/2up>

<sup>403</sup> <http://www.jewfaq.org/shemaref.htm>

<sup>404</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shema\\_Yisrael](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shema_Yisrael)

<sup>405</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/613\\_commandments](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/613_commandments)

<sup>406</sup> <http://www.jewfaq.org/613.htm>

laws with explanation from a Rabbi rather than to only read them. Jewish tradition holds that this oral tradition originated from commands God spoke to Moses which he then taught the people but did not write in the Torah.<sup>407 408 409</sup>  
<sup>410</sup> The Pharisees at the time of Jesus, had been rebuked by Him for being more careful to keep the oral tradition than the Ten Commandments. The Sadducees on the other hand were said not to live according to the oral tradition.<sup>411</sup>

I think the reason Jesus was not willing to state only the foremost commandment is that the summary of the whole Law in two commandments cannot be separated. I believe you cannot truly love God if you do not love your neighbor. I also believe that someone who has not had the opportunity to hear about God, but truly loves their neighbor, is keeping the Law of God.

What do you believe?

- Do you think this was a trick question or an honest one?
- Do you think the oral tradition changed much over the centuries?
- Do you believe that someone who doesn't know about God but truly loves their neighbor can be saved?

## Whose son is the Christ?

[Matthew 22:41-46](#), [Mark 12:35-37](#), [Luke 20:40-44](#)<sup>412</sup>

[Matthew 22:41](#) While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, <sup>42</sup> saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "[The Son] of David." <sup>43</sup> He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying:

[Mark 12:35](#) Then Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the temple, "How [is it] that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David? <sup>36</sup> "For David himself said by the Holy Spirit:

[Luke 20:41](#) And He said to them, "How can they say that the Christ is the Son of David? <sup>42</sup> "Now David himself said in the Book of Psalms:

[Psalm 110:1](#) A Psalm of David.

<sup>44</sup> 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool" ' ?

The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." [Psalm 110:1](#)

'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." ' ?

'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, <sup>43</sup> Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." ' ?

[NKJV](#)

<sup>45</sup> "If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?" <sup>46</sup> And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

[Matthew 22:41-46 NKJV](#)

[Mark 12:37](#) "Therefore David himself calls Him 'Lord'; how is He [then] his Son?" And the common people heard Him gladly. [Mark 12:35-37 NKJV](#)

[Luke 20:44](#) "Therefore David calls Him 'Lord';

how is He then his Son?"—

<sup>40</sup> But after that

they dared not question Him anymore. [Luke](#)

[20:40-44 NKJV](#)

<sup>407</sup> [http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/talmud\\_&\\_mishnah.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/talmud_&_mishnah.html)

<sup>408</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mishnah>

<sup>409</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talmud>

<sup>410</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oral\\_Torah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oral_Torah)

<sup>411</sup> [http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/sadducees\\_pharisees\\_essenes.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/sadducees_pharisees_essenes.html)

<sup>412</sup> Strong. p275. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/274/mode/2up>

At first glance it may appear that Jesus was asking the Pharisees a question about Himself. Because they didn't believe He was the Christ, the question was theoretical to them. If you believe the Christ, the Messiah, is God, then the answer is quite easy. Of course, David would have no problem calling a descendant of his Lord if He was his God. Maybe Jesus was trying to get them to think about who their Messiah really was. The Jews seemed to have the idea that the Messiah would be a descendant of David, maybe from the following prophecy.

[Jeremiah 23:5](#) "Behold, [the] days are coming," says the LORD,  
"That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness;  
A King shall reign and prosper,  
And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.  
<sup>6</sup> In His days Judah will be saved,  
And Israel will dwell safely;  
Now this [is] His name by which He will be called:  
THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. [Jeremiah 23:5-6 NKJV](#)

To be fair, I don't think there were that many clear prophecies that spoke of the childhood and circumstances of His birth. There is the prophecy of the virgin birth in [Isaiah 7:14](#), which is easy to claim in retrospect, but in my opinion is not at all obvious as a predictive prophecy.

[Isaiah 7:14](#) "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. [Isaiah 7:14 NKJV](#)

I discussed this in the chapter on the [Birth of Jesus to the Virgin Mary](#). To recap what was discussed there, the oft quoted verse was actually a sign given to King Ahaz. I didn't see how the prediction of the birth of a child then as a sign, would naturally be seen as a prophecy of the Messiah. In retrospect, however, since the entire Old Testament testifies of Christ, there are many things written which may not have seemed to be prophecies, that were seen to occur in His life. These prophecies were proof to some at the time and to many others after, that Jesus was indeed the Messiah and Savior that was foretold.

At the time, there was a common belief that no one would know where the Messiah came from.

[John 7:27](#) "However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from." [John 7:27 NKJV](#)

I think that based on the prophecies in Daniel, the Jews thought it was the time for the Messiah to appear. And then in addition to that, they had the visit of the wise men, and the announcement to the shepherds. They also had the preaching of John the Baptist, and the many miracles performed by Jesus. The problem was that Jesus didn't fit the mold that they had for the Messiah.

---

What do you believe?

- Do you think the Pharisees knew the answer but were unwilling to say it?
- What do you think Jesus was trying to teach with this question?
- Do you think it is confusing for someone born of a human being to also be God? Would He be human or God?

## More woes on the scribes and Pharisees

[Matthew 23:1-39](#), [Mark 12:38-40](#), [Luke 20:45-47](#), [Luke 11:43, 47-51](#), [Luke 13:34-35](#)<sup>413</sup>

[Matthew 23:1](#) Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. <sup>3</sup> "Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, [that] observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. <sup>4</sup> "For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay [them] on men's shoulders; but they [themselves] will not move them with one of their fingers. <sup>5</sup> "But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. <sup>6</sup> "They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, <sup>7</sup> "greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.' <sup>8</sup> "But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. <sup>9</sup> "Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. <sup>10</sup> "And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. <sup>11</sup> "But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. <sup>12</sup> "And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. <sup>13</sup> "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in [yourselves], nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. <sup>14</sup> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation. <sup>15</sup> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. <sup>16</sup> "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged [to perform it].' <sup>17</sup> "Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? <sup>18</sup> "And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged [to perform it].' <sup>19</sup> "Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? <sup>20</sup> "Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. <sup>21</sup> "He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it. <sup>22</sup> "And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it. <sup>23</sup> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier [matters] of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. <sup>24</sup> "Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!"

[Mark 12:38](#) Then He said to them in His teaching, "Beware of the scribes, ...  
[Luke 20:45](#) Then, in the hearing of all the people, He said to His disciples, <sup>46</sup> "Beware of the scribes, ...  
 ... who desire to go around in long robes, [love] greetings in the marketplaces, <sup>39</sup> "the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, [Mark 12:38-39](#) in the marketplaces. [Luke 11:43 NKJV](#)

[Mark 12:38](#) ... who desire to go around in long robes, [love] greetings in the marketplaces, <sup>39</sup> "the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, [Mark 12:38-39](#) in the marketplaces. [Luke 11:43 NKJV](#)  
[Luke 20:46](#) ... who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, [Luke 20:45-46 NKJV](#)

not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. <sup>9</sup> "Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. <sup>10</sup> "And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. <sup>11</sup> "But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. <sup>12</sup> "And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

<sup>13</sup> "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in [yourselves], nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. <sup>14</sup> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!

For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation. <sup>15</sup> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

<sup>16</sup> "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged [to perform it].' <sup>17</sup> "Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? <sup>18</sup> "And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged [to perform it].' <sup>19</sup> "Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? <sup>20</sup> "Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. <sup>21</sup> "He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it. <sup>22</sup> "And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.

<sup>23</sup> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier [matters] of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. <sup>24</sup> "Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!"

<sup>413</sup> Strong. p276. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/276/mode/2up>

<sup>25</sup> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. <sup>26</sup> "Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.

<sup>27</sup> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead [men's] bones and all uncleanness. <sup>28</sup> "Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

<sup>29</sup> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, <sup>30</sup> "and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.'

[Luke 11:47](#) "Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.

<sup>31</sup> "Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.

<sup>48</sup> "In fact, you bear witness that you approve the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs.

<sup>32</sup> "Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' [guilt]. <sup>33</sup> "Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?

<sup>34</sup> "Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: [some] of them you will kill and crucify, and [some] of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, <sup>35</sup> "that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth,

[Luke 11:49](#) "Therefore the wisdom of God also said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, and [some] of them they will kill and persecute,' <sup>50</sup> "that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation,

from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

<sup>51</sup> "from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation.

<sup>36</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

[Luke 11:47-51 NKJV](#)

<sup>37</sup> "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under [her] wings, but you were not willing! <sup>38</sup> "See! Your house is left to you desolate; <sup>39</sup> "for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say,

[Luke 13:34](#) "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen [gathers] her brood under [her] wings, but you were not willing! <sup>35</sup> "See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until [the time] comes when you say,

'Blessed [is] He who comes in the name of the LORD!' " [Matthew 23:1-39 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 118:26](#) Blessed [is] he who comes in the name of the LORD! ... [Psalm 118:26 NKJV](#)

'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' " [Luke 13:34-35 NKJV](#)

I placed an earlier session of [woes on the scribes and Pharisees](#) right after the first cleansing of the temple, earlier in the ministry of Jesus. Essentially the same things were said at that time. Jesus was primarily condemning the scribes and Pharisees for being hypocrites.

Jesus started by condemning their practice of outwardly showing holiness and religiousness by the clothes they wore. Then He touched on their desire or demands to be honored in public. Then He moved into the titles they demanded

people address them by. Jesus said that no human being should be called Rabbi, because only One is your teacher. I found the following descriptions of a Rabbi from those times.

The rabbis of talmudic times were the sole authority on the Oral Torah. (This was before Oral Torah was written, and no one had the opportunity to study the law for themselves). The rabbi was also revered as being a figure closer to God than anyone else in the community.<sup>414</sup>

The function of the rabbi of the Talmud was to teach the members of the community the Scriptures and the oral and traditional laws.<sup>415</sup>

Jesus had accused the Jews of treating the Oral Torah as more important than the Ten Commandments. The Rabbi was in the position to teach and interpret laws that were not even written down. I interpret this to mean that what the Rabbi said, carried as much weight as the Torah, but there was really no way to verify it by reading it yourself. I think Jesus was saying that no person should take another person's words as carrying the same weight as scripture. No one should be teaching things as religious truth that cannot be found in the Bible.

Jesus also said that no person should be called father in the religious sense, because we all have the same Father, who is God. He also said that people should not be called leaders, because everyone's leader should be Christ. So, does that mean that a church should have no human beings as leaders or teachers? Is it going against Jesus' command to have a president over a church organization? I think the explanation for these titles is the same as Rabbi. Regardless of title, I think, no person should be placed in a position where they are the sole source of spiritual information. In fact, we call organizations that revere an individual in this manner a sect. So, what is the role of a Sabbath school teacher, or a pastor or preacher? In the New Testament, Paul was called as a teacher.

[1 Timothy 2:7](#) for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle--I am speaking the truth in Christ [and] not lying-- a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. [1 Timothy 2:7 NKJV](#)

[2 Timothy 1:11](#) to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. [2 Timothy 1:11 NKJV](#)

[Romans 10:14](#) How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? [Romans 10:14 NKJV](#)

[Ephesians 4:11](#) And He Himself gave some [to be] apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,<sup>12</sup> for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, [Ephesians 4:11-12 NKJV](#)

I think the role of a teacher is similar to that of a preacher, which according to Paul is to tell people about Jesus. According to Ephesians, it is a work of service, not lordship, and it is for the purpose of building up the body of believers in Christ. They should present teachings from the Bible and encourage their hearers to go study for themselves to verify what they have heard. So, is it Biblical to have a church organizational hierarchy, including a president? [Acts 15](#) paints a

<sup>414</sup> <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Rabbis.html>

<sup>415</sup> <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/12494-rabbi#anchor4>

picture of a council of Apostles and elders in Jerusalem that was deciding which of the laws of Moses should be imposed on the new Gentile converts. It is interesting that nothing is said about the Ten Commandments, but they said:

[Acts 15:28](#) For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: <sup>29</sup> that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell. [Acts 15:28-29 NKJV](#)

I think this shows that having a church organization and leadership is supported in the Bible, but they were not teaching or requiring anything that was not in their Holy Scriptures. In fact, it seems that led by the Holy Spirit, they were making a distinction between the essential Law of God and Jewish cultural laws.

I think that some of the Pharisees must have been in positions of national authority by being on the Sanhedrin. But I think many others were considered in positions of authority by nature of the fact that they were called Rabbi's and teachers of the law. Jesus was condemning them for teaching and trying to enforce the law on the people but breaking it themselves. In some cases, they were probably guilty of knowingly breaking some of their own laws in secret, and in other cases breaking God's law to keep their own tradition. According to Jesus, they were all about putting on a show of religiousness in order to be revered by the people.

The mention of the murder of Zechariah the son of Berechiah in [Matthew 23:35](#) is interesting. I had always thought that it was referring to the murder of the Old Testament prophet by king Joash.

[2 Chronicles 24:20](#) Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people, and said to them, "Thus says God: 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He also has forsaken you.' " <sup>21</sup> So they conspired against him, and at the command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the LORD. <sup>22</sup> Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but killed his son; and as he died, he said, "The LORD look on [it], and repay!" [2 Chronicles 24:20-22 NKJV](#)

But it does not seem to be a match based on the name of the father of this Zechariah, and the fact that he was killed in the courtyard of the Temple. Matthew Henry argues that many times people are known by more than one name, hence the difference in the father's name.<sup>416</sup> Young brought to my attention for the first time ever, and Henry also mentions it as a possibility, that perhaps this statement of Jesus was a prophecy.<sup>417</sup> Josephus wrote of a Zacharias the son of Baruch that was killed by the Zealots, in the middle of the Temple. This occurred shortly before the destruction of the Temple by the Romans. [[Josephus. Wars, 4:5:4](#) <sup>418</sup>]

What do you believe?

- Does having fundamental beliefs mean a Church is telling its members what they must believe?
- Do you think Churches that call their priests father, or their preachers reverend, are disobeying the command of Jesus?

<sup>416</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat\\_023.cfm?a=952035](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat_023.cfm?a=952035)

<sup>417</sup> Young, L H. *Lives of the Apostles of Jesus Christ*. New Haven, 1836, p374.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=LV8wAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA374>

<sup>418</sup> Josephus, Flavius. *Wars of the Jews*. p407. <https://books.google.com/books?id=5QQ-AAAAcAAJ&pg=RA1-PA314>

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2850/2850-h/2850-h.htm#link42HCH0005>



- Why does it seem that Christians who eat meat ignore half of the reduced set of laws given to Gentiles, by not worrying about the blood or whether the animal was strangled to death?

## The poor widow's offering

[Mark 12:41-44](#), [Luke 21:1-4](#)<sup>419</sup>

[Mark 12:41](#) Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many [who were] rich put in much. <sup>42</sup> Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. <sup>43</sup> So He called His disciples to [Himself] and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; <sup>44</sup> "for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood." [Mark 12:41-44 NKJV](#)

[Luke 21:1](#) And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, <sup>2</sup> and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. <sup>3</sup> So He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; <sup>4</sup> "for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had." [Luke 21:1-4 NKJV](#)

I think the main principle at play here is that the rich were giving out of their surplus, meaning they didn't have to sacrifice anything in order to give. The poor widow on the other hand, gave all she had. She was willing to give up a meal or more if necessary, in order to be able to give her offering to God. In God's sight, the size of your gift depends more on how much you had to sacrifice to be able to give it.

I guess to tell the truth, I would have to say that I have always been in the position of giving out of my surplus. I suppose it doesn't take too much honesty to admit that it would be very difficult to give up everything I owned. After all, if I did, where would I live, what would I eat and how would I pay for my children's education? What would I have done if I were the rich young ruler that Jesus told to sell all he had, give it to the poor and follow Him?

What do you believe?

- How much does God expect you to give?
- Who do you think benefits more from extreme giving, the giver or the receiver?
- Do you think it would be easier to give up everything you owned if you had two million dollars, or if you only had two dollars?

## Jesus foretells His death again

[John 12:20-50](#)<sup>420</sup>

[John 12:20](#) Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. <sup>21</sup> Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

<sup>22</sup> Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

<sup>419</sup> Strong. p280. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/280/mode/2up>

<sup>420</sup> Strong. p281. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/280/mode/2up>

<sup>23</sup> But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. <sup>24</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. <sup>25</sup> "He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup> "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him [My] Father will honor.

<sup>27</sup> "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. <sup>28</sup> "Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came from heaven, [saying], "I have both glorified [it] and will glorify [it] again."

<sup>29</sup> Therefore the people who stood by and heard [it] said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him."

<sup>30</sup> Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. <sup>31</sup> "Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. <sup>32</sup> "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all [peoples] to Myself." <sup>33</sup> This He said, signifying by what death He would die.

<sup>34</sup> The people answered Him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how [can] You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?"

<sup>35</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. <sup>36</sup> "While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

<sup>37</sup> But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, <sup>38</sup> that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke:

"Lord, who has believed our report?

[Isaiah 53:1](#) Who has believed our report?

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?"

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? [Isaiah](#)

<sup>39</sup> Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:

[53:1 NKJV](#)

<sup>40</sup> "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with [their] eyes, Lest they should understand with [their] hearts and turn, So that I should heal them." <sup>41</sup> These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

[Isaiah 6:10](#) "Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed." [Isaiah 6:10 NKJV](#)

<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess [Him], lest they should be put out of the synagogue; <sup>43</sup> for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

<sup>44</sup> Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. <sup>45</sup> "And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. <sup>46</sup> "I have come [as] a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. <sup>47</sup> "And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. <sup>48</sup> "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him--the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. <sup>49</sup> "For I have not spoken on My own [authority]; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should

speak.<sup>50</sup> "And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak." [John 12:20-50 NKJV](#)

During this meeting with the Greeks, God's voice was heard affirming Jesus for the third time during His earthly ministry. The first was at His baptism, and the second was at His transfiguration. At the beginning of His life, wise men from the East came and worshipped Him, and now in the last week of His life on earth, Greeks from the west came to Him. Ellen White had the following to say:

These men came from the West to find the Saviour at the close of His life, as the wise men had come from the East at the beginning. At the time of Christ's birth the Jewish people were so engrossed with their own ambitious plans that they knew not of His advent. The magi from a heathen land came to the manger with their gifts, to worship the Saviour. So these Greeks, representing the nations, tribes, and peoples of the world, came to see Jesus. So the people of all lands and all ages would be drawn by the Saviour's cross. So shall many "come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 8:11. [Desire of Ages, p621](#)<sup>421</sup>

Jesus not only foretold His death, but He gave them a hint as to How He would die.

[John 12:32](#) "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all [peoples] to Myself." [John 12:32 NKJV](#)

This statement was a reference to the serpent that Moses lifted up in the wilderness.

[Numbers 12:8](#) Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery [serpent], and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live."<sup>9</sup> So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived. [Numbers 12:8-9 NKJV](#)

In actuality, I think the serpent on a standard was intended to be a foreshadowing of Jesus being crucified on the cross.

Finally, Jesus reiterated His oneness with the Father. But what did He mean with the following words?

[John 12:47](#) "And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world."<sup>48</sup> "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him-- the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. [John 12:47-48 NKJV](#)

Why did Jesus say He doesn't judge him who doesn't keep His words? I thought God was going to judge everyone. But then He clarifies a little in the next verse when He says, those who reject Him will be judged by His words at the last day. Matthew Henry suggests that maybe Jesus meant I'm not judging now, or I alone will not judge.<sup>422</sup> The "judge him at the last day," in the next verse kind of supports the not now interpretation. The first coming of Jesus was not for the purpose of judging, but to provide a way for salvation to be offered. Then at the last day, people would be judged based on whether they accepted the salvation He offered.

<sup>421</sup> White. *Desire of Ages*. p621-622.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&collection=2&section=all&pagenumber=621>

<sup>422</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Jhn/Jhn\\_012.cfm?a=1009047](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Jhn/Jhn_012.cfm?a=1009047)

What do you believe?

- Do you think the serpent Moses lifted up was a symbol of Christ? If so, why a serpent?
- In [verse 42](#), who do you think were the rulers who were believing if they were not Pharisees?
- [[John 12:48](#)] How do you think Jesus' words from His first coming might judge at the last day?

## Signs of the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the World

[Matthew 24:1-51](#), [Matthew 10:17-20,22,34-36](#), [Mark 13:1-37](#), [Luke 21:5-36](#) (except 18), [Luke 12:4-5,11-12,32,39-48,51-53](#), [Luke 17:22-24,26-30,31-32,34-37](#)<sup>423</sup>

[Matthew 24:1](#) Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple.

<sup>2</sup> And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not [one] stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

[Matthew 24:3](#) Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what [will be] the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

[Matthew 24:4](#) And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. <sup>5</sup> "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

[Matthew 24:6](#) "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all [these things] must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

[Mark 13:1](#) Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings [are here]!"

<sup>2</sup> And Jesus answered and said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not [one] stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

[Mark 13:3](#) Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, <sup>4</sup> "Tell us, when will these things be? And what [will be] the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?"

[Mark 13:5](#) And Jesus, answering them, began to say: "Take heed that no one deceives you. <sup>6</sup> "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am [He],' and will deceive many.

[Mark 13:7](#) "But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for [such things] must happen, but the end [is] not yet.

[Luke 21:5](#) Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations,

He said, <sup>6</sup> "These things which you see--the days will come in which not [one] stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down."

[Luke 21:7](#) So they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign [will there be] when these things are about to take place?"

[Luke 21:8](#) And He said: "Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am [He],' and, 'The time has drawn near.' Therefore do not go after them.

[Luke 21:9](#) "But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end [will] not [come] immediately."

<sup>423</sup> Strong. p286. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/286/mode/2up>

Matthew 24:7 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup> "All these [are] the beginning of sorrows.  
[Matthew 24:1-8 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 10:17](#) "But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. <sup>18</sup> "You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.

<sup>19</sup> "But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak;

<sup>20</sup> "for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. [Matthew 10:17-20 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 10:34](#) "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.

<sup>35</sup> "For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law';

<sup>36</sup> "and 'a man's enemies will be those of his [own] household.' [Matthew 10:34-36 NKJV](#)

Mark 13:8 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These [are] the beginnings of sorrows.

Mark 13:9 "But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them.

<sup>10</sup> "And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations.

<sup>11</sup> "But when they arrest [you] and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour,

speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. <sup>12</sup> "For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."  
 for it is not you who speak, but [Luke 12:11-12 NKJV](#)

[Micah 7:6](#) For son dishonors father,

Daughter rises against her mother,

Daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;

A man's enemies [are] the men of his own household. [Micah 7:6 NKJV](#)

Luke 21:10 Then He said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. <sup>11</sup> "And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.

[Luke 12:11](#) "Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities,

do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say.

<sup>12</sup> "For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

[Luke 12:11-12 NKJV](#)

Luke 21:12 "But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute [you], delivering [you] up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. <sup>13</sup> "But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony.

<sup>14</sup> "Therefore settle [it] in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer;

<sup>15</sup> "for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. [Luke 21:5-15 NKJV](#)

[Luke 12:51](#) "Do [you] suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. <sup>52</sup> "For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three.

<sup>53</sup> "Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." [Luke 12:51-53 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 24:9](#) "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. <sup>10</sup> "And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. [Matthew 24:9-10 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 10:21](#) "Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father [his] child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. <sup>22</sup> "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. ... [Matthew 10:21-22 NKJV](#)

Mark 13:12 "Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father [his] child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. <sup>13</sup> "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. ...

[Luke 21:16](#) "You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put [some] of you to death. <sup>17</sup> "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. [Luke 21:16-17 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 10:28](#) "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. [Matthew 10:28 NKJV](#)

[Luke 12:4](#) "And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. <sup>5</sup> "But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him! [Luke 12:4-5 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 24:13](#) "But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

[Matthew 10:22](#) ... But he who endures to the end will be saved. [Matthew 10:22 NKJV](#)

[Mark 13:13](#) ... But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

[Luke 21:19](#) "By your patience possess your souls. [Luke 21:19 NKJV](#)

[Luke 12:32](#) "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. [Luke 12:32 NKJV](#)

<sup>14</sup> "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

[Mark 13:10](#) "And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations.

Matthew 24:15 "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),

[Daniel 9:27](#) ...  
And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, ...  
[Daniel 9:27 NKJV](#)

[Mark 13:14](#) "So when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not" (let the reader understand),

[Luke 21:20](#) "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near.

Matthew 24:16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

"then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

<sup>21</sup> "Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her.

Matthew 24:17 "Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. <sup>18</sup> "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.

Mark 13:15 "Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. <sup>16</sup> "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.

[Luke 17:31](#) "In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods [are] in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. <sup>32</sup> "Remember Lot's wife. [Luke 17:31-32 NKJV](#)

[Luke 21:22](#) "For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

Matthew 24:19 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! <sup>20</sup> "And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. <sup>21</sup> "For then there will be great tribulation,

Mark 13:17 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! <sup>18</sup> "And pray that your flight may not be in winter. <sup>19</sup> "For [in] those days there will be tribulation,

Luke 21:23 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!

For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people.

such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.

[Luke 21:24](#) "And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. [Luke 21:22-24 NKJV](#)

Matthew 24:22 "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

Mark 13:20 "And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.

[Luke 17:22](#) Then He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see [it].

Matthew 24:23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here [is] the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe [it].

Mark 13:21 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here [is] the Christ!' or, 'Look, [He is] there!' do not believe it.

[Luke 17:23](#) "And they will say to you, 'Look here!' or 'Look there!' ...

Matthew 24:24 "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

[Matthew 24:11](#) "Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

Mark 13:22 "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

<sup>12</sup> "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. [Matthew 24:11-12 NKJV](#)

<sup>25</sup> "See, I have told you beforehand.

<sup>23</sup> "But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.

Matthew 24:26 "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; [or] 'Look, [He is] in the inner rooms!' do not believe [it].<sup>27</sup> "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

<sup>28</sup> "For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

Matthew 24:29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven,

and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Matthew 24:30 "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.<sup>31</sup> "And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Luke 21:28 "Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

[Luke 17:23](#) ... Do not go after [them] or follow [them].

<sup>24</sup> "For as the lightning that flashes out of one [part] under heaven shines to the other [part] under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day.—

<sup>37</sup> And they answered and said to Him, "Where, Lord?" So He said to them,

"Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together." [Luke 17:23,24,37 NKJV](#)

Mark 13:24 "But in those days,

after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; and in the stars; ...

<sup>25</sup> "the stars of heaven will fall,

and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.<sup>26</sup> ... for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

[Isaiah 13:10](#) ... The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine.—For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; [Isaiah 13:10 NKJV](#)

Luke 21:25 ... and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; <sup>26</sup> "men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, ...

[Daniel 7:13](#) ... And behold, [One] like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! ... [Daniel 7:13 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 27:13](#) ... The great trumpet will be blown; They will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, And they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, And shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem. [Isaiah 27:13 NKJV](#)

Mark 13:26 "Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

<sup>27</sup> "And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.

Luke 21:27 "Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.



Matthew 24:32 "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer [is] near. <sup>33</sup> "So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near--at the doors! <sup>34</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. <sup>35</sup> "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. <sup>36</sup> "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

<sup>37</sup> "But as the days of Noah [were], so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. <sup>38</sup> "For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup> "and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

<sup>40</sup> "Then two [men] will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. <sup>41</sup> "Two [women will be] grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. [Matthew 24:13-41 NKJV](#)

Luke 21:34 "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. <sup>35</sup> "For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup> "Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." [Luke 21:25-36 NKJV](#)

Mark 13:28 "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. <sup>29</sup> "So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near--at the doors! <sup>30</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. <sup>31</sup> "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. <sup>32</sup> "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

[Luke 17:26](#) "And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man:

<sup>27</sup> "They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

<sup>28</sup> "Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; <sup>29</sup> "but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed [them] all. <sup>30</sup> "Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.—<sup>34</sup> "I tell you, in that night there will be two [men] in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left.—

<sup>36</sup> "Two [men] will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left.—<sup>35</sup> "Two [women] will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. [Luke 17:26-30,34-36 NKJV](#)

Luke 21:29 Then He spoke to them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. <sup>30</sup> "When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. <sup>31</sup> "So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. <sup>33</sup> "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

Mark 13:33 "Take heed,

watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is.

[Matthew 24:43](#) "But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. <sup>44</sup> "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. [Matthew 24:43 NKJV](#)

Mark 13:37 "And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!"—<sup>34</sup> "[It is] like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch.

[Matthew 24:45](#) "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? <sup>46</sup> "Blessed [is] that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. <sup>47</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. <sup>48</sup> "But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' <sup>49</sup> "and begins to beat [his] fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, <sup>50</sup> "the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for [him] and at an hour that he is not aware of, <sup>51</sup> "and will cut him in two and appoint [him] his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. [Matthew 24:45-51 NKJV](#)

Luke 12:47 "And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare [himself] or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many [stripes]. <sup>48</sup> "But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more. [Luke 12:39-48 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 24:42](#) "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. [Matthew 24:42 NKJV](#)

[Luke 12:39](#) "But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. <sup>40</sup> "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." <sup>41</sup> Then Peter said to Him, "Lord, do You speak this parable [only] to us, or to all [people]?" <sup>42</sup> And the Lord said, ...

Luke 12:42 ... And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom [his] master will make ruler over his household, to give [them their] portion of food in due season? <sup>43</sup> "Blessed [is] that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. <sup>44</sup> "Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. <sup>45</sup> "But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, <sup>46</sup> "the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for [him], and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint [him] his portion with the unbelievers.

Mark 13:35 "Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming--in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—<sup>36</sup> "lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. [Mark 13:1-37 NKJV](#)

Jesus was really free with His predictions here, but He intermingled the signs for the destruction of Jerusalem and His second coming. It's a little easier for us to sort it out now since we can see the signs that were fulfilled leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem. Let's list all the things Jesus predicted and see what we can come up with in terms of fulfillment:

**[Assuredly, I say to you, not \[one\] stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.](#)**

This one is clearly applicable to the destruction of Jerusalem. Josephus wrote:

Caesar gave orders that they should demolish the entire city and temple

But for all the rest of the wall, it was so completely leveled with the ground, by those that dug it up to the foundation, that there was nothing left to make those who came thither believe it had ever been inhabited.

[Josephus. Wars, 7:1:1](#) <sup>424</sup>

A portion of a wall was left standing to provide shelter for the garrison, which is called the weeping wall today. Many have explained that this is not one of the temple walls but a retaining wall. <sup>425</sup>

Dr. Earnest L. Martin, in his book, "The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot," states:

Even the most liberal of scholars admit that these statements were recorded in these Synoptic Gospels within a generation or two after the Jewish/Roman War. Had the statements not been true, there were hosts of hostile people to the teachings of Christianity up to the middle of the second century and beyond who would have gladly stated that these prophetic utterances made by Jesus were an outright lie (if they were indeed a lie). But I have recorded in my book numerous eyewitnesses over the next 300 years that attest to the accuracy of what the Gospel writers stated about the prophecies of Jesus given above. Jerusalem and the Temple (with their walls) were leveled to the ground — to the extent that even their very foundation stones were uprooted and overturned. No stone remained on top another, just as Jesus said would happen. <sup>426</sup>

The following story has been told by many, without historical reference:

There were great quantities of gold and silver which had been placed in the Temple for safekeeping. This melted and ran down between the rocks and into the cracks of the stones that formed the Temple and the wall around it. When the Roman soldiers finally took the city, in their greed to obtain this gold and silver they took long bars and pried apart these massive stones. Thus, quite literally, not one stone was left standing upon another.

User [Schuh](#) on stackexchange.com shares his analysis on the origin of this story. He says the earliest example of the story he could find was from a 1970 Ray Stedman sermon, later published in a book, but quoted without historical reference. <sup>427</sup> It is possible that many since have quoted Stedman without giving him credit.

What do you believe?

- Is there any doubt in your mind that this prophecy was fulfilled by the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem in 70 AD?
- Can you find a historical source for the story of the gold melting into the cracks?
- Why do you think the Romans destroyed the Temple so completely?

<sup>424</sup> Josephus, Flavius. *Wars of the Jews*. p407. <https://books.google.com/books?id=5QQ-AAAACAAJ&pg=RA1-PA407>  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2850/2850-h/2850-h.htm#link72HCH0001>

<sup>425</sup> <http://christianity.stackexchange.com/questions/34711/if-every-stone-of-the-temple-was-thrown-down-how-is-the-wailing-wall-still-stand>

<sup>426</sup> Martin, Earnest L.. *The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot* (Expanded Internet edition). <http://askelm.com/temple/t001211.htm>

<sup>427</sup> [Schuh. http://christianity.stackexchange.com/questions/35766/what-is-the-source-of-the-story-about-the-melted-gold-in-the-destroyed-temple-in](http://christianity.stackexchange.com/questions/35766/what-is-the-source-of-the-story-about-the-melted-gold-in-the-destroyed-temple-in)

**For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.**

This one seems more applicable to the second coming. The destruction of Jerusalem was within the lifetime of some who had seen Jesus, and hence I think it would have been difficult for imposters. Wikipedia has an extensive list of people who have claimed to be Jesus returned or reincarnated. Whether it is because we just know more about recent history or not, the list is heavily weighted to the claims in the last fifty years.<sup>428</sup> But I do not believe most of these past claims have been the great deception predicted. After all most of these people were probably not performing great signs and wonders. So when the great deception comes, the one that if possible could deceive the very elect, how is one supposed to know whether a person who claims to be Christ is or is not? We can know because of what Jesus and the Bible says about the next time He will return, as well as what it says about imposters.

[Matthew 24:23](#) "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here [is] the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe [it].<sup>24</sup> "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.<sup>25</sup> "See, I have told you beforehand.<sup>26</sup> "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; [or] 'Look, [He is] in the inner rooms!' do not believe [it].<sup>27</sup> "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. [Matthew 24:23-27 NKJV](#)

[2 Thessalonians 2:1](#) Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,<sup>2</sup> not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.<sup>3</sup> Let no one deceive you by any means; for [that Day will not come] unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,<sup>4</sup> who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. [2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 NKJV](#)

[2 Corinthians 11:14](#) And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.<sup>15</sup> Therefore [it is] no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works. [2 Corinthians 11:14-15 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 1:7](#) Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. [Revelation 1:7 NKJV](#)

I know, some may look at the list on Wikipedia and wonder how people could be deceived by some of these false Christs. But many have not read these warnings in the Bible. It used to scare me as a child because I used to think the deception would be so great it could deceive the very elect. But that's not what Jesus said, He said they would "show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect." [\[Matthew 24:24\]](#) What that says to me is that the very elect will not be deceived, but the deception will be good enough that it would almost get them. So, what does that mean for those who don't study the warnings in God's Word?

I'm sure there are many other verses from the Bible that could be added to the ones quoted above, but this is a good place to start.

1. If someone tells you about Jesus being somewhere on earth and you haven't seen Him arrive yourself, don't believe it. This might just be the best and most important sign.
2. If you see someone who appears like a supernatural being of light
  - who performs miracles, check #1

<sup>428</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_messiah\\_claimants#Christian\\_messiah\\_claimants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_messiah_claimants#Christian_messiah_claimants)

- who says they are God, check #1
- who teaches things contrary to what the Bible says, don't follow

What do you believe?

- Have you personally heard of someone claiming to Christ?
- Do you think it would be hard or easy for you to identify a false prophet?
- What is your ultimate guide in identifying false Christs and false prophets?

### **The end is not yet, all these [are] the beginning of sorrows**

There were three things that Jesus mentioned where He specifically said it was not an immediate sign of the end. So, what did He mean by that and why did He say it? Some translations say birth pangs, in place of sorrows, which would definitely lead to birth, but any woman who has experienced false labor, or a very long painful delivery knows how long that time can seem. These are the three statements Jesus added that qualifier to:

- You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place
- For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom
- In various places there will be famines and earthquakes

I was just scanning a list of wars that the United States has been involved in and it is extensive.<sup>429</sup> Also on Wikipedia, the list of wars globally was so large that they were broken down into categories and time ranges.<sup>430</sup> I think I like the point made by the answerer to a question on this topic. In my own words, there have always been wars and perhaps Jesus was trying to say not to interpret wars and rumor of wars as a sign of His coming. The same author also made the same point about famines and earthquakes.<sup>431</sup> Does that mean we should see all the wars and natural disasters which some would argue are happening with increased frequency and say that Jesus is not coming back soon? Absolutely not, I just believe that we should not try to attach any timeframe or nearness to His coming based on these things.

What do you believe?

- Do you believe there is an increased frequency of wars now?
- Do you believe there is an increased frequency of natural disasters?
- How do you interpret Jesus' statement "That is not yet the end, but all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs?"

**You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. "But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak;**

I believe this was definitely fulfilled for the early Christians when the same people who persecuted and killed Jesus, continued to do the same to His followers. After the destruction of Jerusalem and when the Jews lost any governing ability, the Christians continued to be persecuted by Rome to more or less of a degree depending on the Emperors or

<sup>429</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_wars\\_involving\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_wars_involving_the_United_States)

<sup>430</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outline\\_of\\_war#Wars](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outline_of_war#Wars)

<sup>431</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/wars-and-rumors-of-war.html>

governors. To a great degree I think Rome did not distinguish between Jews and Christians and when they persecuted the Jews because of their terrorism, the Christians suffered as well. I'm sure many Christians were persecuted and killed without due process, but some, possibly the more influential had to stand on trial in Roman courts. Jesus promised them that the Holy Spirit would give them the right words to say, but I don't believe they were necessarily the words that would get them released. I think this served as an opportunity to witness to those who heard the testimony of the Christians on trial. I also believe that in the last days, true followers of Jesus, regardless of denomination or religious affiliation, will be persecuted. I think the promise of the Holy Spirit will be fulfilled then as well. I think it will be the last opportunity for some unbelievers to make their choice. When they see people who are willing to suffer and die for their beliefs, and the Holy Spirit is speaking to them through these very people, they will not be able to say when they are judged that they never knew.

---

What do you believe?

- Do you think that all people everywhere will have this experience, or do you think some countries will remain religiously free?
- Do you believe you must have memorized or at least read the words from the Bible before the Holy Spirit can prompt you to speak them?

**"For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; 'and 'a man's enemies will be those of his [own] household.'**

This statement by Jesus would have been painfully true for Jewish families who were split when some accepted Christianity and others did not. It has continued to be so for any families split by opposing religions. I don't know if Jesus meant that this would be worse in the last days, or if He was just warning all followers, present and future that they might encounter this. I think this experience is much more true for families that have strong but different religious beliefs. Families that don't have strong religious view will be less impacted by one or a portion of the family accepting Christ.

---

What do you believe?

- Do you think Jesus literally came to set family members against each other or do you think He just knew that would happen in some cases?
- Do you think this type of betrayal would only happen to families with strong religious views?
- We could probably all envision this behavior in some very dysfunctional families, but what would have to happen for a normal family to wish harm or even death on another family member?

**Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.**

This statement by Jesus is very much related to the previous two points. Christians will be hated by many (all nations) because of their belief in Him. But the point here is that some who are brought to trial and are given an ultimatum to reject Christ and betray their fellow believers, will cave in to the pressure. Some will regretfully betray friends and loved ones, but for others the former love and comradery will be replaced by hatred.

---

What do you believe?

- If you live in a country with religious freedom, do you believe a time could come when people would be killed for their religious beliefs?
- Or do you believe this will only happen in countries that currently don't have religious freedom?
- Why or how do you think God's true followers will be hated by all nations?

**And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.**

I used to wonder with new people being born every day, how could the Gospel of Jesus be preached to every single person. But that will always be the case and I don't think that is what Jesus was talking about. I believe God in His infinite wisdom will judge the babies and infants justly. The bigger question is whether God is dependent on human beings to accomplish something before He can come. Is there something special about the time Jesus returns that everyone should have heard about Him, because I don't think there would have been any other time in history when that was the case?

---

What do you believe?

- Does being preached in the whole word mean that every single person alive must have been confronted with a choice to believe it or not?
- If so, how do you envision this happening especially when there are babies being born all the time around the world? Do you think the whole world could be sterilized?
- Why do you think it is important for every living person to hear the Gospel when it has probably never happened in history before?

**Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. 18 "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.**

This phrase abomination of desolation is used twice in Daniel, but the pair of words occurs a third time, but not in the same phrase. The word abomination is translated from the word [שִׁקּוּץ, šiqqûs](#)<sup>432</sup> which is translated to some form of the word abomination 20 times in the KJV. It is also translated to some form of the word detestable 6 times, most of which are followed by the word idol or thing. The word is primarily used to describe idols and possibly idolatry. The Hebrew word from which desolation is translated is [שָׁמֵם, šāmēm](#)<sup>433</sup> which is mostly translated to some form of the word desolate, and secondly less than half as many times as astonished. The primary definition for the biblical usage of the word is "to be desolate, be appalled, stun, stupefy."<sup>434</sup> The first and the most concentrated use of the word in a single chapter is in Leviticus 26, where God describes through Moses, what will happen if the Israelites do not obey His laws.

---

<sup>432</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=H8251&t=NKJV>

<sup>433</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=H8074&t=NKJV>

<sup>434</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=H8074&t=NKJV>

[Leviticus 26:1](#) 'You shall not make idols for yourselves; neither a carved image nor a [sacred] pillar shall you rear up for yourselves; nor shall you set up an engraved stone in your land, to bow down to it; for I [am] the LORD your God. <sup>2</sup> You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary: I [am] the LORD. [Leviticus 26:1-2 NKJV](#)

So, what does the abomination of desolation mean? While it seemed that abomination had a lot to do with idolatry, remember there were three other points made in Leviticus, keeping the sabbaths, reverencing the sanctuary and keeping His commands in general. The consequence of disobedience was that they would be carried away from the land God had given them and the land would be left desolate. Is it fair to start with the desolation of the land and then consider what led to it as an abomination? There's no question that idolatry was considered an abomination. I don't think it is a stretch to consider breaking the other commands to be an abomination as well. After studying about the seventh year sabbath laws (see [Appendix F](#)), it seemed to me that the breaking of these laws was as much a factor in the abomination that led to desolation. From a human standpoint, these sabbath laws were all about taking care of the poor and the needy.

But understanding more about the abominations that led to desolation still doesn't help me to understand how this was a sign to flee Jerusalem. A pretty good description of the destruction of the second temple was written by Lambert Dolphin with many historical references.<sup>435</sup> From the result of my study, the abomination didn't seem like a single incident. G. Goldberg on a page from the website josephus.org assembled a number of quotations from Josephus followed by comments of his own meant to show the pollution of the Temple by the zealots and Idumeans, leading up to its destruction.<sup>436</sup>

I should not mistake if I said that the death of Ananus was the beginning of the destruction of the city, and that from this very day may be dated the overthrow of her wall, and the ruin of her affairs, whereon they saw their high priest, and the procurer of their preservation, slain in the midst of their city. [Josephus. Wars. 4:5:2](#)<sup>437</sup>

Certain of those robbers went up to the city, as if they were going to worship God, while they had daggers under their garments, and by thus mingling themselves among the multitude they slew Jonathan ... and having weapons concealed in like manner as before, and mingling themselves among the multitude, they slew certain of their own enemies, and were subservient to other men for money; and slew others, not only in remote parts of the city, but in the temple itself also; for they had the boldness to murder men there, without thinking of the impiety of which they were guilty. And this seems to me to have been the reason why God, out of his hatred of these men's wickedness, rejected our city; and as for the temple, he no longer esteemed it sufficiently pure for him to inhabit therein, but brought the Romans upon us, and threw a fire upon the city to purge it; and brought upon us, our wives, and children, slavery, as desirous to make us wiser by our calamities. [Josephus. Antiquities. 20:8:5](#)<sup>438</sup>

The zealots also joined in the shouts raised by the Idumeans; and the storm itself rendered the cry more terrible; nor did the Idumeans spare any body; for as they are naturally a most barbarous and bloody nation, and had been distressed by the tempest, they made use of their weapons against those that had shut the gates against them, and acted in the same manner as to those that supplicated for their lives, and to those that fought them, insomuch that they ran through those with their swords who desired them to remember the relation there was

<sup>435</sup> <http://www.templemount.org/destruct2.html>

<sup>436</sup> <http://www.josephus.org/causeofDestruct.htm>

<sup>437</sup> Josephus, Flavius. *Wars of the Jews*. Book 4:5:2. <https://books.google.com/books?id=5QQ-AAAACAAJ&pg=RA1-PA313>  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2850/2850-h/2850-h.htm#link42HCH0005>

<sup>438</sup> Josephus, Flavius. *Antiquities of the Jews*. Book 20:8:1. <https://books.google.com/books?id=5QQ-AAAACAAJ&pg=RA1-PA116>  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2848/2848-h/2848-h.htm#link202HCH0008>



between them, and begged of them to have regard to their common temple. Now there was at present neither any place for flight, nor any hope of preservation; but as they were driven one upon another in heaps, so were they slain. Thus the greater part were driven together by force, as there was now no place of retirement, and the murderers were upon them; and, having no other way, threw themselves down headlong into the city; whereby, in my opinion, they underwent a more miserable destruction than that which they avoided, because that was a voluntary one. And now the outer temple was all of it overflowed with blood; and that day, as it came on, they saw eight thousand five hundred dead bodies there. [Josephus. Wars. 4:5:1](#)<sup>439</sup>

These quotes and more from the same chapter in Wars of the Jews show the abominations that took place in the Temple just prior to its destruction. But perhaps the best clue is what Luke wrote:

[Luke 21:20](#) "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. <sup>21</sup> "Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. [Luke 21:20-21 NKJV](#)

I got the impression from reading church historians that many Christians had already left Jerusalem and relocated to Pella in Perea, maybe when they saw the abominations taking place in the Temple by the Zealots and the Idumeans. The following are a couple quotes from early church historians, assembled by the authors of the web page <http://www.preteristarchive.com/StudyArchive/p/pella-flight.html><sup>440</sup>

But the people of the church in Jerusalem had been commanded by a revelation, vouchsafed to approved men there before the war, to leave the city and to dwell in a certain town of Perea called Pella. [Eusebius. Church History. 3:5:3](#)<sup>441</sup>

For that was its place of origin, since all the disciples had settled in Pella after their remove from Jerusalem — Christ having told them to abandon Jerusalem and withdraw from it because of the siege it was about to undergo. [The Panarion of Ephiphanius of Salamis](#)<sup>442</sup>

I think the siege of Jerusalem followed by the temporary withdrawal by Cestius was the final sign that the Christians were to flee without delay.

It then happened that Cestius was not conscious either how the besieged despaired of success, nor how courageous the people were for him; and so he recalled his soldiers from the place, and by despairing of any expectation of taking it, without having received any disgrace, he retired from the city, without any reason in the world. [Josephus. Wars, 2:19:7](#)<sup>443</sup>

<sup>439</sup> Josephus. Wars of the Jews. Book 4:5:1. <https://books.google.com/books?id=5QQ-AAAAcAAJ&pg=RA1-PA313>  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2850/2850-h/2850-h.htm#link42HCH0005>

<sup>440</sup> <http://www.preteristarchive.com/StudyArchive/p/pella-flight.html>

<sup>441</sup> Eusebius. Church History. Book 3:5:3. [http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/0265-0339\\_Eusebius\\_Caesariensis\\_Church\\_History\\_EN.pdf](http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/0265-0339_Eusebius_Caesariensis_Church_History_EN.pdf) alternate: [http://btlb.org/0265-0339\\_Eusebius\\_Caesariensis\\_Church\\_History\\_EN.pdf](http://btlb.org/0265-0339_Eusebius_Caesariensis_Church_History_EN.pdf)

<sup>442</sup> Epiphanius. *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis*.

[https://archive.org/stream/ThePanarionOfEpiphaniusOfSalamis\\_201603/the%20panarion%20of%20epiphanius%20of%20salamis\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/ThePanarionOfEpiphaniusOfSalamis_201603/the%20panarion%20of%20epiphanius%20of%20salamis_djvu.txt)

<sup>443</sup> Josephus. Wars of the Jews. Book 2:19:7. <https://books.google.com/books?id=5QQ-AAAAcAAJ&pg=RA1-PA250>  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2850/2850-h/2850-h.htm#link22HCH0019>

What do you believe?

- Do you believe the abominations referred to are perpetrated by God's chosen people or by outsiders?
- Do you believe this prophecy has multiple fulfillments?
- Do you think the fulfillment of this prophecy has to involve the destruction of the Jewish Temple?

**Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.**

A related text but with slightly different wording regarding the moon is found in the book of Joel.

[Joel 2:31](#) The sun shall be turned into darkness,  
And the moon into blood,  
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. [Joel 2:31 NKJV](#)

On May 19, 1780, in the New England states, there was a mysterious dark day that was not the result of an eclipse. It was a regional phenomenon, but the event was well recorded.

The New England Historical Society has a good description of that day.

The New England Dark Day was the darkest day of the American Revolution – a day as dark as night, a day when a candle was needed to see anything outside at noon.

On May 19, 1780, the sun came up as usual, but then the skies over New England darkened as far north as Portland, Maine, and as far south as New Jersey. There George Washington, fighting the Revolutionary War, reported the Dark Day in his diary (though he seems to have gotten the date wrong). Washington wrote:

“Heavy & uncommon kind of Clouds—dark & at the same time a bright and reddish kind of light intermixed with them—brightning & darkning alternately. This continued till afternoon when the sun began to appear. The Wind in the Morning was Easterly. After that it got to the Westward.”

The Dark Day inspired terror, panic and puzzlement. Men prayed and women wept. Thousands left off work and took to taverns and churches for solace. Children were sent home from school. Bewildered chickens went to their roost, frightened cattle returned to their stalls, the night birds whistled and frogs peeped as they did at midnight.<sup>444</sup>

The same website concluded with the suspected natural cause of the dark day.

Scientific research into old trees in the Algonquin Highlands, Ontario, concluded the Dark Day resulted from a massive wildfire in Canadian forests. Scientists found charcoal and resin – ‘fire scars’ -- in the growth rings of the trees.

Just because something has a natural cause does not mean it is not a fulfillment of a sign from God. I believe He has seen all the events of our history and can simply tell us things that He has seen happen. It was not a global event, but there is no debate that the event actually occurred. Most eye-witness accounts are very similar. There were variations

---

<sup>444</sup> <http://www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/new-england-dark-day-1780/>

regarding the moon, possibly depending on the observation point. Some said the moon appeared red<sup>445</sup> and some could see no moon at all.<sup>446</sup> I'm sure there are many more historical eye-witness accounts of that day, but Wikipedia has compiled a few online sources.<sup>447</sup>

Seventh-Day Adventists teach that the tribulation of those days was the 1260 year period of Daniel and Revelation that the people of God were persecuted by the beast of the dragon. This prophetic period was said to end in 1798 when the Pope was taken captive by the French General Berthier. Ellen White says:

The 1260 days, or years, terminated in 1798. A quarter of a century earlier, persecution had almost wholly ceased. Between these two dates, according to the words of Christ, the sun was to be darkened. On the 19th of May, 1780, this prophecy was fulfilled. [White. Great Controversy. p306](#)<sup>448</sup>

The next sign mentioned was the stars falling. One event that fits the time frame and description by Jesus was the great Leonid meteor shower of 1833. Ellen white described it this way:

This prophecy received a striking and impressive fulfillment in the great meteoric shower of November 13, 1833. That was the most extensive and wonderful display of falling stars which has ever been recorded; "the whole firmament, over all the United States, being then, for hours, in fiery commotion. No celestial phenomenon has ever occurred in this country, since its first settlement, which was viewed with such intense admiration by one class in the community, or such dread and alarm by another." "Its sublimity and awful beauty still linger in many minds.... Never did rain fall much thicker than the meteors fell toward the earth; east, west, north, and south, it was the same. In a word, the whole heavens seemed in motion.... The display, as described in Professor Silliman's journal, was seen all over North America.... From two o'clock until broad daylight, the sky being perfectly serene and cloudless, an incessant play of dazzlingly brilliant luminosities was kept up in the whole heavens." [White. Great Controversy. p333](#)<sup>449</sup>

Another eyewitness description:

On the night of November 12-13, 1833, a tempest of falling stars broke over the Earth... The sky was scored in every direction with shining tracks and illuminated with majestic fireballs. At Boston, the frequency of meteors was estimated to be about half that of flakes of snow in an average snowstorm. Their numbers... were quite beyond counting; but as it waned, a reckoning was attempted, from which it was computed, on the basis of that much-diminished rate, that 240,000 must have been visible during the nine hours they continued to fall. - Agnes Clerke's, Victorian Astronomy Writer<sup>450</sup>

The meteor shower of 1833 is well understood now, but at the time it was not. In fact, it is said to be the birth of meteor astronomy. This particular one is the result of earth passing through the orbit of the Temple-Tuttle comet which it does every year. However, approximately every 33 years, the comet itself is in the vicinity of earth as they cross paths. In

<sup>445</sup> <https://storiesfromipswich.org/2014/07/25/the-dark-day-1780/>

<sup>446</sup> [https://archive.wired.com/science/discoveries/news/2008/05/dayintech\\_0519](https://archive.wired.com/science/discoveries/news/2008/05/dayintech_0519)

<sup>447</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_England's\\_Dark\\_Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_England's_Dark_Day)

<sup>448</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Great Controversy*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1939. p306.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=0kUtAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA306>

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=GC88&lang=en&pagenumber=306>

<sup>449</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Great Controversy*. Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1939. p333.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=0kUtAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA333>

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=GC88&lang=en&pagenumber=333>

<sup>450</sup> <https://leonid.arc.nasa.gov/history.html>

those years, the number of meteors observed jumps because there is more debris present. The early November meteor showers are called Leonids because they appear to originate from the constellation Leo.<sup>451 452</sup>

My question is whether the meteor shower from 1799 could actually have been the sign Jesus was referring to since it was truly immediately after the 1260 years of tribulation which ended in 1798? These signs of the sun, moon and stars was a confirmation to many that their understanding of the 1260 years prophecy was correct. It was not given by Jesus as an immediate sign of His return.

What do you believe?

- Do you think these signs could be fulfilled by regional events such as the New England dark day in 1780?
- Do you think these signs could be fulfilled again on a grander or more global scale?
- Do you think there will be another tribulation just before Jesus comes that these signs could follow?

**Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.**

I believe this to be the only sign of the immediate return of Christ. All other signs I have discussed point to other things or to the nearness of His return. I arrive at this conclusion because Jesus Himself told us that no man can know that day or hour of His return.

[Mark 13:32](#) "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. [Mark 13:32 NKJV](#)

Some would argue after reading the few preceding verses that this statement by Jesus is in reference to the destruction of Jerusalem that was to occur before that generation passed. Here are some more statements by Jesus which say something similar.

[Matthew 25:13](#) "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming. [Matthew 25:13 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 24:36](#) "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. [Matthew 24:36 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 24:42](#) "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. [Matthew 24:42 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 24:50](#) "the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for [him] and at an hour that he is not aware of, [Matthew 24:50 NKJV](#)

[Mark 13:33](#) "Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. <sup>34</sup> "[It is] like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. <sup>35</sup> "Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming--in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—<sup>36</sup> "lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. <sup>37</sup> "And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!" [Mark 13:33-37 NKJV](#)

<sup>451</sup> <http://meteorshowersonline.com/leonids.html>

<sup>452</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonids>

[Luke 12:46](#) "the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for [him], and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint [him] his portion with the unbelievers. [Luke 12:46 NKJV](#)

I believe the message of these verses is that we cannot predict a date for the return of Christ. But when He does come, everyone will see Him coming.

What do you believe?

- Is it helpful for you to look for and identify sign of Jesus' soon return?
- Why do you think so many have tried to set dates for the return of Christ?
- Do you think William Miller was inspired by the Holy Spirit when he set a date for the return of Jesus in 1844?

**Then two [men] will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. 41 "Two [women will be] grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.**

I believe these statements by Jesus are the primary supporting verses for the teachings of the secret rapture. I think the most popular beliefs about the secret rapture today are those made popular by the books, movies and preaching of people like Hal Lindsey, Tim LaHaye, Jimmy Swaggart, Chuck Smith and others. They belong to a teaching called Pre-tribulational Premillennialism, describing the rapture and the Second Coming of Christ separated by the great tribulation, all followed by the millennium.<sup>453</sup> This teaching is generally associated with the futurist view of prophecy which places the last week or seven years of Daniel's 70 week prophecy between the rapture and the second coming.<sup>454</sup> It appears that the futurist view of prophecy was developed by the Roman Catholic Church to deflect reformation era teachings that the Papacy was the antichrist.<sup>455</sup> <sup>456</sup> While it seems that Francisco Ribera (1537-1591) taught that there was a rapture 45 days before the end of the great tribulation, I don't think that was a major point of this teachings.<sup>457</sup> I say this because while the Roman Catholic Church still holds the futurist view of prophecy, they do not seem to agree with the pre-tribulational teachings of the secret rapture.<sup>458</sup> <sup>459</sup>

The simple fact of the matter is that there are many Bible verses supporting a very public return of Christ at the end of the world to take those who will be saved, including the resurrected righteous, to heaven. The question that remains then is whether there is a time prior to His very public return that some are secretly taken to heaven? First let's look at some of the Bible verses describing the coming of Christ to take those who will be saved.

[1 Thessalonians 4:16](#) For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. [1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 NKJV](#)

<sup>453</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rapture#Pre-tribulational\\_Premillennialism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rapture#Pre-tribulational_Premillennialism)

<sup>454</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great\\_Tribulation#Futurism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Tribulation#Futurism)

<sup>455</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Futurism\\_\(Christianity\)#History](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Futurism_(Christianity)#History)

<sup>456</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francisco\\_Ribera](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francisco_Ribera)

<sup>457</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rapture#Doctrinal\\_history](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rapture#Doctrinal_history)

<sup>458</sup> <https://www.catholic.com/tract/the-rapture>

<sup>459</sup> <https://www.catholic.com/magazine/print-edition/rapture-claptrap>

[1 Corinthians 15:51](#) Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—<sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. [1 Corinthians 15:51-52 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 24:31](#) "And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. [Matthew 24:31 NKJV](#)

In all of these cases, a trumpet or great trumpet is mentioned, and Thessalonians also includes a shout. There are many other verses about the second coming and the resurrection, but I chose these specifically because it talks about the elect, those who will be saved and taken to heaven. This is the class of people who would presumably be raptured, but this sounds anything but quiet and secret. Let's take another look at the seemingly secret rapture, including the greater context.

[Matthew 24:32](#) "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer [is] near. <sup>33</sup> "So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near--at the doors! <sup>34</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. <sup>35</sup> "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

<sup>36</sup> "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. <sup>37</sup> "But as the days of Noah [were], so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. <sup>38</sup> "For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup> "and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. <sup>40</sup> "Then two [men] will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. <sup>41</sup> "Two [women will be] grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. [Matthew 24:32-41 NKJV](#)

[Luke 17:22](#) Then He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see [it]. <sup>23</sup> "And they will say to you, 'Look here!' or 'Look there!' Do not go after [them] or follow [them]. <sup>24</sup> "For as the lightning that flashes out of one [part] under heaven shines to the other [part] under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day. <sup>25</sup> "But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. <sup>26</sup> "And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: <sup>27</sup> "They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. <sup>28</sup> "Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; <sup>29</sup> "but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed [them] all. <sup>30</sup> "Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

<sup>31</sup> "In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods [are] in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. <sup>32</sup> "Remember Lot's wife. <sup>33</sup> "Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. <sup>34</sup> "I tell you, in that night there will be two [men] in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. <sup>35</sup> "Two [women] will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. <sup>36</sup> "Two [men] will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left."

<sup>37</sup> And they answered and said to Him, "Where, Lord?" So He said to them, "Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together." [Luke 17:22-37 NKJV](#)

A few questions or points about these two passages. Is this one taken and the other left about the destruction of Jerusalem, or the second coming? In Matthew those statements are preceded by Jesus saying, "Assuredly, I say to you,

this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.” In Luke He said, “In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods [are] in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back.” Both of those statements seem to have more to do with the destruction of Jerusalem. Another point that I would make is that the taking seems to be likened to the days of Noah, where those who went in the ark were saved and those left outside were lost. There was nothing secret about the salvation in this case because Noah had been preaching for years, trying to get people to join them in the ark. Secondly, for those left out of the ark, there was no second chance as is the case with the popular rapture theology. [Luke 17:34](#) says “on that night”, so does that mean the secret rapture will occur at night? But then it also mentions people working or being in the field, so does that imply day?

In conclusion, I strongly oppose the idea of inserting an indeterminate gap between the first 69 weeks and the 70<sup>th</sup> weeks of Daniels 70-week prophecy. I think this was first proposed by the Roman Catholic Church to deflect or deny identification of the Papacy as the Antichrist. I don't see any cohesive evidence for the saved being taken secretly, with another group of people taken later at the second coming which is undeniable. Finally, I think it is easier to interpret the one taken and other left in the context of the second coming, than it is to try to explain a secret rapture in the context of the very public and loud second coming to take the saved to heaven.

What do you believe?

- Do you think some will be taken prior to the second coming of Jesus?
- Why do you think there are so many different beliefs in what the prophecies mean for the end times?
- Do you think God intended for it to be hard to understand these end time prophecies?

## The ten virgins

[Matthew 25:1-12](#), [Luke 12:36-38](#)<sup>460</sup>

[Matthew 25:1](#) "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup> "Now five of them were wise, and five [were] foolish. <sup>3</sup> "Those who [were] foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, <sup>4</sup> "but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. <sup>5</sup> "But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

<sup>6</sup> "And at midnight a cry was [heard]: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' <sup>7</sup> "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. <sup>8</sup> "And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us [some] of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' <sup>9</sup> "But the wise answered, saying, '[No], lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' <sup>10</sup> "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

<sup>11</sup> "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' <sup>12</sup> "But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' [Matthew 25:1-12 NKJV](#)

[Luke 12:35](#) "Let your waist be girded and [your] lamps burning; <sup>36</sup> "and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. <sup>37</sup> "Blessed [are] those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down [to eat], and will come and serve them. <sup>38</sup> "And if he

<sup>460</sup> Strong. p302. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/302/mode/2up>

should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find [them] so, blessed are those servants.

[Luke 12:35-38 NKJV](#)

Before talking about the ten virgins, I wanted to make a few brief comments about the verses from Luke. The purpose of being ready is different but the warning to be ready is the same. Keep your lamps lit and stay awake and alert. [Verse 37](#) seemed kind of strange because it seems that he, singular, the master, will serve them, the slaves when he returns. Was Jesus really suggesting that the master would have his slaves recline at the table and serve them? Of course, Jesus Himself said that He came to serve and to give His life.

[Matthew 20:28](#) "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." [Matthew 20:28 NKJV](#)

On another occasion Jesus mentioned the saved, reclining at a table in heaven.

[Matthew 8:11](#) "And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. [Matthew 8:11 NKJV](#)

Moving on to the main story of the ten virgins, I wondered as I read it again whether bridesmaids, as we call them, had to be virgins back then? Then I wondered, why were these ten virgins not with the bride? Then that made me wonder why the bride was not mentioned at all in this parable? Maybe these ten virgins were not bridal attendants or what we consider bridesmaids. It seems pretty clear that the ten virgins represent people who are anticipating the second coming of Jesus. These are Bible believing, church going Christians, not just the general public. In fact, in the Bible prophecy, a woman represents a religious body or organization. And a virgin or pure woman is usually a symbol of a good church. In the Bible oil can represent the Holy Spirit. Is it possible that the virgins who ran out of oil represent some of the protestant churches, founded by reformers who were definitely motivated by the Holy Spirit? After all, in the story, they are virgins, anticipating the bridegroom and they had oil at first. I would say that perhaps then, the midnight shout was a specific event such as what occurred in the years leading up to 1844. At that time, many Protestant Christian churches rejected the message and even went so far as to remove from membership those who accepted it.<sup>461</sup> Then the flip side would imply that those people, because it wasn't really church organizations, who accepted the message were the ones that had extra oil. Ellen White had this comment to make about the midnight shout, which the NKJV phrased the midnight cry.

I seemed to be surrounded with light, and to be rising higher and higher from the earth. I turned to look for the advent people in the world, but could not find them, when a voice said to me, "Look again, and look a little higher." At this, I raised my eyes, and saw a straight and narrow path, cast up high above the world. On this path the advent people were traveling to the city which was at the farther end of the path. They had a bright light set up behind them at the beginning of the path, which an angel told me was the "midnight cry." [See [Matthew 25:6](#).] This light shone all along the path, and gave light for their feet, so that they might not stumble. [CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE AND TEACHINGS OF ELLEN G. WHITE, p57](#)<sup>462</sup>

Clearly the bridegroom is God or Jesus. Many of the following verses portraying God as husband to Israel or His people were gleaned from the website [<https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/topics/Marriage,-Between-God-And-His-People>].<sup>463</sup>

<sup>461</sup> <http://www.adventistheritage.org/article/51/resources/pioneer-stories/william-miller-second-advent-preacher>

<sup>462</sup> White, Ellen G. *Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White*. p57.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=CET&lang=en&pagenumber=57>

<sup>463</sup> <https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/topics/Marriage,-Between-God-And-His-People>



[John 3:27](#) John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. <sup>28</sup> "You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' <sup>29</sup> "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. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. <sup>30</sup> "He must increase, but I [must] decrease. [John 3:27-30 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 9:15](#) And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. [Matthew 9:15 NKJV](#)

[Mark 2:19](#) And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. <sup>20</sup> "But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days. [Mark 2:19-20 NKJV](#)

[Luke 5:34](#) And He said to them, "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? <sup>35</sup> "But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days." [Luke 5:34-35 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 54:4](#) "Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed;  
Neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame;  
For you will forget the shame of your youth,  
And will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore.  
<sup>5</sup> For your Maker [is] your husband,  
The LORD of hosts [is] His name;  
And your Redeemer [is] the Holy One of Israel;  
He is called the God of the whole earth.  
<sup>6</sup> For the LORD has called you Like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit,  
Like a youthful wife when you were refused," Says your God. [Isaiah 54:4-6 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 62:4](#) You shall no longer be termed Forsaken,  
Nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate;  
But you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah;  
For the LORD delights in you,  
And your land shall be married.  
<sup>5</sup> For [as] a young man marries a virgin,  
[So] shall your sons marry you;  
And [as] the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,  
[So] shall your God rejoice over you. [Isaiah 62:4-5 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 31:31](#) "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—<sup>32</sup> "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day [that] I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. [Jeremiah 31:31-32 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 16:8](#) "When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time [was] the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine," says the Lord GOD.

<sup>9</sup> "Then I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil. <sup>10</sup> "I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk. <sup>11</sup> "I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists, and a chain on your neck. <sup>12</sup> "And I put a jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head. <sup>13</sup> "Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing [was of] fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate [pastry of] fine flour, honey, and oil. You were exceedingly beautiful, and succeeded to royalty. <sup>14</sup> "Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it [was] perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you," says the Lord GOD. [Ezekiel 16:8-14 NKJV](#)

[Hosea 1:2](#) When the LORD began to speak by Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea:

"Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry  
And children of harlotry,  
For the land has committed great harlotry  
[By departing] from the LORD." [Hosea 1:2 NKJV](#)

[Hosea 2:14](#) "Therefore, behold, I will allure her,  
Will bring her into the wilderness,  
And speak comfort to her.

<sup>15</sup> I will give her her vineyards from there,  
And the Valley of Achor as a door of hope;  
She shall sing there,  
As in the days of her youth,  
As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.

<sup>16</sup> "And it shall be, in that day,"

Says the LORD,  
"[That] you will call Me 'My Husband,'  
And no longer call Me 'My Master,'

<sup>17</sup> For I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals,  
And they shall be remembered by their name no more.

<sup>18</sup> In that day I will make a covenant for them

With the beasts of the field,  
With the birds of the air,  
And [with] the creeping things of the ground.

Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth,  
To make them lie down safely.

<sup>19</sup> "I will betroth you to Me forever;  
Yes, I will betroth you to Me In righteousness and justice,  
In lovingkindness and mercy;

<sup>20</sup> I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness,  
And you shall know the LORD. [Hosea 2:14-20 NKJV](#)

[Ephesians 5:25](#) Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, <sup>26</sup> that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup> that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

[Ephesians 5:25-27 NKJV](#)

[2 Corinthians 11:2](#) For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present [you as] a chaste virgin to Christ. [2 Corinthians 11:2 NKJV](#)

What I glean from these verses is that God considered Himself the husband of Israel, but they were not faithful, and acted as an adulterous wife. In the New Testament, Jesus was considered a bridegroom by His own words and by John the Baptist. My next analogy from the parable is that the arrival of the bridegroom for the wedding is the second coming. But how could the second coming be the wedding if God was already the husband of Israel and the Christian Church? Well in ancient Jewish culture, there were two stages to the marriage, the betrothal and the wedding. A betrothed couple were exclusively committed to each other and a divorce would be needed to break off the engagement, but the marriage was not consummated sexually until the wedding. So, in that sense, God could be considered betrothed to His true followers until the second coming when He comes to take them home.

[Matthew 22:2](#) "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, [Matthew 22:2 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 19:7](#) "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." <sup>8</sup> And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

<sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed [are] those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." [Revelation 19:7-9 NKJV](#)

The wedding feast is the celebration in heaven of those who are saved.

Where there is a bridegroom, there must also be a bride, who just happened to not be mentioned in the story. So, in Bible symbolism, where Jesus is the groom, who is the bride and does it apply in this parable? The verses we presented about the bridegroom by inference tell us about who the bride is. Let's examine just a couple more verses that talk about the bride of Christ.

[Ephesians 5:23](#) For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. [Ephesians 5:23 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 21:1](#) Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. <sup>2</sup> Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. [Revelation 21:1-2 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 21:9](#) Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." <sup>10</sup> And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, [Revelation 21:9-10 NKJV](#)

It seems the bride or betrothed of Christ is Israel, New Jerusalem and possibly by inference the Christian Church. The first and last could be generalized to imply that the betrothed of Christ are His true followers throughout the history of earth. Sometimes God had a nation or an organization that represented His true people, and sometimes He didn't. Nations and Churches that may have started out as His betrothed became unfaithful, but there have always been people down through the ages, sometimes in hiding from persecution, that were His true followers. In ancient times, there were people like Enoch, Noah, Job, Abraham, Moses and prophets who were persecuted by apostate Israel. In more recent history, there were those who kept alive the truths from the Bible, and as a result were persecuted by the apostate church. If the bride represents true followers of God, then perhaps the unmentioned bride in the parable

would be those who didn't fall asleep. But then we have Revelation saying the holy city, the New Jerusalem is the bride, or is it just adorned as a bride? [Verses 9-10](#) seem pretty clear that the bride of Christ is the holy city. Can the bride of Christ be both His people and the New Jerusalem? Why not, aren't the harlot and Babylon synonymous in Revelation?

[Revelation 17:1](#) Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, <sup>2</sup> "with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

<sup>3</sup> So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast [which was] full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. <sup>4</sup> The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. <sup>5</sup> And on her forehead a name [was] written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. <sup>6</sup> I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

<sup>7</sup> But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. [Revelation 17:1-7 NKJV](#)

The last puzzling thing about this parable is the fact that those who ran out of oil went and purchased more but were still denied entrance to the feast. The answer given for their rejection is the same as that given in another teaching of Jesus.

[Matthew 7:21](#) "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. <sup>22</sup> "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' <sup>23</sup> "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' [Matthew 7:21-23 NKJV](#)

I think the answers, "I do not know you," and "I never knew you," underscore the importance of a relationship. It's not just about knowledge or good works although both should follow from a true relationship. Maybe the oil in this parable represents the actions and perhaps the foolish acquired oil that were actions not born out of a true relationship with Jesus.

---

What do you believe?

- It is said multiple times in the New Testament that the Church is the body of Christ. Can it be both the body and the bride of Christ?
- What do you think the oil in the parable represents?
- What do you think it means that after the door was already shut, the foolish knocked and asked for admittance and were turned away?

## Separating the sheep and the goats at the judgment

[Matthew 25:13](#), [Matthew 25:31-46](#)<sup>464</sup>

[Matthew 25:13](#) "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

[Matthew 25:13 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 25:31](#) "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. <sup>32</sup> "All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides [his] sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> "And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup> "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: <sup>35</sup> 'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; <sup>36</sup> 'I [was] naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

<sup>37</sup> "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed [You], or thirsty and give [You] drink? <sup>38</sup> 'When did we see You a stranger and take [You] in, or naked and clothe [You]? <sup>39</sup> 'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' <sup>40</sup> "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did [it] to one of the least of these My brethren, you did [it] to Me.'

<sup>41</sup> "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: <sup>42</sup> 'for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; <sup>43</sup> 'I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'

<sup>44</sup> "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' <sup>45</sup> "Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do [it] to one of the least of these, you did not do [it] to Me.' <sup>46</sup> "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." [Matthew 25:31-46 NKJV](#)

This teaching of Jesus is very consistent with His words throughout the entire Bible. See [Appendix E – Hands, feet, eyes and ears of God](#). The following table was presented along with the verses in the Appendix. The word count only included instances that had to do with the care of this class of people. Verses that just stated that someone was a widow for example were not counted. I think it's pretty clear that compassion is VERY important to God.

Word	Count
Poor	44
Orphan or fatherless	23
Alien, stranger, sojourner	21
Widow	20
Oppress or mistreat	17
Justice or Judgment	16
Destitute or needy	12
Afflicted or humble	3

<sup>464</sup> Strong. p303. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/302/mode/2up>

The question is whether this criteria alone is sufficient for one to be saved? Throughout the New Testament, the criteria given for salvation was often different. Let's look at a few.

[Matthew 10:22](#) "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

[Matthew 10:22 NKJV](#)

[Mark 16:16](#) "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. [Mark](#)

[16:16 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 19:29](#) "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. [Matthew 19:29 NKJV](#)

[Luke 18:18](#) Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>19</sup> So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one [is] good but One, [that is], God. <sup>20</sup> "You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother.' " <sup>21</sup> And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth." <sup>22</sup> So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." [Luke 18:18-22 NKJV](#)

[John 3:16](#) "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. [John 3:16 NKJV](#)

[John 4:14](#) "but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." [John 4:14 NKJV](#)

[John 6:40](#) "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." [John 6:40 NKJV](#)

[John 6:54](#) "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. [John](#)

[6:54 NKJV](#)

[John 10:9](#) "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. [John](#)

[10:9 NKJV](#)

[John 17:3](#) "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. [John 17:3 NKJV](#)

[Acts 2:21](#) And it shall come to pass

[That] whoever calls on the name of the LORD

Shall be saved.' [Acts 2:21 NKJV](#)

[Acts 4:10](#) "let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. <sup>11</sup> "This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' <sup>12</sup> "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." [Acts 4:10-12 NKJV](#)

[Acts 15:11](#) "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they." [Acts 15:11 NKJV](#)

[Acts 16:30](#) And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" <sup>31</sup> So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." [Acts 16:30-31 NKJV](#)

[Romans 10:9](#) that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. [Romans 10:9 NKJV](#)

[Romans 10:13](#) For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." [Romans 10:13 NKJV](#)

[Ephesians 2:8](#) For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God, [Ephesians 2:8 NKJV](#)

[1 John 5:13](#) These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may [continue to] believe in the name of the Son of God. [1 John 5:13 NKJV](#)

Most of these verses emphasize belief and faith in Jesus and acceptance of the free gift of Salvation. There is also perseverance through trial and persecution and a willingness to forsake friends and family if necessary to follow Him. Then there is the sell all you own, give it to the poor and follow Me. There was also the story of the Good Samaritan, not included above, which was an answer to the same question. And the answer after keeping the commandments was to love your neighbor as the Good Samaritan loved the man in need.

Is it possible for one who never heard of Jesus but was truly caring for the poor and needy to be saved? I think most would agree on the answer yes. But is it possible for one who rejected the Christian religion, but was truly caring for the poor and needy to be saved? I don't think it is an easy yes or no answer for human observers. I think that ultimately the people who will be saved for eternity will be those who God knows, in His infinite wisdom, will be both happy and safe to be given eternal life. Clearly, whether one has heard of Jesus or not, it is still His sacrifice that makes it possible for them to be saved. Regardless of how many good works we have done, they do not earn us the right to forgiveness and salvation. But the good works in the form of compassion are possibly an indicator of the type of person who would be safe for God to take to heaven.

---

What do you believe?

- If good works do not earn us salvation, why do you think works of compassion are associated with salvation?
- Speaking of someone being safe to take to heaven, how can we have free will and never choose to sin again?
- Do you think it would be possible for someone to be highly compassionate toward the poor and needy but not be happy in heaven?

## Judas agrees to betray Jesus

[Matthew 26:1-5](#), [14-16](#), [Mark 14:1-2,10-11](#), [Luke 22:1-6](#), [John 13:2](#)<sup>465</sup>

<p><a href="#">Matthew 26:1</a> Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, [that] He said to His disciples,  <sup>2</sup> "You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."</p>	<p><a href="#">Mark 14:1</a> After two days it was the Passover and [the Feast] of Unleavened Bread.</p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 22:1</a> Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover.</p>
<p><sup>3</sup> Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,  <sup>4</sup> and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill [Him]. <sup>5</sup> But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people."  <a href="#">Matthew 26:1-5 NKJV</a></p>	<p>And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by trickery and put [Him] to death. <sup>2</sup> But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people." <a href="#">Mark 14:1-2 NKJV</a></p>	<p><sup>2</sup> And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people.</p>
<p><a href="#">Matthew 26:14</a> Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests 15 and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?"      And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. <sup>16</sup> So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.  <a href="#">Matthew 26:14-16 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">John 13:2</a> ... the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's [son], to betray Him, <a href="#">John 13:2 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 22:3</a> Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. <sup>4</sup> So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them.</p>
	<p><sup>11</sup> And when they heard [it], they were glad, and promised to give him money. So he sought how he might conveniently betray Him. <a href="#">Mark 14:10-11 NKJV</a></p>	<p><sup>5</sup> And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. <sup>6</sup> So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude. <a href="#">Luke 22:1-5 NKJV</a></p>

Ellen White paints a picture where Judas may not have arrived at this decision with the intent to actually harm Jesus.

Judas reasoned that if Jesus was to be crucified, the event must come to pass. His own act in betraying the Saviour would not change the result. If Jesus was not to die, it would only force Him to deliver Himself. At all events, Judas would gain something by his treachery. He counted that he had made a sharp bargain in betraying his Lord.

Judas did not, however, believe that Christ would permit Himself to be arrested. In betraying Him, it was his purpose to teach Him a lesson. He intended to play a part that would make the Saviour careful thenceforth to treat him with due respect. But Judas knew not that he was giving Christ up to death. How often, as the Saviour taught in parables, the scribes and Pharisees had been carried away with His striking illustrations! How often they had pronounced judgment against themselves! Often when the truth was brought home to their hearts, they had been filled with rage, and had taken up stones to cast at Him; but again and again He had made His escape. Since He had escaped so many snares, thought Judas, He certainly would not now allow Himself to be taken.

<sup>465</sup> Strong. p305. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/304/mode/2up>



Judas decided to put the matter to the test. If Jesus really was the Messiah, the people, for whom He had done so much, would rally about Him, and would proclaim Him king. This would forever settle many minds that were now in uncertainty. Judas would have the credit of having placed the king on David's throne. And this act would secure to him the first position, next to Christ, in the new kingdom. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. pp720-721](#)<sup>466</sup>

Judas was not alone among the disciples in wanting Jesus to be crowned king. Nor was he alone in coveting the highest position power under Christ in the kingdom which all the disciples were still expecting. I seemed to recall that there was a prophecy that Jesus would be betrayed in exchange for thirty pieces of silver. So, I searched the Bible for the words thirty silver. What I found was that thirty shekels of silver was the compensation price for a slave that was killed by an ox. In other words that was the standard price of a slave back then.

[Exodus 21:32](#) "If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned. [Exodus 21:32 NKJV](#)

The next relevant hit for thirty pieces of silver was from Zechariah.

[Zechariah 11:12](#) Then I said to them, "If it is agreeable to you, give [me] my wages; and if not, refrain." So they weighed out for my wages thirty [pieces] of silver. <sup>13</sup> And the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter"--that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty [pieces] of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter. [Zechariah 11:12-13 NKJV](#)

These verses with the thirty pieces of silver and the mention of the potter will come up later when Judas throws the money back at the priests. But let's look at what Zechariah is writing about here. If you read the whole chapter, it sounds like a story or maybe a parable. It's actually not that long, so let's read it now.

[Zechariah 11:1](#) Open your doors, O Lebanon,  
That fire may devour your cedars.  
<sup>2</sup> Wail, O cypress, for the cedar has fallen,  
Because the mighty [trees] are ruined.  
Wail, O oaks of Bashan,  
For the thick forest has come down.  
<sup>3</sup> [There is] the sound of wailing shepherds!  
For their glory is in ruins.  
[There is] the sound of roaring lions!  
For the pride of the Jordan is in ruins.

<sup>4</sup> Thus says the LORD my God, "Feed the flock for slaughter, <sup>5</sup> "whose owners slaughter them and feel no guilt; those who sell them say, 'Blessed be the LORD, for I am rich'; and their shepherds do not pity them. <sup>6</sup> "For I will no longer pity the inhabitants of the land," says the LORD. "But indeed I will give everyone into his neighbor's hand and into the hand of his king. They shall attack the land, and I will not deliver [them] from their hand."

<sup>7</sup> So I fed the flock for slaughter, in particular the poor of the flock. I took for myself two staffs: the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bonds; and I fed the flock. <sup>8</sup> I dismissed the three shepherds in one month. My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me. <sup>9</sup> Then I said, "I will not feed you. Let what is dying die, and what is perishing perish. Let those that are left eat each other's flesh." <sup>10</sup> And I took my staff, Beauty, and cut it

<sup>466</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p720.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=720>

in two, that I might break the covenant which I had made with all the peoples. <sup>11</sup> So it was broken on that day. Thus the poor of the flock, who were watching me, knew that it [was] the word of the LORD. <sup>12</sup> Then I said to them, "If it is agreeable to you, give [me] my wages; and if not, refrain." So they weighed out for my wages thirty [pieces] of silver.

<sup>13</sup> And the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter"--that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty [pieces] of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter. <sup>14</sup> Then I cut in two my other staff, Bonds, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

<sup>15</sup> And the LORD said to me, "Next, take for yourself the implements of a foolish shepherd. <sup>16</sup> "For indeed I will raise up a shepherd in the land [who] will not care for those who are cut off, nor seek the young, nor heal those that are broken, nor feed those that still stand. But he will eat the flesh of the fat and tear their hooves in pieces.

<sup>17</sup> "Woe to the worthless shepherd,  
Who leaves the flock!  
A sword [shall be] against his arm  
And against his right eye;  
His arm shall completely wither,  
And his right eye shall be totally blinded." [Zechariah 11:1-17 NKJV](#)

In [Ezra 3:7](#), we read that the cedars of Lebanon were brought for the construction of the Jewish Temple.

[Ezra 3:7](#) They also gave money to the masons and the carpenters, and food, drink, and oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre to bring cedar logs from Lebanon to the sea, to Joppa, according to the permission which they had from Cyrus king of Persia. [Ezra 3:7 NKJV](#)

I think most are in agreement that the first couple verses in [Zechariah 11](#) prophesy the destruction of the temple by Rome. From [verse 3](#) through the end of the chapter, the symbolism of a shepherd and the flock are used. The flock generally refers to the Jews, mostly around the time of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem. Shepherds represent their leaders, rulers or kings. Hence, [verse 5](#) could be in reference to the wicked and heartless rulers, both their own and foreigners. We know that God was often unhappy with the Jews because their leaders, or the wealthy, took advantage of the poor and needy for their own gain. This oppression happened under some kings, as well as from the wealthy at times when there were no kings. At the time of Christ, the ruling class consisting of Sadducees and Pharisees, including many priests, looked down on the common people and took advantage of them for personal gain. This is the reason Jesus chased the merchants out of the Temple, not one but twice. Here are just a couple of many rebukes given against this upper class.

[Nehemiah 5:7](#) Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them. [Nehemiah 5:7 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 23:14](#) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation. [Matthew 23:14 NKJV](#)

[Verse 6](#) is like a reference to the king of Rome, whom the Jews chose over Christ, and who mistreated them and eventually destroyed their temple and city.

[John 19:15](#) But they cried out, "Away with [Him], away with [Him]! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!" [John 19:15 NKJV](#)

In the next paragraph, there is mention of two staffs named favor and union. Probably most would agree that the removal of the staff named “beauty” represents the removal of God’s special favor on Israel when they rejected Jesus, who was the reason they existed as the chosen in the first place. Not that disunity had never existed before, but you can read in the writings of Josephus how there was a lot of disunity especially between the zealots and anyone they perceived as collaborators with Rome (see discussion on the [abomination of desolation](#)). There was also a lot of disunity among the Jews especially among families where some accepted Jesus and some did not. Then in [verse 9](#), Zechariah said “Let those that are left eat each other's flesh.” Josephus had a chilling description of how during the siege of Jerusalem, a mother killed her own child, then roasted and ate it.<sup>467</sup>

The primary verses of interest, [12-13](#), prophesy the amount of the payment to Judas for the betrayal of Jesus. And then throwing the money to the potter in the house of the Lord is a pretty good description of Judas later throwing the money into the Temple.

[Matthew 27:5](#) Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.

[Matthew 27:5 NKJV](#)

It seems that [Zechariah 11](#) at least up to this point is mostly a prophecy of the Jews’ rejection and crucifixion of Jesus and the results which followed, ending with the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem. The bad shepherd toward the end of the chapter could possibly be a reference to the church of the middle ages, that persecuted and killed so many.

As is the case with many prophecies, I think the prophecies of the betrayal and the price are not really predictive, but maybe retrospective, meaning that parallels can be draw between what was written and what actually happened. In conclusion, I will end with some hard questions about Judas.

---

What do you believe?

- Do you think Judas had the freedom to choose another path other than to betray Jesus?
- Why do you think Jesus chose or allowed Judas to be one of the twelve disciples?
- Do you think Jesus was hoping to save Judas from going through with the betrayal that was predicted?

---

<sup>467</sup> Josephus. Wars of the Jews. Book 6:3:4. <https://books.google.com/books?id=5QQ-AAAACAAJ&pg=RA1-PA313>  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2850/2850-h/2850-h.htm#link62HCH0003>

## Jesus washes the disciples' feet

[Luke 22:7-17,24](#), [Matthew 26:17-20](#), [Mark 14:12-17](#), [John 13:1-15](#)<sup>468</sup>

[Luke 22:7](#) Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed.

<sup>8</sup> And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat." <sup>9</sup> So they said to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare?"

<sup>10</sup> And He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters.

<sup>11</sup> "Then you shall say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"' <sup>12</sup> "Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready."

<sup>13</sup> So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover.

<sup>14</sup> When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. [Luke 22:7-14 NKJV](#)

[John 13:1](#) Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. [John 13:1 NKJV](#)

[Luke 22:15](#) Then He said to them, "With [fervent] desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; <sup>16</sup> "for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." <sup>17</sup> Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide [it] among yourselves;— <sup>24</sup> Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. [Luke 22:15-17,24 NKJV](#)

[John 13:2](#) And supper being ended, ... <sup>3</sup> Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, <sup>4</sup> rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. <sup>5</sup> After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe

[Matthew 12:17](#) Now on the first [day of the Feast] of Unleavened Bread

the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?"

<sup>18</sup> And He said, "Go into the city to a certain man,

and say to him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples." ' ' "

<sup>19</sup> So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.

[Matthew 26:20](#) When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. [Matthew 26:17-20 NKJV](#)

[Mark 14:12](#) Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover [lamb],

His disciples said to Him, "Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?" <sup>13</sup> And He sent out two of His disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him.

<sup>14</sup> "Wherever he goes in,

say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"' <sup>15</sup> "Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished [and] prepared; there make ready for us." <sup>16</sup> So His disciples went out, and came into the city, and found it just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover.

[Mark 14:17](#) In the evening He came with the twelve. [Mark 14:12-17 NKJV](#)

[them] with the towel with which He was girded. <sup>6</sup> Then He came to Simon Peter. And [Peter] said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?"

<sup>7</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this."

<sup>8</sup> Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."

<sup>9</sup> Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also [my] hands and [my] head!"

<sup>10</sup> Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash [his] feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." <sup>11</sup> For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, "You are not all clean."

<sup>12</sup> So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? <sup>13</sup> "You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for [so] I am. <sup>14</sup> "If I then, [your] Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup> "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. [John 13:2-15 NKJV](#)

[Luke 22:25](#) And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' <sup>26</sup> "But not so [among] you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. <sup>27</sup> "For who [is] greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? [Is] it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.

<sup>28</sup> "But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. <sup>29</sup> "And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed [one] upon Me, <sup>30</sup> "that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." [Luke 22:25-30 NKJV](#)

I started to puzzle about whether this meal was the Passover meal (14<sup>th</sup> day of the month) or the first day of the feast of unleavened bread (15<sup>th</sup> day of the month)? But decided to defer this discussion to when we read about the meal. For now, I would like to focus on the foot washing which was very much a part of the culture of the time. The main mode of transportation was walking, and it is generally thought that most people wore sandals. Hence feet got dirty, but that alone was not a reason for washing feet. I think it was more for the purpose of showing hospitality toward a guest. It was performed by a servant or slave and always by someone of a lower social status. Did Jesus literally mean that we should wash each other's feet? Or do you think He meant that the church pastor or leaders should wash the feet of church members. Or did He mean that those of higher social status or maybe the more wealthy should wash the feet of the poor?

I think the immediate reason Jesus performed this act of a servant was to try to get through to His disciples. They had been with Him for more than three years, and He must have wondered if they were learning anything from Him. They obviously had no idea what kind of kingdom He came to establish, and they were all bickering about which one of them was the greatest. He had confronted them about this before.

[Mark 9:33](#) Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?" <sup>34</sup> But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who [would be the] greatest. <sup>35</sup> And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." [Mark 9:33-35 NKJV](#)

[Mark 10:42](#) But Jesus called them to [Himself] and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup> "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. <sup>44</sup> "And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. <sup>45</sup> "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." [Mark 10:42-45 NKJV](#)

[Luke 14:11](#) "For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." [Luke 14:11 NKJV](#)

I like the way that Ellen White described it in the *Desire of Ages*.

So Christ expressed His love for His disciples. Their selfish spirit filled Him with sorrow, but He entered into no controversy with them regarding their difficulty. Instead He gave them an example they would never forget. His love for them was not easily disturbed or quenched. He knew that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came from God, and went to God. He had a full consciousness of His divinity; but He had laid aside His royal crown and kingly robes, and had taken the form of a servant. One of the last acts of His life on earth was to gird Himself as a servant, and perform a servant's part. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. pp644-645](#)<sup>469</sup>

So after all of His attempts to get His disciples to understand that His kingdom is not of this world and the greatest should be least, why did Jesus then tell them in [verse 30](#) that they would sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel? Was He assuring them that eventually He would rule over all nations, and they along-side Him, or was He giving them false hope?

What do you believe?

- Do you think Jesus intended this act of foot washing to be part of the communion service, or do you think He meant that we should serve each other in general?
- Do you think washing the feet of a homeless person that are actually dirty would have more of an impact on you than washing clean feet in church?
- If you were one of the disciples, how do you think you would have resolved the apparent contradiction between Jesus' prediction of His death, and His kingdom and twelve thrones?

## Jesus predicts He will be betrayed and denied

[John 13:17-19,21-38](#), [Matthew 26:21-25,31-35](#), [Mark 14:18-21,27-31](#), [Luke 22:21-23,31-38](#)<sup>470</sup>

[John 13:17](#) "If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. <sup>18</sup> "I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, [Psalm 41:9](#) Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, Who ate 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against my bread, Has lifted up [his] heel against me. [Psalm 41:9 NKJV](#) Me.' <sup>19</sup> "Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am [He]. [John 13:17-19 NKJV](#)

[John 13:21](#) When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit,

<sup>469</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p644-645.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=644>

<sup>470</sup> Strong. p311. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/310/mode/2up>

<p>and testified and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me."</p>	<p><a href="#">Matthew 26:21</a> Now as they were eating, He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me." <a href="#">Matthew 26:21 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Mark 14:18</a> Now as they sat and ate, Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me." <a href="#">Mark 14:18 NKJV</a></p>
		<p><a href="#">Luke 22:21</a> "But behold, the hand of My betrayer [is] with Me ..." <a href="#">Luke 22:21 NKJV</a></p>

<sup>22</sup> Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke. [John 13:21-22 NKJV](#)

<p><a href="#">Matthew 26:22</a> And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, "Lord, is it I?" <sup>23</sup> He answered and said, "He who dipped [his] hand with Me in the dish will betray Me." <sup>24</sup> "The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born." <a href="#">Matthew 26:22-24 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Mark 14:19</a> And they began to be sorrowful, and to say to Him one by one, "[Is] it I?" And another [said], "[Is] it I?" <sup>20</sup> He answered and said to them, "[It is] one of the twelve, who dips with Me in the dish." <sup>21</sup> "The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born." <a href="#">Mark 14:19-21 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 22:23</a> Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing.— <sup>21</sup> ... [is] with Me on the table. <sup>22</sup> "And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!" <a href="#">Luke 22:21-23 NKJV</a></p>
--	--	---

[John 13:23](#) Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. <sup>24</sup> Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke.

<sup>25</sup> Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"

<sup>26</sup> Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped [it]." And having dipped the bread, He gave [it] to Judas Iscariot, [the son] of Simon. [John 13:23-26 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 26:25](#) Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, "Rabbi, is it I?" He said to him, "You have said it." [Matthew 26:25 NKJV](#)

[John 13:27](#) Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."

<sup>28</sup> But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him. <sup>29</sup> For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, "Buy [those things] we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor.

<sup>30</sup> Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.

<sup>31</sup> So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. <sup>32</sup> "If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately. <sup>33</sup> "Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say to you. <sup>34</sup> "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. <sup>35</sup> "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

<sup>36</sup> Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward."

<sup>37</sup> Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake."

<sup>38</sup> Jesus answered him, "Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times. [John 13:27-38 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 26:31](#) Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

[Mark 14:27](#) Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'Strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered; ... 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered.'

[Zechariah 13:7 NKJV](#)

<sup>32</sup> "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee." <sup>33</sup> Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble." [Matthew 26:31-33 NKJV](#)

<sup>28</sup> "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee." <sup>29</sup> Peter said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble, yet I [will] not [be]." [Mark 14:27-29 NKJV](#)

[Luke 22:31](#) And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift [you] as wheat.

<sup>32</sup> "But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to [Me], strengthen your brethren." <sup>33</sup> But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death."

<sup>34</sup> Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."

[Matthew 26:34](#) Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." <sup>35</sup> Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples. [Matthew 26:31-35 NKJV](#)

[Mark 14:30](#) Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that today, [even] this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." <sup>31</sup> But he spoke more vehemently, "If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And they all said likewise. [Mark 14:30-31 NKJV](#)

<sup>35</sup> And He said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?" So they said, "Nothing."

<sup>36</sup> Then He said to them, "But now, he who has a money bag, let him take [it], and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. <sup>37</sup> "For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: 'And He was numbered with the transgressors.' For the things concerning Me have an end."

[Isaiah 53:12](#) ...

And He was numbered with the transgressors, ... [Isaiah 53:12 NKJV](#)

<sup>38</sup> So they said, "Lord, look, here [are] two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough." [Luke 22:31-38 NKJV](#)

I find it interesting with these prophecies of Jesus, especially many from the Psalms, that if you read the context, you wouldn't think you were reading a prophecy of Jesus. In fact, clearly the entire chapter in [Psalm 41](#) is not about Jesus. I say this because of verse 2.

[Psalm 41:2](#) The LORD will preserve him and keep him alive,  
[And] he will be blessed on the earth;  
You will not deliver him to the will of his enemies. [Psalm 41:2 NKJV](#)

So, what I notice with many of the prophecies is that they really do not serve the purpose of being predictive. I think these little acts or occurrences in the life of Christ that are said to be fulfillment of scripture, show the unity of the entire



Bible. I think in a way it shows that the entire Old Testament should point us to Jesus. It shows that words written in the Old Testament were inspired by one who knew future details of the life Christ on earth.

From Matthew, Mark and Luke you would assume that all the disciples then understood that Judas was the betrayer. But according to John, the other disciples thought that Judas had been sent on an errand by Jesus. It makes sense that John would have a different take on the events of that evening considering that he was on the other side of Jesus from Judas. He directly asked who it was and he must also have overheard Jesus' conversation with Judas. Whatever he knew or didn't know, he apparently didn't share it with the others at the time. I think it is important to understand that all four of the Gospel accounts were written much after the fact, when everyone knew who the betrayer was.

[John 13:31,32](#) recorded statements of Jesus that I think must have been very confusing or misleading to the disciples at the time, but that they would understand later on. He was talking about betrayal and death but also about being glorified. What were the disciples to make of this? Jesus understood that His purpose on earth was to fulfill the plan that was laid out for Him and that by doing so, He would be glorified in the sight of God. To Jesus, the cross was His crown.

Finally, we come to Peter, self-confident and always with something to say. He assures Jesus that he is willing to die, probably envisioning fighting, for His sake. All the disciples said the same thing, but it seems that Peter was most insistent. But Jesus, seeing the future, tells Peter in no uncertain terms that he will deny Him even before the rooster crows the second time in the coming morning. Knowing Jesus is God and knows all things, Peter still refused to accept what he was being told.

---

What do you believe?

- If John clearly understood that Judas was the betrayer, why didn't he tell the others so they could try to stop him?
- If you were told that you were going to do something bad, do you think you could change your future and not do it? If you did it in the end, does that mean you don't have free will?
- I believe God has seen the future and knows what will happen, but do you think Jesus as a human always saw the future that clearly, or do you think He only saw what the Holy Spirit revealed to Him?

## The last supper, the first Communion

[Matthew 26:26-29](#), [Mark 14:22-25](#), [Luke 22:18-20](#), [1 Corinthians 11:23-25](#)<sup>471</sup>

<a href="#">Matthew 26:26</a> And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke [it], and gave [it] to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."	<a href="#">Mark 14:22</a> And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke [it], and gave [it] to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."	<a href="#">Luke 22:19</a> And He took bread, gave thanks and broke [it], and gave [it] to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."	<a href="#">1 Corinthians 11:23</a> ... took bread; <sup>24</sup> and when He had given thanks, He broke [it] and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."
---	---	--	---

---

<sup>471</sup> Strong. p316. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/316/mode/2up>

<p>Matthew 26:27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave [it] to them,</p> <p>saying,</p> <p>"Drink from it, all of you.</p> <p><sup>28</sup> "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.</p> <p><sup>29</sup> "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."  <a href="#">Matthew 26:26-29 NKJV</a></p>	<p>Mark 14:23 Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave [it] to them, and they all drank from it.</p> <p><sup>24</sup> And He said to them,</p> <p>"This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many.</p> <p><sup>25</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." <a href="#">Mark 14:22-25 NKJV</a></p>	<p>Luke 22:20 Likewise He also [took] the cup after supper,</p> <p>saying,</p> <p>"This cup [is] the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.—</p> <p><sup>18</sup> "for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."  <a href="#">Luke 22:18-20 NKJV</a></p>	<p>1 Corinthians 11:25 In the same manner [He] also [took] the cup after supper,</p> <p>saying,</p> <p>"This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink [it], in remembrance of Me." <a href="#">1 Corinthians 11:23-25 NKJV</a></p>
---	---	---	---

The first question I had was whether this meal was the official Passover meal or not? The question is really part of several questions I had surrounding the timing and sequence of the twenty-four hours leading up to the death of Jesus on the cross. Was Jesus crucified at the time of the official Passover sacrifice, twilight on the fourteenth day of the month? If He was, then then this would have been the thirteenth day of the month because He was crucified the next day. Earlier [Mathew 12:17](#), [Mark 14:12](#) and [Luke 22:7](#) all said that it was the first day of unleavened bread which technically should have been the fifteenth day of the month, but Mark and Luke both say this was the day the Passover lamb was to be sacrificed, which must be the fourteenth day of the month. Let's start by looking at the sequence of events of the original Passover.

[Exodus 12:1](#) Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, <sup>2</sup> "This month [shall be] your beginning of months; it [shall be] the first month of the year to you. <sup>3</sup> "Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of [his] father, a lamb for a household. <sup>4</sup> 'And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take [it] according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. <sup>5</sup> 'Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take [it] from the sheep or from the goats. <sup>6</sup> 'Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. <sup>7</sup> 'And they shall take [some] of the blood and put [it] on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. <sup>8</sup> 'Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread [and] with bitter [herbs] they shall eat it. <sup>9</sup> 'Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire--its head with its legs and its entrails. <sup>10</sup> 'You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. [Exodus 12:1-10 NKJV](#)

Now let's read one of the places where it describes the annual observance of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

[Leviticus 23:4](#) 'These [are] the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times. <sup>5</sup> 'On the fourteenth [day] of the first month at twilight [is] the LORD's Passover. <sup>6</sup> 'And on the fifteenth day of the same month [is] the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. <sup>7</sup> 'On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. <sup>8</sup> 'But you shall

offer an offering made by fire to the LORD for seven days. The seventh day [shall be] a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work [on it].' " [Leviticus 23:4-8 NKJV](#)

So, the lamb is to be selected on the tenth day of the month. It is to be sacrificed at twilight on the fourteenth day of the month, roasted, and eaten with none saved to the next day. On the surface, it seems pretty straight forward but one question immediately comes to mind. Is twilight the end of the day or the beginning of the day? It's a little like the question, which day does midnight belong to? The Hebrew word translated to twilight is עֶרֶב, 'ereb,<sup>472</sup> which is used many times in the Old Testament, approximately one half of which can be found in the writings of Moses. By far the word is translated to even or evening the majority of the time. Notably in the creation account, God said "there was evening and there was morning," in describing the day. The Hebrew lexicon says, "between the two evenings," and goes on to say that there were two opinions on this.<sup>473</sup>

- 1) Between sunset and deep twilight (Karaites and Samaritans)
- 2) Between late afternoon at the end of day and sunset (Pharisees)

The first would make twilight at the start of the day and the second at the end of the day. Many other uses in the writings of Moses use it to mark the end of a period of "uncleanness," I believe this use to be the instant of time that marks the end of a day or the start of the next.

Let's look at the significance of the Passover day itself. It was to commemorate the day that the angel of death passed over Israelites, who had put the blood on their door posts, but killed the first born of the Egyptians. [Exodus 12:29](#) says that the Lord struck the firstborn in the land of Egypt around midnight. That means the lamb should have been killed already or the Israelites would not have been protected by the blood of the lamb at midnight.

My internet search was fairly conclusive that the modern Passover holiday begins on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month, with the remembrance of the sacrifice beginning in the afternoon of the 14<sup>th</sup>. On the timing of the sacrifice, it seems that the Pharisees prevailed. However, I found many questions about the 14<sup>th</sup> vs. 15<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the day vs. the end of the day, and found many different answers from both Jews and Christians.

At least a couple times I came across an explanation, that from the third century B.C. when the Jews were subject to Egypt, they were forced into a calendar system where the day began and ended at sunrise. Apparently, this contributed to the confusion of the time for the Passover sacrifice and persisted to the time of Jesus and even today.<sup>474</sup>

A very clear and concise article written by Ronald H Stewart best describes my conclusions and more.<sup>475</sup>

I believe that the Last Supper was the Passover meal at the start of the day as Jesus Himself had commanded the Israelites. Jesus was tried and crucified on later on that same day.

[Matthew 26:19](#) So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover. [Matthew 26:19 NKJV](#)

[Mark 14:12](#) Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover [lamb], His disciples said to Him, "Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?" [Mark 14:12 NKJV](#)

<sup>472</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=H6153&t=NASB>

<sup>473</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=H6153&t=NASB>

<sup>474</sup> [http://www.cogwriter.com/passover\\_on\\_the\\_fourteenth\\_or\\_fifteenth.htm](http://www.cogwriter.com/passover_on_the_fourteenth_or_fifteenth.htm)

<sup>475</sup> <http://www.giveshare.org/HolyDay/pas1415.htm> if the link is not available, I saved the content as a pdf ([http://btlb.org/Passover\\_14th\\_or\\_15th.pdf](http://btlb.org/Passover_14th_or_15th.pdf))

[Luke 22:8](#) And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat." [Luke 22:8 NKJV](#)

As for the Passover being on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, I think it was a matter of speaking, where the Passover and the feast were spoken of as one event. I think many of the Jews, led by the Pharisees were planning to celebrate the Passover meal toward the end of that day. Hence John's comments to that effect. But I also think some must have observed their Passover at the start of the day.

[John 18:28](#) Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. [John 18:28 NKJV](#)

[John 19:14](#) Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" [John 19:14 NKJV](#)

I don't believe there is any evidence that would lead me to believe that the Last Supper Passover meal was at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> because that would mean the Jews would have crucified Jesus on the 15<sup>th</sup> which was to be a Sabbath day of rest, celebrating the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

What do you believe?

- Do you think the Last Supper was the Passover meal or not?
- Do you think the Bible is clear about when the Passover meal is to be eaten?
- Why do you think modern Passover begins on the fifteenth of the month?

## Jesus promises to return to take His disciples Home with Him

[John 14](#)<sup>476</sup>

[John 14:1](#) "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. <sup>2</sup> "In My Father's house are many mansions; if [it were] not [so], I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, [there] you may be also. <sup>4</sup> "And where I go you know, and the way you know."

<sup>5</sup> Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"

<sup>6</sup> Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

<sup>7</sup> "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."

<sup>8</sup> Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."

<sup>9</sup> Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? <sup>10</sup> "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own [authority]; but the Father who

<sup>476</sup> Strong. p317. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/316/mode/2up>

dwells in Me does the works. <sup>11</sup> "Believe Me that I [am] in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. <sup>12</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater [works] than these he will do, because I go to My Father. <sup>13</sup> "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> "If you ask anything in My name, I will do [it].

<sup>15</sup> "If you love Me, keep My commandments. <sup>16</sup> "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—<sup>17</sup> "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. <sup>18</sup> "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

<sup>19</sup> "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also.

<sup>20</sup> "At that day you will know that I [am] in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup> "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

<sup>22</sup> Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?"

<sup>23</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. <sup>24</sup> "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

<sup>25</sup> "These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. <sup>26</sup> "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. <sup>27</sup> "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. <sup>28</sup> "You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming [back] to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I.

<sup>29</sup> "And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. <sup>30</sup> "I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. <sup>31</sup> "But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here. [John 14:1-31 NKJV](#)

Probably like many other people, I memorized the first three verses of this chapter as a child. And why not, considering the wonderful directness of the promise that we will be taken to be with God. The promise of His return is great news for us but for the disciples what it meant was that He would be leaving them. This was greatly troubling to them, so they wanted to know where He was going and why they couldn't go with Him. Going implied a place and they wanted to know where it was and why they couldn't go with Him. Thomas was brave enough to ask the question they all were wondering, but Jesus' answer really wasn't the information they were looking for. They were looking for directions that they could navigate to get to a location, but instead Jesus said He was going to the Father, and that He is the only one who could get them there. Jesus, having mentioned the Father, then prompted them to ask if He could show them the Father. He answered by saying if you have seen Me you've seen the Father, if you know Me you know the Father. Then Jesus said He would send the Helper, the Spirit of Truth, or the Holy Spirit. I believe the disciples had come to rely on Jesus for comfort and counsel. Jesus clearly said one of the things the Holy Spirit would do was to help them remember the things He had taught them.

There are two things Jesus said in this conversation that puzzled me. In [verse 12](#), He said: "he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater [works] than these he will do, because I go to My Father." How could any person do greater works than Jesus did? I don't think there was ever a person since who did more and greater miracles than Jesus did. There is no one else who can match the act of sacrificing their life to save the world. So, what greater works can human beings do? First, we should always remember to take things in their proper context. Jesus followed that statement with, "because I go to My Father." I seem to recall some other statements by Jesus regarding why He had to leave and what He could do when He left.

[John 16:7](#) "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. [John 16:7 NKJV](#)

[John 15:26](#) "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. [John 15:26 NKJV](#)

[Acts 1:8](#) "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." <sup>9</sup> Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. [Acts 1:8-9 NKJV](#)

[John 14:26](#) "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. [John 14:26 NKJV](#)

As hard as it may be to believe, Jesus said it was better for the disciples if He left, because if He didn't the Holy Spirit would not come. I really have no idea why the Holy Spirit could not come as long as Jesus was still on earth. The Bible says the Holy Spirit was with John the Baptist when Jesus was here on earth. But if Jesus were limited by His physical body to be in one place at a time, the Holy Spirit would be an advantage to them because they would need to go to all parts of the world and Jesus could not have been physically with every one of them. I only included one instance, but Jesus said multiple times that the Holy Spirit could help them remember the things Jesus said, and could give them words to speak. Probably countless times, after the fact, Jesus counseled them on what they could have said in certain situations, but the Holy Spirit would be able to give them the right words at the time they needed them. I think I could see how it could be to their advantage to have the Holy Spirit over the physical presence of Jesus, but would that translate to them performing greater works than Jesus did? I guess when Jesus was physically here on earth, I would say that most didn't understand His mission and were following Him for the hope of an earthly kingdom. After He left when there was no longer any thought of an earthly kingdom, the disciples with the help of the Holy Spirit could get down to business spreading the good news of salvation from sin through belief in the sacrifice of Jesus. In other words, the Holy Spirit would bring salvation to many people through them, and I think most would agree that spiritual healing and salvation are greater than physical. I still don't think anything could be greater than Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, but maybe He was just referring to greater works than His miracles of healing.

The other statement I found interesting was in [verse 28](#) where He said: "for My Father is greater than I." Is Jesus equal with God or not? Was Jesus just saying this about their relationship while He was here on earth? There are other places in the New Testament where Jesus seems to defer to the Father, or where the Father knows something the Son doesn't, or the Son is begotten of the Father.

[Matthew 24:36](#) "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. [Matthew 24:36 NKJV](#)

[John 3:35](#) "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. [John 3:35 NKJV](#)

[John 8:28](#) Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am [He], and [that] I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. [John 8:28 NKJV](#)

[Hebrews 1:1](#) God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> has in these last days spoken to us by [His] Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; <sup>3</sup> who being the brightness of [His] glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, <sup>4</sup> having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

<sup>5</sup> For to which of the angels did He ever say:

"You are My Son,  
Today I have begotten You"?

And again:

"I will be to Him a Father,  
And He shall be to Me a Son"? [Hebrews 1:1-5 NKJV](#)

[John 3:16](#) "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. [John 3:16 NKJV](#)

I believe that even though Jesus set aside His glory and made Himself a man, a point is being made that He is not lower than the angels, and that He is still God, and is still to be worshipped.

What do you believe?

- What kind of dwelling places do you envision in heaven?
- If the disciples on the night before Jesus died did not have the belief of the Trinity, when do you think this understanding was formed?
- What do you think Jesus meant when He said, "the Father is greater than I?"

## Jesus is the vine and we are the branches

[John 15:1-27](#), [John 13:34](#)<sup>477</sup>

[John 15:1](#) "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup> "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every [branch] that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup> "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

<sup>5</sup> "I am the vine, you [are] the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw [them] into the fire, and they are burned. <sup>7</sup> "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you

<sup>477</sup> Strong. p321. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/320/mode/2up>

will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. <sup>8</sup> "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

<sup>9</sup> "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. <sup>10</sup> "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

<sup>11</sup> "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and [that] your joy may be full. <sup>12</sup> "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. <sup>14</sup> "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. <sup>15</sup> "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and [that] your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. <sup>17</sup> "These things I command you, that you love one another. [John 15:1-17 NKJV](#)

[John 13:34](#) "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. [John 13:34 NKJV](#)

[John 15:18](#) "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before [it hated] you. <sup>19</sup> "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. <sup>20</sup> "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. <sup>21</sup> "But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. <sup>22</sup> "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. <sup>23</sup> "He who hates Me hates My Father also. <sup>24</sup> "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. <sup>25</sup> "But [this happened] that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law,

'They hated Me  
without a cause.'

[Psalm 109:3](#) They have also surrounded me with words of hatred,  
And fought against me without a cause. [Psalm 109:3 NKJV](#)

<sup>26</sup> "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. <sup>27</sup> "And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning. [John 15:18-27 NKJV](#)

I used to envision Jesus and the disciples going straight from the upper room to the garden of Gethsemane, but if we are to take John's Gospel literally and chronologically, Jesus' words in John 15-17 were spoken to them in this time interval. In this chapter, just after they left the upper room, Jesus makes three main points.

1. Jesus is the vine, the Father is the vinedresser, we are the branches,
  - a. Branches that bear no fruit are cut off
  - b. Branches that bear fruit are pruned so they will bear more
  - c. We cannot bear fruit unless we abide in the vine (stay connected)
  - d. If we do not abide in Him, we will be like branches that have been cut off, dried up and gathered to burn
  - e. God is glorified when the branches bear much fruit
  - f. If we keep His commandments, we abide in God's love
  - g. Jesus taught these things so that His joy would be in us and our joy would be made full
2. Jesus gave a new commandment, that we should love one another as He loved us



- a. The greatest love is shown by a person giving up his life for a friend
  - b. We are God's friends if we keep His commandments
  - c. Our connection with God is not dependent on our initial action, because He chooses us first
3. If we choose to follow Jesus, we can expect to be hated by the world
- a. Being a follower of Jesus and being of the world are opposites
  - b. If we are of the world, the world would love us
  - c. If the world hates us and persecutes us for being followers of Jesus, they cannot claim ignorance and will have no excuse for their sin

Jesus' statement that He is the vine is a pretty well-known statement, but I think what is a lot less understood is what it means for the Father to be the vinedresser. Clearly Jesus is talking about roles, as He also mentions the Helper at the end of the chapter. What does it mean for a branch in Jesus to be cut off for not bearing fruit? Is this a person who attends church but doesn't bring anyone to Christ? But doesn't that describe most church goers? If the Father is the vinedresser, then He is the one who should do the cutting, but what does that mean? First of all, what is a branch? It is something that is alive, receiving nourishment from the vine. Since those who don't abide in Christ are like branches that are cut off and dried up, then the branch that is alive must by definition be connected to the vine. In the case of a real vine, pruning stimulates new growth, on which fruit often appears. If a branch represents a person, what is represented by the branches that grow out of that branch, or the branches that are pruned off? Is it stretching the analogy too far to say that branches growing out of a branch could represent people who are brought to Christ but are getting their nourishment from a person rather than directly from Jesus? Could a big branch with many small branches represent a pastor with many church members who would all fall away from Christ if he did? In this case pruning by the vinedresser could represent cutting off branches that are growing off a branch and then grafting it directly into the vine. Another type of pruning could represent cutting off people who are a bad influence. Pruning could also represent cutting off bad habits and sin to stimulate good growth. Or is the pruning all about growth from pain caused by cutting or in a way discipline?

[Hebrews 12:6](#) For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives."

<sup>7</sup> If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? <sup>8</sup> But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. <sup>9</sup> Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected [us], and we paid [them] respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? <sup>10</sup> For they indeed for a few days chastened [us] as seemed [best] to them, but He for [our] profit, that [we] may be partakers of His holiness. <sup>11</sup> Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. [Hebrew 12:6-11 NKJV](#)

[2 Samuel 7:14](#) "I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. [2 Samuel 7:14 NKJV](#)

In Romans, Paul used the analogy of grafting although with an olive tree.

[Romans 11:17](#) And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, <sup>18</sup> do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, [remember that] you do not support the root, but the root [supports] you.

<sup>19</sup> You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." <sup>20</sup> Well [said]. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. <sup>21</sup> For if God did not spare the natural

branches, He may not spare you either.<sup>22</sup> Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in [His] goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.

<sup>23</sup> And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.

<sup>24</sup> For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who [are] natural [branches], be grafted into their own olive tree? [Romans 11:17-24 NKJV](#)

I think the olive tree analogy is a little different from the vine because I think it represents God's true people or representatives on earth. The Jews were at one time the branches of this tree but were cut off. Some who chose to believe in Jesus, were grafted back in. Gentiles who chose to believe in Jesus were also grafted in. However I am of the opinion that branches (people) who are connected to the vine (Jesus) will not be cut off until the end. I base this on the following parable.

[Matthew 13:24](#) Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field;<sup>25</sup> "but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.

<sup>26</sup> "But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. <sup>27</sup> "So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?'

<sup>28</sup> "He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' <sup>29</sup> "But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. <sup>30</sup> 'Let

both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn." ' ' [Matthew 13:24-30 NKJV](#)

The second point Jesus made in this teaching is that we should love each other. On one hand, it's not really a new commandment because it's a summary of the latter half of the Ten. The command was given in Leviticus in the following way.

[Leviticus 19:8](#) 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I [am] the LORD. [Leviticus 19:8 NKJV](#)

The Jews understood this command to apply to fellow Jews, but Jesus expanded that understanding in answering the lawyer with the story of the Good Samaritan in [Luke 10:25-37](#). Now He expanded it more by commanding us to love each other, not just as we love ourselves, but as He loves us. Jesus loved us so much that He was willing to give up His life so that we could be saved from sin. He emphasized His point by saying that the greatest love a person could show was to give his life for a friend. In his letter to the Romans Paul showed that Jesus went even farther than this:

[Romans 5:6](#) For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. <sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. [Romans 5:6-8 NKJV](#)

If everyone truly followed this command, there would be no war or crime or poverty. This is obviously not going to happen in a sinful world, but think of the good will Christianity would have if they followed this command of Jesus.

While some good will can be earned by being a true follower of Jesus, we should not be surprised if we are hated by others just as many hated Him. Those who are opposed to the ways of the kingdom of God will naturally be at odds with His followers. But Jesus said that those who persecute you will be without excuse in the judgment because they have been shown the light and have rejected it.

---

What do you believe?

- In the analogy of the vine and the branches, in what way do you envision the Father being the vinedresser?
- Do you think there are people who are connected to other people rather than Jesus for their spiritual nourishment?
- Do you think that true love for your enemies and a willingness to die rather than harm them will turn them from hating you?

## Jesus tries to prepare His disciples for His death and departure from them

[John 16](#)<sup>478</sup>

[John 16:1](#) "These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. <sup>2</sup> "They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. <sup>3</sup> "And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me. <sup>4</sup> "But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.

<sup>5</sup> "But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' <sup>6</sup> "But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. <sup>7</sup> "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. <sup>8</sup> "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: <sup>9</sup> "of sin, because they do not believe in Me; <sup>10</sup> "of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; <sup>11</sup> "of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

<sup>12</sup> "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear [them] now. <sup>13</sup> "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own [authority], but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. <sup>14</sup> "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare [it] to you. <sup>15</sup> "All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare [it] to you.

<sup>16</sup> "A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father."

<sup>17</sup> Then [some] of His disciples said among themselves, "What is this that He says to us, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'; and, 'because I go to the Father'?" <sup>18</sup> They said therefore, "What is this that He says, 'A little while'? We do not know what He is saying."

<sup>19</sup> Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, "Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'? <sup>20</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. <sup>21</sup> "A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being

---

<sup>478</sup> Strong. p325. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/324/mode/2up>

has been born into the world. <sup>22</sup> "Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.

<sup>23</sup> "And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. <sup>24</sup> "Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

<sup>25</sup> "These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. <sup>26</sup> "In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; <sup>27</sup> "for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God. <sup>28</sup> "I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father."

<sup>29</sup> His disciples said to Him, "See, now You are speaking plainly, and using no figure of speech! <sup>30</sup> "Now we are sure that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe that You came forth from God."

<sup>31</sup> Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? <sup>32</sup> "Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. <sup>33</sup> "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." [John 16:1-33 NKJV](#)

The first three verses of this chapter really go along with my third bullet point from the previous chapter. If they hated Jesus they will hate His followers. Jesus was killed by religious authorities and His followers will also be killed by religious people, thinking they are doing God's will. As I read this, I thought of all the people who were killed by the Roman Catholic Church of the Dark Ages. I also think of the Christians today who are persecuted and killed by Islamic terrorists, clearly thinking they are doing the will of God.

The rest of this chapter is dedicated to Jesus trying to prepare His disciples for His death and for their life when He is no longer with them. Jesus spoke of His death in figurative language because they could not bear to hear the truth. In fact, when He told them plainly in prior conversations that He would be killed, they thought He was speaking figuratively because it was so incomprehensible to them. Again, Jesus told them that unless He left, the Helper would not come to them. In this case Jesus said the Helper would convict the world of three things.

1. Sin – in rejecting Jesus but also of sin in general
2. Righteousness – of Jesus and that He was God, as He said He was
3. Judgment – of Satan the ruler of this world, that his true ideas and methods were exposed and he was proved wrong in his dispute with God

I believe Jesus had to leave because as long as He was present physically, there was the thought of the earthly kingdom. After all, even as Jesus was about to rise up to heaven, the disciples were still thinking there would be an earthly kingdom.

[Acts 1:6](#) Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" <sup>7</sup> And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. <sup>8</sup> "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

<sup>9</sup> Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. [Acts 1:6-9 NKJV](#)

In [verse 23](#) Jesus said "Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you." That's a pretty clear and unambiguous statement. So how does one explain the many prayers that people have prayed in Jesus' name, where they didn't receive what they asked for? I guess the best answer I can give is that we should not form a whole belief or doctrine around a single Bible verse. Each verse must be taken in context and if you believe the Bible is without error and inspired from by God, then compare one verse with another seeking an understanding that is consistent throughout the entire Bible. Since this seemed like a topic that deserved more discussion than a paragraph or two, I wrote an Appendix on [Unanswered prayer](#).

What do you believe?

- Do you think the disciples understood yet that Jesus was going to die?
- What do you think the disciples believed or understood about the Holy Spirit?
- What do you think it means to Pray in Jesus' name?

## Jesus prays for His disciples

[John 17:1-26](#), [John 18:1](#), [Matthew 26:30](#), [Mark 14:26](#), [Luke 22:39](#)<sup>479</sup>

[John 17:1](#) Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, <sup>2</sup> "as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. <sup>3</sup> "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. <sup>4</sup> "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. <sup>5</sup> "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

<sup>6</sup> "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. <sup>7</sup> "Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. <sup>8</sup> "For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received [them], and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.

<sup>9</sup> "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. <sup>10</sup> "And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. <sup>11</sup> "Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We [are]. <sup>12</sup> "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. <sup>13</sup> "But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. <sup>14</sup> "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>15</sup> "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>17</sup> "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. <sup>18</sup> "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup> "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

<sup>479</sup> Strong. p328. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/328/mode/2up>

<sup>20</sup> "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; <sup>21</sup> "that they all may be one, as You, Father, [are] in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. <sup>22</sup> "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: <sup>23</sup> "I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

<sup>24</sup> "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. <sup>25</sup> "O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. <sup>26</sup> "And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare [it], that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them." [John 17:1-26 NKJV](#)

[John 18:1](#) When Jesus had spoken these words,

	<a href="#">Matthew 26:30</a> And when they had sung a hymn, they went out	<a href="#">Mark 14:26</a> And when they had sung a hymn, they went out	<a href="#">Luke 22:39</a> Coming out, He went
He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, ... <a href="#">John 18:1 NKJV</a>	to the Mount of Olives. <a href="#">Matthew 26:30 NKJV</a>	to the Mount of Olives. <a href="#">Mark 14:26 NKJV</a>	to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. <a href="#">Luke 22:39 NKJV</a>

As I read this prayer, I had several thoughts. It should have been pretty clear to the disciples that Jesus was going to be leaving them and going back to the Father. He was concerned for their well-being when His physical presence would no longer be with them. I believe the words of this prayer were primarily for their benefit, to help them understand that the connection He had with the Father in heaven, was to be theirs. He wanted them to know that though He was God, He depended on that connection with the Father even as they should and could. Then, the idea of Jesus praying got me wondering if prayer was any different for Him than it is for us. Obviously, it's different in that He is not praying to Jesus, but I mean the vast majority of people never hear God verbally speaking back to them when they pray. I don't know how the Father, Son and Holy Spirit communicate with each other, but I don't imagine they are limited to verbal communication. I just wondered if Jesus had any communication with the Father or Holy Spirit, as they did when He was not human, or if He was limited to what is possible for us. Another thing that stood out as I contemplated this prayer is that Jesus prayed as if Judas were already lost. I know he had already agreed to betray Jesus, but he hadn't actually gone through with it yet. Do you think it was possible for Judas to exercise his free will and choose not to betray Jesus? I believe the choice was his and God/Jesus had simply observed him making it. [Verse 20-21](#) lets us know that Jesus was not only praying for the Apostles, but for all who should choose to follow Him through their testimony. In [verses 22-24](#), Jesus prayed of glory again. Is this the same glory He spoke of in [verse 5](#)? On the surface it doesn't seem the same. [Verse 5](#) speaks of the glory Jesus had with the Father before He took human form. The glory in [verse 22](#) seems to be something Jesus received while in His human form, which He passed on to the disciples so that they could have the same oneness He had with the Father on earth. I think it's pretty clear what the first glory is, but what is the glory Jesus had, and we also can have with the Father here on earth? I think Jesus spoke of His coming death on the cross as Him being glorified.

[Luke 24:25](#) Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

<sup>26</sup> "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" [Luke 24:25-26 NKJV](#)

[John 12:23](#) But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. <sup>24</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. [John 12:23-24 NKJV](#)

[John 3:14](#) "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> "that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. [John 3:14-15 NKJV](#)

Jesus also told Peter the kind of death by which he would glorify God.

[John 21:19](#) This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me." [John 21:19 NKJV](#)

For me, maybe the question about the glory could be about who is being glorified. Who was glorified during the crucifixion of Jesus? Who was glorified by Peter's crucifixion? Who is glorified by the deaths of all faithful martyrs for Christ? I think Jesus was glorified because He was victorious over Satan and because of the salvation He accomplished for us through His death. But I think the works we do for God, and possibly the death we die for Him, should bring glory to God. Jesus performed many miracles during His ministry and the Apostles were also given the gift of miraculous healing, but I think they were not for the purpose of bringing glory to themselves.

What do you believe?

- What do you think Jesus meant when He prayed "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was?"
- What does it mean to be one with the Father even as Jesus was? How is that even possible?
- Do you think Jesus was able to have more of a two-way conversation when He prayed or was He limited to more of the same experience we are?

## The garden of Gethsemane

[Matthew 26:36-56](#), [Mark 14:32-52](#), [Luke 22:40-48](#), [Luke 12:50](#), [John 18:1-12](#)<sup>480</sup>

[Matthew 26:36](#) Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there."

[Mark 14:32](#) Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray."

[Luke 22:40](#) When He came to the place, He said to them, [John 18:1](#) ... where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. [John 18:1 NKJV](#)  
"Pray that you may not enter into temptation."

[Matthew 26:37](#) And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. <sup>38</sup> Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. ...

[Mark 14:33](#) And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. <sup>34</sup> Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, [even] to death. ...

[Luke 12:50](#) "But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished! [Luke 12:50 NKJV](#)

<sup>480</sup> Strong. p331. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/n405/mode/2up>

[Matthew 26:38](#) ... Stay here and watch with Me."

<sup>39</sup> He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed,

saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You [will]."

<sup>40</sup> Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter,

"What? Could you not watch with Me one hour?"

<sup>41</sup> "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.

The spirit indeed [is] willing, but the flesh [is] weak."

[Matthew 26:42](#) Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done."

[Matthew 26:43](#) And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.

[Matthew 26:44](#) So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

[Matthew 26:45](#) Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Are [you] still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. <sup>46</sup> "Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

[Mark 14:34](#) ... Stay here and watch."

<sup>35</sup> He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him.

<sup>36</sup> And He said, "Abba, Father, all things [are] possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You [will]."

<sup>37</sup> Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour?"

<sup>38</sup> "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed [is] willing, but the flesh [is] weak."

[Mark 14:40](#) And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him.

[Luke 22:44](#) And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.— <sup>43</sup> Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.

[Mark 14:41](#) Then He came the third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. <sup>42</sup> "Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

[Luke 22:41](#) And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed,

<sup>42</sup> saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."— <sup>45</sup> When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow.

<sup>46</sup> Then He said to them, "Why do you sleep?"

Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation."

[Mark 14:39](#) Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words.



Matthew 26:47 And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve,

with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people. <sup>48</sup> Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him."

<sup>49</sup> Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed Him.

<sup>50</sup> But Jesus said to him, "Friend, why have you come?" Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him. [Matthew 26:36-50 NKJV](#)

[John 18:4](#) Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?" <sup>5</sup> They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am [He]." And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. <sup>6</sup> Now when He said to them, "I am [He]," they drew back and fell to the ground. <sup>7</sup> Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." <sup>8</sup> Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am [He]. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way," <sup>9</sup> that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none." [John 18:4-9 NKJV](#)

[Luke 22:49](#) When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they said to Him, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" [Luke 22:49 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 26:51](#) And suddenly, one of those [who were] with Jesus stretched out [his] hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

Mark 14:43 And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve,

with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. <sup>44</sup> Now His betrayer had given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him and lead [Him] away safely."

<sup>45</sup> As soon as he had come, immediately he went up to Him and said to Him, "Rabbi, Rabbi!" and kissed Him. [Mark 14:32-45 NKJV](#)

[Mark 14:47](#) And one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

[Luke 22:47](#) And while He was still speaking,

behold, a multitude;

and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. <sup>48</sup> But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" [Luke 22:40-48 NKJV](#)

[Luke 22:50](#) And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.

[John 18:2](#) And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples. <sup>3</sup> Then Judas, having received a detachment [of troops], and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. [John 18:2-3 NKJV](#)

[John 18:10](#) Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

[Luke 22:51](#) But Jesus answered and said, "Permit even this." And He touched his ear and healed him.

Matthew 26:52 But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. <sup>53</sup> "Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? <sup>54</sup> "How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?"

[John 18:11](#) So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. ...

John 18:11 ... Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"

[Matthew 26:55](#) In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes,

"Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me.

<sup>56</sup> "But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.—

[Matthew 26:50](#) ... Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him.

[Matthew 26:50-56 NKJV](#)

[Mark 14:48](#) Then Jesus answered and said to them,

"Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? <sup>49</sup> "I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me.

But the Scriptures must be fulfilled." <sup>50</sup> Then they all forsook Him and fled.—

[Mark 14:46](#) Then they laid their hands on Him and took Him.

—

[Luke 22:54](#) Having arrested Him, they led [Him] ... [Luke 22:50-54 NKJV](#)

[Luke 22:52](#) Then Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders who had come to Him,

"Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs? <sup>53</sup> "When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

[John 18:12](#) Then the detachment [of troops] and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. [John 18:10-12 NKJV](#)

[Mark 14:51](#) Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around [his] naked [body]. And the young men laid hold of him, <sup>52</sup> and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked. [Mark 14:47-52 NKJV](#)

Matthew's account of the Garden of Gethsemane is the most complete. The details he left out were:

- The sweating drops of blood (Luke)
- Jesus being strengthened by an angel (Luke)
- Jesus asking who the mob was looking for, answering I am He, and they fell to the ground (John)
- The identity of the person who cut off the ear and the name of the servant whose ear was cut off (John)
- Jesus healing the severed [right] ear (Luke)
- The naked young man (Mark)

Luke was a doctor, so it should come as no surprise that he would include the sweat as drops of blood and the healing of the ear that was cut off. John was the one who often liked to give little details about people and who they were. He was also the one who had some connection with the High Priest that later allowed him to enter and observe the trial, so he may even have known of Malchus at the time. Finally, many believe that the naked young man was Mark, the author of the Gospel by his name.

Jesus as He often did, took Peter, James and John with Him but then left them and went a little further. Jesus wanted the disciples to pray for strength to withstand what He knew was coming. He Himself prayed that He might not have to drink the cup set before Him, but He had completely surrendered to do the will of the Father. What is the cup Jesus was praying about? Many probably assume that it was the crucifixion and death on the cross. I believe that it was the sin of the world that He had to assume responsibility for and the resulting separation from the Father that Jesus shrank back from. Ellen White expanded on this scene in the Desire of Ages.

He went a little distance from them—not so far but that they could both see and hear Him—and fell prostrate upon the ground. He felt that by sin He was being separated from His Father. The gulf was so broad, so black, so

deep, that His spirit shuddered before it. This agony He must not exert His divine power to escape. As man He must suffer the consequences of man's sin. As man He must endure the wrath of God against transgression.

[White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p686](#)<sup>481</sup>

And what was to be gained by this sacrifice? How hopeless appeared the guilt and ingratitude of men! In its hardest features Satan pressed the situation upon the Redeemer: The people who claim to be above all others in temporal and spiritual advantages have rejected You. They are seeking to destroy You, the foundation, the center and seal of the promises made to them as a peculiar people. One of Your own disciples, who has listened to Your instruction, and has been among the foremost in church activities, will betray You. One of Your most zealous followers will deny You. All will forsake You. Christ's whole being abhorred the thought. That those whom He had undertaken to save, those whom He loved so much, should unite in the plots of Satan, this pierced His soul. The conflict was terrible. Its measure was the guilt of His nation, of His accusers and betrayer, the guilt of a world lying in wickedness. The sins of men weighed heavily upon Christ, and the sense of God's wrath against sin was crushing out His life. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p687](#)<sup>482</sup>

Three times Jesus went a little distance from Peter, James and John to pray, and three times He came back to find them sleeping. He had asked them to pray so that they could withstand temptation. I think Satan probably did everything within his power to keep them from praying. I wonder if God would still have sent an angel if the disciples had been able to stay awake to pray and comfort Jesus? Ellen White gives us an idea of how the conversation with the angel might have gone:

In this awful crisis, when everything was at stake, when the mysterious cup trembled in the hand of the sufferer, the heavens opened, a light shone forth amid the stormy darkness of the crisis hour, and the mighty angel who stands in God's presence, occupying the position from which Satan fell, came to the side of Christ. The angel came not to take the cup from Christ's hand, but to strengthen Him to drink it, with the assurance of the Father's love. He came to give power to the divine-human suppliant. He pointed Him to the open heavens, telling Him of the souls that would be saved as the result of His sufferings. He assured Him that His Father is greater and more powerful than Satan, that His death would result in the utter discomfiture of Satan, and that the kingdom of this world would be given to the saints of the Most High. He told Him that He would see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied, for He would see a multitude of the human race saved, eternally saved.

Christ's agony did not cease, but His depression and discouragement left Him. The storm had in nowise abated, but He who was its object was strengthened to meet its fury. He came forth calm and serene. A heavenly peace rested upon His bloodstained face. He had borne that which no human being could ever bear; for He had tasted the sufferings of death for every man. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p693-694](#)<sup>483</sup>

I think there is a saying that nothing good happens after midnight. I don't think there is anything magical that happens when the clock strikes midnight, but I think it does have something to do with darkness. In fact, the Jews

---

<sup>481</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p686.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=686>

<sup>482</sup> White. p687. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=687>

<sup>483</sup> White. p693-694. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=693>

had Laws prohibiting criminal trials from happening at night.<sup>484</sup> Jesus also pointed out their hypocrisy with the following statement.

[Luke 22:53](#) "When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness." [Luke 22:53 NKJV](#)

I think the law against criminal trial by night makes a lot of sense. The main reason anyone would want conduct a trial by night is to avoid the scrutiny of the general public. In addition to that, generally the people available at that time of night are often less than upstanding citizens. I think it's probably easier to assemble a mob of mischief makers at night than in broad daylight.

When Jesus asked the mob who they were looking for and answered them, I am He, they drew back and fell to the ground. John tells us this, but he doesn't attempt to give an explanation of why they drew back and fell to the ground. Was this similar to the times when Jesus chased the merchants from the temple, and they ran out rather than standing up to Him and challenging His authority? I expect that it was some sort of supernatural display of heavenly power or glory, such as when the angel came to roll back the stone of Jesus' tomb, and the guards fell to the ground as dead men. Ellen White suggests the following:

No traces of His recent agony were visible as Jesus stepped forth to meet His betrayer. Standing in advance of His disciples He said, "Whom seek ye?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am He." As these words were spoken, the angel who had lately ministered to Jesus moved between Him and the mob. A divine light illuminated the Saviour's face, and a dovelike form overshadowed Him. In the presence of this divine glory, the murderous throng could not stand for a moment. They staggered back. Priests, elders, soldiers, and even Judas, fell as dead men to the ground. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p694](#)<sup>485</sup>

Regarding Peter's attack with the sword, Jesus was the one who actually told them to get it. This came up in the chapter where [Jesus predicts He will be betrayed and denied](#).

[Luke 22:35](#) And He said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?" So they said, "Nothing." <sup>36</sup> Then He said to them, "But now, he who has a money bag, let him take [it], and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. <sup>37</sup> "For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: 'And He was numbered with the transgressors.' For the things concerning Me have an end." <sup>38</sup> So they said, "Lord, look, here [are] two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough." [Luke 22:35-38 NKJV](#)

So, it seems Jesus told the disciples to get a couple swords, but then He chastised Peter for using one of them. Why did He do that? Did Jesus literally mean for them to get swords? Is there any other place in His life where Jesus even remotely advocated violence or even self-defense? When a mob tried to throw Him off a cliff, He miraculously walked away [\[Luke 4:29\]](#). When John the Baptists was thrown in prison, He didn't try to break him out. When wrongfully condemned by an illegal trial, He willingly went along with it, even to the point of sacrificing His life. Later based on His teachings and example, the Apostles willingly suffered persecution [\[Acts 5:41\]](#), torture and death for His sake. So, the request to acquire swords seems completely out of character and purpose for Jesus. I could theorize that perhaps Jesus spoke figuratively when He told them to get a couple swords, but I rather choose to

<sup>484</sup> <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/practice-procedure>

<sup>485</sup> White. p694. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=694>

think that He had a purpose and a lesson to teach with the incident in the garden. Maybe Malchus and others were even converted and saved as a result of Jesus' miracle that night.

What do you believe?

- What do you think the cup was that Jesus prayed about?
- Why do you think Judas need the signal of the kiss? Wasn't Jesus recognizable by everyone?
- Why do you think Jesus asked the disciples to get a sword and then rebuked Peter for using it?

## Peter denies knowing Jesus in the courtyard of Annas

[John 18:13-27](#), [Matthew 22:58,69-75](#), [Mark 14:54-72](#), [Luke 22:54-62](#)<sup>486</sup>

[John 18:13](#) And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. <sup>14</sup> Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

[Luke 22:54](#) ... and brought Him into the high priest's house. ...

[John 18:15](#) And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so [did] another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest.

[Matthew 26:58](#) But Peter followed Him at a distance  
[Mark 14:54](#) But Peter followed Him at a distance, ...  
to the high priest's courtyard.

[Luke 22:54](#) ... But Peter followed at a distance. [Luke 22:54 NKJV](#)

[John 18:16](#) But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in.—  
<sup>18</sup> Now the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself. —

[Matthew 26:58](#) ... And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end. [Matthew 22:58 NKJV](#)  
[Mark 14:54](#) ... right into the courtyard of the high priest.  
And he sat with the servants and  
warmed himself at the fire.—

[Luke 22:55](#) Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them.

<sup>486</sup> Strong. p338. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/338/mode/2up>

<p>John 18:17 Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter,</p>	<p><a href="#">Matthew 26:69</a> Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying,</p>	<p><a href="#">Mark 14:66</a> Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came. <sup>67</sup> And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said,</p>	<p>Luke 22:56 And a certain servant girl, seeing him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said,</p>
<p>"You are not also [one] of this Man's disciples, are you?"</p>	<p>"You also were with Jesus of Galilee."</p>	<p>"You also were with Jesus of Nazareth."</p>	<p>"This man was also with Him."</p>
<p>He said, "I am not."—</p>	<p><sup>70</sup> But he denied it before [them] all, saying, "I do not know what you are saying."</p>	<p><sup>68</sup> But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are saying." ...</p>	<p><sup>57</sup> But he denied Him, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him."</p>
<p>John 18:25 Now Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Therefore they said to him, "You are not also [one] of His disciples, are you?"</p>	<p><a href="#">Matthew 26:71</a> And when he had gone out to the gateway, another [girl] saw him and said to those [who were] there, "This [fellow] also was with Jesus of Nazareth."</p>	<p><a href="#">Mark 14:68</a> ... And he went out on the porch, and a rooster crowed. <sup>69</sup> And the servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by,</p>	<p>Luke 22:58 And after a little while another saw him and said, "You also are of them."</p>
<p>He denied [it] and said, "I am not!"—</p>	<p><sup>72</sup> But again he denied with an oath, "I do not know the Man!"</p>	<p><sup>70</sup> But he denied it again. ...</p>	<p>But Peter said, "Man, I am not!"</p>
<p>John 18:19 The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine.</p>			
<p><sup>20</sup> Jesus answered him, "I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. <sup>21</sup> "Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said."</p>			
<p><sup>22</sup> And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, "Do You answer the high priest like that?"</p>			
<p><sup>23</sup> Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?"—</p>			

<p>John 18:26 One of the servants of the high priest, a relative [of him] whose ear Peter cut off, said, "Did I not see you in the garden with Him?" <sup>27</sup> Peter then denied again;</p>	<p>Matthew 26:73 And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are [one] of them, for your speech betrays you."</p>	<p>Mark 14:70 ... And a little later those who stood by said to Peter again, "Surely you are [one] of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows [it]."</p>	<p>Luke 22:59 Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, "Surely this [fellow] also was with Him, for he is a Galilean."</p>
<p>and immediately a rooster crowed. <a href="#">John 18:13-27 NKJV</a></p>	<p><sup>74</sup> Then he began to curse and swear, [saying], "I do not know the Man!" Immediately a rooster crowed.</p>	<p><sup>71</sup> Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this Man of whom you speak!" <sup>72</sup> A second time [the] rooster crowed. ...</p>	<p><sup>60</sup> But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying!" Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed.</p>
<p>Luke 22:61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." <sup>62</sup> So Peter went out and wept bitterly. <a href="#">Luke 22:54-62 NKJV</a></p>	<p>Matthew 26:75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly. <a href="#">Matthew 26:69-75</a></p>	<p>Mark 14:72 ... Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And when he thought about it, he wept. <a href="#">Mark 14:54-72 NKJV</a></p>	

John, as he usually does, started out in [verse 13](#) by giving us a little background information about some of the people involved. He tells us that Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the High Priest that year. A little later in [verses 21,22](#) he was referred to as the High Priest. So, was Annas the High Priest or not? The answer is yes and no. Originally, I believe the office of High Priest was an appointment for life.

[Numbers 35:25](#) 'So the congregation shall deliver the manslayer from the hand of the avenger of blood, and the congregation shall return him to the city of refuge where he had fled, and he shall remain there until the death of the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil. [Number 35:25 NKJV](#)

Aaron was the first High Priest, and it was God's command that his descendants were to occupy that as well as the other priestly offices.

[Exodus 27:21](#) "In the tabernacle of meeting, outside the veil which [is] before the Testimony, Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening until morning before the LORD. [It shall be] a statute forever to their generations on behalf of the children of Israel. [Exodus 27:21 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 29:29](#) "And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons' after him, to be anointed in them and to be consecrated in them. [Exodus 29:29 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 30:30](#) "And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that [they] may minister to Me as priests. [Exodus 30:30 NKJV](#)

I believe genealogy was very important to Jews, but because of this command from God, it was especially important to descendants of Aaron, in order to prove eligibility to serve as priests. I found a pretty exhaustive list of High Priests in a [Jewish Encyclopedia website](#).<sup>487</sup> It seems to me that when there was no monarchy, the office of High Priest was the highest office in the land and hence had become highly politicized. Undoubtedly during the time of Jesus, it was very political and the Romans through Herod probably exerted their power over the Jews in the appointment of that office. In this particular case, it is pretty universally accepted that Annas had been High Priest but had been replaced by others, Caiaphas his son-in-law, being the current one. Apparently Annas was still considered by the Jews, perhaps because of his age, or some suggest his presidency over the Sanhedrin as an authority in the nation. I also think that just as some may still refer to former United States presidents as "president," Annas probably was still referred to as High Priest.

So, what was Annas trying to accomplish by his questioning? I believe he was fishing for something that he could use against Jesus in a Roman court. The majority of the Sanhedrin had already accused Jesus of being a Sabbath breaker and a blasphemer, so they didn't need any other evidence from their perspective, but they knew those accusations would not get them what they wanted in a Roman court, which was the death penalty.

I found it interesting that John used his connections to get himself and Peter into the courtyard showing that he was not trying to hide his association with Jesus. Peter on the other hand was apparently trying to mingle with the rabble, where he would hopefully not be recognized, or suspected as being a follower of Jesus. John probably got as close as he could so he could watch and listen to the proceedings. Peter who was trying to hide his identity, but could probably not hide his true feelings, had perfectly placed himself in a position to deny his Lord. Ellen White wrote:

Peter had not designed that his real character should be known. In assuming an air of indifference he had placed himself on the enemy's ground, and he became an easy prey to temptation. If he had been called to fight for his Master, he would have been a courageous soldier; but when the finger of scorn was pointed at him, he proved himself a coward. Many who do not shrink from active warfare for their Lord are driven by ridicule to deny their faith. By associating with those whom they should avoid, they place themselves in the way of temptation. They invite the enemy to tempt them, and are led to say and do that of which under other circumstances they would never have been guilty. The disciple of Christ who in our day disguises his faith through dread of suffering or reproach denies his Lord as really as did Peter in the judgment hall.

Peter tried to show no interest in the trial of his Master, but his heart was wrung with sorrow as he heard the cruel taunts, and saw the abuse He was suffering. More than this, he was surprised and angry that Jesus should humiliate Himself and His followers by submitting to such treatment. In order to conceal his true feelings, he endeavored to join with the persecutors of Jesus in their untimely jests. But his appearance was unnatural. He was acting a lie, and while seeking to talk unconcernedly he could not restrain expressions of indignation at the abuse heaped upon his Master. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p712](#)<sup>488</sup>

I could ask the same question about Peter that I asked about Judas, both of whose actions Jesus predicted mere hours before. Did he have a choice, or was he predestined to betray his Master? My belief is the same as it was for Judas, which is that Jesus merely told them what He had observed them choose. The strange thing, especially in the

---

<sup>487</sup> <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/7689-high-priest#anchor7>

<sup>488</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p712.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=712>



case of Peter is that even though he denied so vehemently that he would betray Jesus, he still did it. Even the foreknowledge didn't result in a change in his action.

---

What do you believe?

- Why was John not afraid to reveal his identity, and why wasn't he persecuted at this time because of his connection with Jesus?
- Is it possible that some of those confronting Peter would merely have wanted to ask him about Jesus if he had not denied the connection?
- Do you think Peter could have chosen to not betray Jesus?

## Jesus taken to stand before Caiaphas

[Matthew 26:57,63-68](#), [Mark 14:53,55-65](#), [Luke 22:63-71](#), [John 18:24](#)<sup>489</sup>

[John 18:24](#) Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

[Matthew 26:57](#) And those who had laid hold

of Jesus led [Him] away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.—

[Mark 14:53](#) And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes.—

[Luke 22:66](#) As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council,

[Matthew 26:59](#) Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death,<sup>60</sup> but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. ...

[Mark 14:55](#) Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none.<sup>56</sup> For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree.<sup>57</sup> Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying,

[Matthew 26:60](#) ... But at last two false witnesses came forward<sup>61</sup> and said, "This [fellow] said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'"<sup>62</sup> And the high priest arose and said to Him, "Do You answer nothing? What [is it] these men testify against You?"<sup>63</sup> But Jesus kept silent. ...

[Mark 14:58](#)

"We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.'"<sup>59</sup> But not even then did their testimony agree.<sup>60</sup> And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, "Do You answer nothing? What [is it] these men testify against You?"<sup>61</sup> But He kept silent and answered nothing. ...

[Luke 22:66](#) ... saying,<sup>67</sup> "If You are the Christ, tell us." But

He said to them, "If I tell you, you will by no means believe.<sup>68</sup> And if I also ask [you], you will by no means answer Me or let [Me] go.<sup>69</sup> "Hereafter

[Matthew 26:64](#) ... Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see ...

[Mark 14:62](#) ... And you will see ...

the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God."<sup>70</sup> [Daniel 7:13](#) "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, [One] like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! ... [Daniel 7:13 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 26:64](#) ... the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."<sup>71</sup>—

[Mark 14:62](#) ... the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."

---

<sup>489</sup> Strong. p341. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/340/mode/2up>

Luke 22:70 Then they all said, "Are You then the Son of God?"

So He said to them, "You [rightly] say that I am."

<sup>71</sup> And they said, "What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth." —

[Luke 22:63](#) Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him.

<sup>64</sup> And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, "Prophecy! Who is the one who struck You?" <sup>65</sup> And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him.

[Luke 22:63-71 NKJV](#)

Matthew 26:63 ... And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!" <sup>64</sup> Jesus said to him, "[It is as] you said. ...

<sup>65</sup> Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy!

What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy!

<sup>66</sup> "What do you think?" They answered and said, "He is deserving of death."

Matthew 26:67 Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck [Him] with the palms of their hands,

<sup>68</sup> saying, "Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?" [Matthew 26:63-68 NKJV](#)

Mark 14:63 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? <sup>64</sup> "You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

Mark 14:65 Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him,

"Prophecy!" And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands. [Mark 14:55-65 NKJV](#)

According to Luke day had dawned by the time they brought Jesus to the palace of Caiaphas. What occurred before Annas earlier in the morning was probably a preliminary hearing to try to determine the best options to achieve their goal of killing Jesus. Now it appears the whole council, is assembled for a trial, but they are still searching for a crime to accuse Him of. Jewish law required at least two witnesses in order to put someone to death.

[Deuteronomy 17:6](#) "Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness. [Deuteronomy 17:6 NKJV](#)

Now the priests were trying to find more than one person who could provide eye or ear witness accounts that were consistent with each other and could be used in Roman court to secure the death penalty. They had no problem resorting to false testimony, but as is usually the case when not simply telling the truth, there are often inconsistencies between statements from different people. They knew the temple was a symbol of pride, not only for them but for the Romans as well. Herod had invested a great deal of time and resources to turn it into one of the wonders of the world. They finally found two people who testified that Jesus said He would destroy the temple. But these were false statements because Jesus never said He would destroy the temple. This is what He actually said:

[John 2:18](#) So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?" <sup>19</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." <sup>20</sup> Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" <sup>21</sup> But He was speaking of the temple of His body. [John 2:18-21 NKJV](#)

Notice, Jesus didn't say He would destroy the temple. The implication was that His questioners would destroy the temple, His body, and He would raise it up in three days. Even if He had said He would destroy it, that should hardly have been considered a capital offense.

They realized they needed more, so they pressed on. Jesus had not often responded directly to their questions about who He was and where He came from, but He had on occasion. They probably remembered the following exchange they had with Him and now they wished to get Him to make this statement in front of the whole council so they could accuse Him of blasphemy.

[John 8:58](#) Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."<sup>59</sup> Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. [John 8:58-59 NKJV](#)

In the previous chapter I mentioned the illegality of the trial by night, but here was another of their own laws they were willing to break if it would get them what they wanted. Jewish law we just read above, given to Moses by God, stated that the death penalty required at least two witnesses, but the High Priest and the scribes and elders, which composed the council, were willing to pronounce Jesus worthy of death on His own testimony.

Finally, those handling Jesus, probably temple guards and the mob were treating Him terribly. They were punching and slapping Him, spitting on Him, blind folding and mocking Him, and saying blasphemous things against Him. Ellen White suggest that the priests and rulers probably even joined in the mocking.

When the condemnation of Jesus was pronounced by the judges, a satanic fury took possession of the people. The roar of voices was like that of wild beasts. The crowd made a rush toward Jesus, crying, He is guilty, put Him to death! Had it not been for the Roman soldiers, Jesus would not have lived to be nailed to the cross of Calvary. He would have been torn in pieces before His judges, had not Roman authority interfered, and by force of arms restrained the violence of the mob.

Heathen men were angry at the brutal treatment of one against whom nothing had been proved. The Roman officers declared that the Jews in pronouncing condemnation upon Jesus were infringing upon the Roman power, and that it was even against the Jewish law to condemn a man to death upon his own testimony. This intervention brought a momentary lull in the proceedings; but the Jewish leaders were dead alike to pity and to shame.

Priests and rulers forgot the dignity of their office, and abused the Son of God with foul epithets. They taunted Him with His parentage. They declared that His presumption in proclaiming Himself the Messiah made Him deserving of the most ignominious death. The most dissolute men engaged in infamous abuse of the Saviour. An old garment was thrown over His head, and His persecutors struck Him in the face, saying, "Prophecy unto us, Thou Christ, Who is he that smote Thee?" When the garment was removed, one poor wretch spat in His face.

[White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p715<sup>490</sup>](#)

---

What do you believe?

- Do you think there were members of the council, or Sanhedrin that were sympathetic to Jesus, that were present that day, or do you think they were all excluded?
- Do you think the Romans would consider a boast to be able to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days a crime worthy of death?

---

<sup>490</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p715.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=715>

- What would cause some of the mob, who most likely had no reason to hate Jesus, treat Him so terribly?

## Jesus stands before Pilate

[Matthew 27:1-2,11-12](#), [Mark 15:1-5](#), [Luke 23:1-7](#), [John 18:28-38](#)<sup>491</sup>

<p><a href="#">John 18:28</a> Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover.</p>	<p><a href="#">Matthew 27:1</a> When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. <sup>2</sup> And when they had bound Him, they led Him away</p>	<p><a href="#">Mark 15:1</a> Immediately, in the morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council; and they bound Jesus, and delivered [Him] to Pilate.</p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 23:1</a> Then the whole multitude of them arose and led Him away,</p>
	<p>and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor. <a href="#">Matthew 27:1-2 NKJV</a></p>	<p>and delivered [Him] to Pilate.</p>	<p>and led Him to Pilate.</p>

<sup>29</sup> Pilate then went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this Man?"

<sup>30</sup> They answered and said to him, "If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you."

<sup>31</sup> Then Pilate said to them, "You take Him and judge Him according to your law." Therefore the Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death," <sup>32</sup> that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die. [John 18:28-32 NKJV](#)

[Luke 23:2](#) And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this [fellow] perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King."

<p><a href="#">John 18:33</a> Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him,</p>	<p><a href="#">Matthew 27:11</a> Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying,</p>	<p><a href="#">Mark 15:2</a> Then Pilate asked Him,</p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 23:3</a> Then Pilate asked Him, saying,</p>
<p>"Are You the King of the Jews?"</p>	<p>"Are You the King of the Jews?"</p>	<p>"Are You the King of the Jews?"</p>	<p>"Are You the King of the Jews?"</p>

<sup>34</sup> Jesus answered him, "Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?" <sup>35</sup> Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?" <sup>36</sup> Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." <sup>37</sup> Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?"

<p>Jesus answered, "You say [rightly] that I am a king. For</p>	<p><a href="#">Matthew 27:11</a> ... Jesus said to him, "[It is as] you say."</p>	<p><a href="#">Mark 15:2</a> ... He answered and said to him, "[It is as] you</p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 23:3</a> ... He answered him and said, "[It is as] you say."</p>
---	---	---	--

<sup>491</sup> Strong. p344. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/344/mode/2up>

this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." <sup>38</sup> Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all. [John 18:28-38 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 27:12](#) And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. <sup>13</sup> Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?" <sup>14</sup> But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly. [Matthew 27:11-14 NKJV](#)

[Mark 15:3](#) And the chief priests accused Him of many things, but He answered nothing. <sup>4</sup> Then Pilate asked Him again, saying, "Do You answer nothing? See how many things they testify against You!" <sup>5</sup> But Jesus still answered nothing, so that Pilate marveled. [Mark 15:1-5 NKJV](#)

[Luke 23:4](#) So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no fault in this Man." <sup>5</sup> But they were the more fierce, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place." <sup>6</sup> When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked if the Man were a Galilean. <sup>7</sup> And as soon as he knew that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. [Luke 23:1-7 NKJV](#)

Now that it was daylight, not to mention with a couple preliminary trials and behind them, the Jews brought Jesus to Pilate. They were not looking for a trial, but merely a rubber stamp on their sentence, so they could put Jesus to death. I suspect Pilate had done this before, so they were probably expecting this to be done quickly. Ellen White said:

When the Saviour was brought into the judgment hall, Pilate looked upon Him with no friendly eyes. The Roman governor had been called from his bedchamber in haste, and he determined to do his work as quickly as possible. He was prepared to deal with the prisoner with magisterial severity. Assuming his severest expression, he turned to see what kind of man he had to examine, that he had been called from his repose at so early an hour. He knew that it must be someone whom the Jewish authorities were anxious to have tried and punished with haste.

Pilate looked at the men who had Jesus in charge, and then his gaze rested searchingly on Jesus. He had had to deal with all kinds of criminals; but never before had a man bearing marks of such goodness and nobility been brought before him. On His face he saw no sign of guilt, no expression of fear, no boldness or defiance. He saw a man of calm and dignified bearing, whose countenance bore not the marks of a criminal, but the signature of heaven.

Christ's appearance made a favorable impression upon Pilate. His better nature was roused. He had heard of Jesus and His works. His wife had told him something of the wonderful deeds performed by the Galilean prophet, who cured the sick and raised the dead. Now this revived as a dream in Pilate's mind. He recalled rumors that he had heard from several sources. He resolved to demand of the Jews their charges against the prisoner.

Who is this Man, and wherefore have ye brought Him? he said. What accusation bring ye against Him? The Jews were disconcerted. Knowing that they could not substantiate their charges against Christ, they did not desire a public examination. They answered that He was a deceiver called Jesus of Nazareth.

Again Pilate asked, "What accusation bring ye against this Man?" The priests did not answer his question, but in words that showed their irritation, they said, "If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up unto thee." When those composing the Sanhedrin, the first men of the nation, bring to you a man they deem

worthy of death, is there need to ask for an accusation against him? They hoped to impress Pilate with a sense of their importance, and thus lead him to accede to their request without going through many preliminaries. They were eager to have their sentence ratified; for they knew that the people who had witnessed Christ's marvelous works could tell a story very different from the fabrication they themselves were now rehearsing.

The priests thought that with the weak and vacillating Pilate they could carry through their plans without trouble. Before this he had signed the death warrant hastily, condemning to death men they knew were not worthy of death. In his estimation the life of a prisoner was of little account; whether he were innocent or guilty was of no special consequence. The priests hoped that Pilate would now inflict the death penalty on Jesus without giving Him a hearing. This they besought as a favor on the occasion of their great national festival.

But there was something in the prisoner that held Pilate back from this. He dared not do it. He read the purposes of the priests. He remembered how, not long before, Jesus had raised Lazarus, a man that had been dead four days; and he determined to know, before signing the sentence of condemnation, what were the charges against Him, and whether they could be proved. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p723](#)<sup>492</sup>

I think the priests knew that Pilate had no problem murdering innocent people in the name of keeping order.<sup>493</sup> According to Philo Judaeus, "he frequently would, without any cause given, put men to excessive torments, and arbitrarily condemn to death others, without any sentence of law."<sup>494</sup> I think the rebelliousness of the Jews probably tried his patience and brought out these baser parts of his nature, but Pilate was probably not at all used to seeing an accused behave as Jesus did. It quickly became obvious to him that Jesus was not guilty of any of the things the priests were accusing Him of. He must have at first determined to take a stand to not be pushed around by these annoying priests who were trying to manipulate him for their own purpose. Throughout the whole farce of a trial up to this point Jesus had made a point of not defending Himself against false accusations. He answered questions about His identity and His relationship to God, and in this case probably answered some questions in order to bring light to Pilate. But Pilate saw that he was not getting anywhere by trying to behave as a just judge, and when he realized that Jesus was from Galilee, he saw a way out. Galilee was under King Herod's jurisdiction, who just happened to be in Jerusalem at the time.

---

What do you believe?

- Why do you think the Romans did not allow nations under their control to put people to death without their approval?
- Why do you think Jesus answered Pilate's questions?
- Why do you think the Jews didn't bring any witnesses before Pilate?

---

<sup>492</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p723.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=723>

<sup>493</sup> Josephus, Flavius. *Antiquities of the Jews*. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2848/2848-h/2848-h.htm#link182HCH0003>

<sup>494</sup> *The Life of Pontius Pilate*. London, 1753, p13.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=St1bAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA13#v=onepage&q&f=false>

## Jesus stands before Herod after which He is returned to Pilate

[Luke 23:8-24](#), [Matthew 27:15-30,3-10](#), [Mark 15:6-18](#), [John 18:39-19:16](#), [Acts 1:18-19](#)<sup>495</sup>

[Luke 23:8](#) Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long [time] to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. <sup>9</sup> Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. <sup>10</sup> And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. <sup>11</sup> Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked [Him], arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. <sup>12</sup> That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other.

<sup>13</sup> Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, <sup>14</sup> said to them, "You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined [Him] in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; <sup>15</sup> "no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him. <sup>16</sup> "I will therefore chastise Him and release [Him]"

[Matthew 27:15](#) Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished.—

[Mark 15:6](#) Now at the feast he was accustomed to releasing one prisoner to them, whomever they requested.—

[Luke 23:17](#) [Now he was obliged to release to them at the feast one prisoner.] —

[John 18:39](#) "But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. ...

<sup>17</sup> Therefore, when they had gathered together,

[Mark 15:8](#) Then the multitude, crying aloud, began to ask [him to do] just as he had always done for them.

Pilate said to them,

<sup>9</sup> But Pilate answered them, saying,

"Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" <sup>18</sup> For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.

"Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?"

[John 18:39](#) ... Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?"

<sup>10</sup> For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.—

<sup>19</sup> While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him."—

<sup>16</sup> And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas.—

[Mark 15:7](#) And there was one named Barabbas, [who was] chained with his fellow rebels; they had committed murder in the rebellion.—

[Luke 23:19](#) who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder.—

[John 18:40](#) ... Now Barabbas was a robber.—

<sup>20</sup> But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. <sup>21</sup> The governor answered and said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" ...

[Mark 15:11](#) But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them.

<sup>495</sup> Strong. p347. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/346/mode/2up>

[Matthew 27:21](#) ...

They said, "Barabbas!"

<sup>22</sup> Pilate said to them,

"What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"

[They] all said to him, "Let Him be crucified!"

<sup>23</sup> Then the governor said, "Why, what evil has He done?"

But they cried out all the more, saying, "Let Him be crucified!"

<sup>24</sup> When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather [that] a tumult was rising, he took water and washed [his] hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see [to it]."

<sup>25</sup> And all the people answered and said, "His blood [be] on us and on our children."

<sup>26</sup> Then he

released Barabbas to them;

and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered [Him] to be crucified.

[Matthew 27:27](#) Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. <sup>28</sup> And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. <sup>29</sup> When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put [it] on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" <sup>30</sup> Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. [Mathew 27:15-30 NKJV](#)

[John 19:4](#) Pilate then went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him."

[Luke 23:18](#) But they cried out all together, saying, "Away with this man, and release for us Barabbas!"

[Mark 15:12](#) Pilate answered and said to them again, "What then do you want me to do [with Him] whom you call the King of the Jews?" <sup>13</sup> So they cried out again, "Crucify Him!"

<sup>14</sup> Then Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has He done?"

But they cried out all the more, "Crucify Him!"

[Mark 15:15](#) So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them;

and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged [Him], to be crucified.

[Mark 15:16](#) <sup>16</sup> Then the soldiers led Him away into the hall called Praetorium, and they called together the whole garrison.

<sup>17</sup> And they clothed Him with purple; and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it on His [head],

<sup>18</sup> and began to salute Him,

"Hail, King of the Jews!" <sup>19</sup> Then they struck Him on the head with a reed and spat on Him; and bowing the knee, they worshiped Him. [Mark 15:6-18 NKJV](#)

[John 18:40](#) So they cried out again, saying, "Not this Man, but Barabbas." ...

[Luke 23:20](#) Pilate, therefore, wishing to release Jesus, again called out to them.

<sup>21</sup> But they shouted, saying, "Crucify [Him], crucify Him!"

<sup>22</sup> Then he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let [Him] go."

<sup>23</sup> But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed.

[Luke 23:24](#) So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested. <sup>25</sup> And he released to them the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will. [Luke 23:8-24 NKJV](#)

[John 19:1](#) So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged [Him].

[John 19:2](#) And the soldiers

twisted a crown of thorns and put [it] on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe.

<sup>3</sup> Then they said,

"Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck Him with their hands.



<sup>5</sup> Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And [Pilate] said to them, "Behold the Man!"

<sup>6</sup> Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify [Him], crucify [Him]!" Pilate said to them, "You take Him and crucify [Him], for I find no fault in Him."

<sup>7</sup> The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."

<sup>8</sup> Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, <sup>9</sup> and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.

<sup>10</sup> Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?"

<sup>11</sup> Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."

<sup>12</sup> From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, "If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar."

<sup>13</sup> When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called [The] Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. <sup>14</sup> ... And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!"

<sup>15</sup> But they cried out, "Away with [Him], away with [Him]! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!"

<sup>16</sup> Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus and led [Him] away. — <sup>14</sup> Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. ... [John 18:39-19:16 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 27:3](#) Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, <sup>4</sup> saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What [is that] to us? You see [to it]!"

[Matthew 27:5](#) Then he threw down the pieces of silver [Acts 1:18](#) (Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling in the temple and departed, and went and headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out. hanged himself.

[Matthew 27:6](#) But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood." <sup>7</sup> And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

[Matthew 27:8](#) Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. <sup>9</sup> Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, ...

[Acts 1:19](#) And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.) [Acts 1:18-19 NKJV](#)

Matthew 27:9 ... "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced,<sup>10</sup> "and gave them for the potter's field, as the LORD directed me." [Matthew 27:3-10 NKJV](#)

[Zechariah 11:12](#) ... So they weighed out for my wages thirty [pieces] of silver.  
<sup>13</sup> And the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter ... [Zechariah 11:12-13 NKJV](#)

First let's begin by addressing the Potters field prophecy. How do we explain that [Matthew 27:9](#) says Jeremiah, but those words are not found in our modern translations in Jeremiah but in Zechariah? Matthew Henry has this to say:

The words quoted are found in the prophecy of Zechariah, ch. 11:12. How they are here said to be spoken by Jeremy is a difficult question; but the credit of Christ's doctrine does not depend upon it; for that proves itself perfectly divine, though there should appear something human as to small circumstances in the penmen of it. The Syriac version, which is ancient, reads only, It was spoken by the prophet, not naming any, whence some have thought that Jeremy was added by some scribe; some think that the whole volume of the prophets, being in one book, and the prophecy of Jeremiah put first, it might not be improper, currente calamo-for a transcriber to quote any passage out of that volume, under his name. The Jews used to say, The spirit of Jeremiah was in Zechariah, and so they were as one prophet. Some suggest that it was spoken by Jeremiah, but written by Zechariah; or that Jeremiah wrote the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of Zechariah.<sup>496</sup>

I would add one more possible explanation could be that at the time, there were some other writings of Jeremiah available that are not in our modern Bible. I realize that these explanations will probably not satisfy someone who is trying to use this discrepancy to prove the Bible is not inspired. The second thing that comes to mind when I read these verses in Zechariah is that it doesn't really seem like a prophecy, but that some key words matched. But then again, I think many of the prophecies are that way. For example, many of the prophecies quoted from the Psalms sound like David writing about his own experiences, but he was inspired to use certain words that would correlate with an incident in the life of Christ. For example, the following verse from Psalm 41 was quoted as being a fulfillment of Judas' betrayal.

[Psalm 41:9](#) Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted,  
Who ate my bread,  
Has lifted up [his] heel against me. [Psalm 41:9 NKJV](#)

But if you read the chapter it sounds like David writing about enemies and false friends. In fact, probably many if not most prophecies from the Old Testament are like this.

I mentioned in the previous chapter that Jesus was not interested in defending Himself. Since, Herod didn't ask Him any of the questions He was inclined to answer, He simply remained silent. Now remember, this was the King Herod who had beheaded John the Baptist, but also liked listening to him, so perhaps he had some guilt or regret. The thought had occurred to Him that maybe Jesus was John the Baptist come back to life and this was an opportunity to save him and appease his conscience.

[Mark 6:14](#) Now King Herod heard [of Him], for His name had become well known. And he said, "John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him."

<sup>15</sup> Others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets."

<sup>496</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat\\_027.cfm?a=956009](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat_027.cfm?a=956009)

<sup>16</sup> But when Herod heard, he said, "This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!" <sup>17</sup> For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. <sup>18</sup> Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

<sup>19</sup> Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; <sup>20</sup> for Herod feared John, knowing that he [was] a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. [Mark 6:14-20 NKJV](#)

Ellen White had the following to say about Jesus' silence before Herod.

Herod's conscience was now far less sensitive than when he had trembled with horror at the request of Herodias for the head of John the Baptist. For a time he had felt the keen stings of remorse for his terrible act; but his moral perceptions had become more and more degraded by his licentious life. Now his heart had become so hardened that he could even boast of the punishment he had inflicted upon John for daring to reprove him. And he now threatened Jesus, declaring repeatedly that he had power to release or to condemn Him. But no sign from Jesus gave evidence that He heard a word.

Herod was irritated by this silence. It seemed to indicate utter indifference to his authority. To the vain and pompous king, open rebuke would have been less offensive than to be thus ignored. Again he angrily threatened Jesus, who still remained unmoved<sup>497</sup> and silent. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p730](#)<sup>497</sup>

In spite of His irritation with Jesus' silence, Herod realized the same thing Pilate had, which was that Jesus was innocent and it was jealousy and hatred that motivated the Jews that accused Him. Herod decided that He would NOT take upon himself the responsibility for the death of Jesus, so He sent Him back to Pilate. Now apparently there had been some kind of quarrel between the two rulers. Some think it was because Pilate had murdered some Galileans, whom Herod considered his subjects.<sup>498</sup>

[Luke 13:1](#) There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. [Luke 13:1 NKJV](#)

With Jesus being from Galilee, Pilate had thought he would defer to Herod, and let him be responsible for deciding the fate of one of his own subjects. In doing this, he had also hoped to smooth over the quarrel the two had going. According to [Luke 23:12](#), at least Pilate succeeded on that account, because it says they became friends after this, but now he still had Jesus to deal with.

Before Pilate again, the priests continued to apply pressure to try to get what they wanted. They knew that Pilate had attracted the attention of the Emperor for his inability to keep peace in Judea, and this was a card they were willing to play. The Jews were never happy about the fact that they were subject to a ruling power, and there were among them, people who were willing to use violence in an attempt to annoy and destabilize the foreign administration. To make matters worse, Pilate seemed to try to irritate the Jews and to try to get them to react, possibly so that he could use deadly force against them. Even though we know the Jews would have loved to have a king to lead a rebellion against the Romans, they were now willing to accuse Jesus of claiming to be this type of king in an attempt to secure His condemnation. But Pilate wasn't buying it. The demeanor of Jesus combined with the

<sup>497</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p730.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=730>

<sup>498</sup> Josephus, Flavius. *Antiquities of the Jews*. Footnote 8. [http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2848/2848-h/2848-h.htm#link202H\\_FOOT](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2848/2848-h/2848-h.htm#link202H_FOOT)

idea that they were trying to accuse one of their own as being a threat to Rome just didn't add up. Pilate tried standing Jesus side-by-side with Barabbas, a convicted murderer and thief, to see if he could appeal to the mob's better nature but that didn't work. He could not afford for word to get back to Rome that he was not willing to kill someone accused of insurrection and rebellion. He tried having Jesus scourged, hoping that would satisfy His accusers, but it did not. He was beginning to lose his resolve to not condemn an innocent man to death, and even washed his hands, declaring that he was not responsible. In response to this, the priests led the mob in the sad chant, "His blood [be] on us and on our children." [\[Matthew 27:25\]](#) But, then Pilate suddenly became alarmed when he heard that Jesus had claimed to be the Son of God. Now he was worried for a different reason. His wife had sent him a message warning him that she had had a dream about Jesus and that he should not have anything to do with killing Him. So, he took Jesus aside and wanted to question Him on this topic. By this time Jesus must have known that Pilate was not seeking truth but was only concerned about his own skin. So, He didn't bother trying to explain His divinity to Pilate, but instead remained silent. The silent treatment annoyed Pilate but he was still not ready to give in yet. By now, the priests and the mob were in a satanic frenzy, all shouting for crucifixion. They were so desperate by this point that they were even willing to embrace Caesar as their king in order to secure the condemnation and death of Jesus. Pilate finally made his decision. He didn't want to condemn an innocent man but he thought it preferable to the Emperor hearing that he was not willing to punish someone accused of insurrection against Rome.

Finally, I would like to comment on the scourging that was so casually mentioned. For those who have seen a movie of the crucifixion, you may have an idea what this entailed. In my limited internet search, I didn't find a lot of secular historical descriptions of this type of punishment by the Romans. I did find a number of religious based articles mostly related to the scourging of Jesus. This was a procedure that is generally believed to be performed with a multi-tailed whip generally made of leather, with the addition of hard or sharp objects attached to the ends. Sharp objects were intended to cut and even bite and tear when pulled back.<sup>499</sup> Picture lead balls and sharp pieces of metal or bone attached to the end of the whip, applied to the entire back side, with the person's hands bound to a post. Jewish law did not allow someone to be punished with more than forty lashes or strokes. It was pretty traditional for them to only give thirty-nine lashes, possibly to avoid accidentally giving more than forty, as Paul experience five times.

[Deuteronomy 25:1](#) "If there is a dispute between men, and they come to court, that [the judges] may judge them, and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked, <sup>2</sup> "then it shall be, if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, that the judge will cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence, according to his guilt, with a certain number of blows. <sup>3</sup> "Forty blows he may give him [and] no more, lest he should exceed this and beat him with many blows above these, and your brother be humiliated in your sight. [Deuteronomy 25:1-3 NKJV](#)

[2 Corinthians 11:24](#) From the Jews five times I received forty [stripes] minus one. [2 Corinthians 11:24 NKJV](#)

I don't know if the Romans had a limit on the number of lashes, but clearly a person could easily be killed with that type of punishment and they didn't want that, because then they couldn't be tortured on the cross. Some believe Jesus was actually scourged on two occasions, once when Pilate was trying to appease the crowd without killing Him, and the usual one that preceded a crucifixion. In any case it was an incredibly cruel and painful punishment

---

<sup>499</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scourge#Description>

that His accusers seemed to even enjoy. Ellen White suggests that Satan himself was in the mob, even leading them in their cruel treatment of Jesus.

Jesus was taken, faint with weariness and covered with wounds, and scourged in the sight of the multitude. "And the soldiers led Him away into the hall, called Praetorium, and they call together the whole band. And they clothed Him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about His head, and began to salute Him, Hail, King of the Jews! And they ... did spit upon Him, and bowing their knees worshiped Him." Occasionally some wicked hand snatched the reed that had been placed in His hand, and struck the crown upon His brow, forcing the thorns into His temples, and sending the blood trickling down His face and beard.

Wonder, O heavens! and be astonished, O earth! Behold the oppressor and the oppressed. A maddened throng enclose the Saviour of the world. Mocking and jeering are mingled with the coarse oaths of blasphemy. His lowly birth and humble life are commented upon by the unfeeling mob. His claim to be the Son of God is ridiculed, and the vulgar jest and insulting sneer are passed from lip to lip.

Satan led the cruel mob in its abuse of the Saviour. It was his purpose to provoke Him to retaliation if possible, or to drive Him to perform a miracle to release Himself, and thus break up the plan of salvation. One stain upon His human life, one failure of His humanity to endure the terrible test, and the Lamb of God would have been an imperfect offering, and the redemption of man a failure. But He who by a command could bring the heavenly host to His aid—He who could have driven that mob in terror from His sight by the flashing forth of His divine majesty—submitted with perfect calmness to the coarsest insult and outrage.

Christ's enemies had demanded a miracle as evidence of His divinity. They had evidence far greater than any they had sought. As their cruelty degraded His torturers below humanity into the likeness of Satan, so did His meekness and patience exalt Jesus above humanity, and prove His kinship to God. His abasement was the pledge of His exaltation. The blood drops of agony that from His wounded temples flowed down His face and beard were the pledge of His anointing with "the oil of gladness" (Hebrews 1:9.) as our great high priest. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p734](#)<sup>500</sup>

---

What do you believe?

- What do you think it means to be responsible for the death of an innocent person?
- Do you think the Jews did bear responsibility?
- Do you think Pilate was absolved of responsibility when he ultimately allowed the crucifixion to happen?

---

<sup>500</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p734.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=734>

## The crucifixion and death of Jesus

[Matthew 27:31-50,55-56](#), [Mark 15:20-37,40-41](#), [Luke 23:26-46,49](#), [John 19:16-30](#)<sup>501</sup>

[Matthew 27:31](#) And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His [own] clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.

[Mark 15:20](#) And when they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him.

[John 19:16](#) Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus and led [Him] away. <sup>17</sup> And He, bearing His cross, went out ...

[Matthew 27:32](#) Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name.

[Mark 15:21](#) Then they compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear His cross.

[Luke 23:26](#) Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear [it] after Jesus.

Him they compelled to bear His cross.

[Luke 23:27](#) And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him.

<sup>28</sup> But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. <sup>29</sup> "For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed [are] the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!'

<sup>30</sup> "Then they will begin 'to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!" ' <sup>31</sup> "For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?"—

[Hosea 10:8](#) ... They shall say to the mountains, "Cover us!" And to the hills, "Fall on us!" [Hosea 10:8 NKJV](#)

[Mark 15:22](#) And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull.

[Matthew 27:33](#) And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull,

[Luke 23:33](#) And when they had come to the place called Calvary, ...

[John 19:17](#) ... to a place called [the Place] of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha,

[Mark 15:23](#) Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take [it].—

[Matthew 27:34](#) they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted [it], He would not drink.

[Mark 15:25](#) Now it was the third hour, and they crucified Him.—

[Matthew 27:35](#) Then they crucified Him, ... —

[Luke 23:33](#) ... there they crucified Him, ... —

[Mark 15:27](#) With Him they also crucified two robbers, one on His right and the other on His left. <sup>28</sup> So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And He was numbered with the transgressors."—

<sup>38</sup> Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left.—

[Luke 23:32](#) There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. — [Luke 23:33](#) and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left.

[John 19:18](#) where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center.

[Isaiah 53:12](#) ... And He was numbered with the transgressors, ... [Isaiah 53:12 NKJV](#)

<sup>501</sup> String. p355. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/354/mode/2up>

[Luke 23:34](#) Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots. ... —

<a href="#">John 19:19</a> Now Pilate wrote a title and put [it] on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.	<a href="#">Matthew 27:37</a> And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.—	<a href="#">Mark 15:26</a> And the inscription of His accusation was written above: THE KING OF THE JEWS.—	<a href="#">Luke 23:38</a> And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.—
---	---	---	---

<sup>20</sup> Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, [and] Latin.

[John 19:21](#) Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'He said, 'I am the King of the Jews.' " ' ' <sup>22</sup> Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

<a href="#">John 19:23</a> Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece.	<a href="#">Matthew 27:35</a> ... and divided His garments,	<a href="#">Mark 15:24</a> And when they crucified Him, they divided His garments,	<a href="#">Luke 23:34</a> ... And they divided His garments
--	---	--	--

<sup>24</sup> They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be," that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says:

casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet:	casting lots for them [to determine] what every man should take.	and cast lots.
---	--	----------------

"They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots." Therefore the soldiers did these things.	"They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots."	<a href="#">Psalm 22:18</a> They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots. <a href="#">Psalm 22:18 NKJV</a>
--	--	--

[Matthew 27:36](#) Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there.—

<a href="#">Matthew 27:39</a> And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads <sup>40</sup> and saying, "You who destroy the temple and build [it] in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross."	<a href="#">Mark 15:29</a> And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! [You] who destroy the temple and build [it] in three days, <sup>30</sup> "save Yourself, and come down from the cross!"
--	--

Matthew 27:41 Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, <sup>42</sup> "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. <sup>43</sup> "He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.' "

[Luke 23:36](#) The soldiers also mocked Him, wine, <sup>37</sup> and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself."—

Luke 23:39 Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us." <sup>40</sup> But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? <sup>41</sup> "And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." <sup>42</sup> Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." <sup>43</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."—

[John 19:25](#) Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the [wife] of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

[Matthew 27:55](#) And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, <sup>56</sup> among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons. [Matthew 27:55-56 NKJV](#)

[Mark 15:40](#) There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome, <sup>41</sup> who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem. [Mark 15:40-41 NKJV](#)

[Luke 23:49](#) But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things. [Luke 23:49 NKJV](#)

John 19:26 When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" <sup>27</sup> Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own [home].

Mark 15:31 Likewise the chief priests also, mocking among themselves with the scribes, said, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. <sup>32</sup> "Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe." ... [Psalm 22:8](#) "... Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!" [Psalm 22:8 NKJV](#)

[Luke 23:35](#) And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God."

coming and offering Him sour

Mark 15:32 ... Even those who were crucified with Him reviled Him.—

Matthew 27:44 Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing.—



[Matthew 27:45](#) Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. <sup>46</sup> And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

[Mark 15:33](#) Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. <sup>34</sup> And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

[Luke 23:44](#) Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. <sup>45</sup> Then the sun was darkened, ... <sup>46</sup> And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, ...

[Psalm 22:1](#) ... My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? ... [Psalm 22:1 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 27:47](#) Some of those who stood there, when they heard [that], said, "This Man is calling for Elijah!" — <sup>49</sup> The rest said, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him." —

[Mark 15:35](#) Some of those who stood by, when they heard [that], said, "Look, He is calling for Elijah!" <sup>36</sup> ... "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down." —

[John 19:28](#) After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" <sup>29</sup> Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there;

and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put [it] on hyssop, and put [it] to His mouth. <sup>30</sup> So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" ...

[Matthew 27:48](#) Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled [it] with sour wine and put [it] on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink. —

[Mark 15:36](#) Then someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put [it] on a reed, and offered [it] to Him to drink, ...

[Luke 23:46](#) ... He said,

"Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.' "

Having said this, He breathed His last. [Luke 23:26-46 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 27:50](#) And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, ...

[Mark 15:37](#) And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, ...

[Psalm 31:5](#) Into Your hand I commit my spirit; ... [Psalm 31:5 NKJV](#)

[Mark 15:37](#) ... and breathed His last. [John 19:30](#) ... And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. [John 19:16-30 NKJV](#)

Crucifixion was an extremely cruel way to kill someone. It was not invented by the Romans but it was used extensively by them to punish rebels and people of lower class who had been condemned to death. The idea was to dehumanize them by stripping them naked, then inflicting multiple sources of excruciating pain, but at the same time prolonging the torture for days if possible, with death usually coming through suffocation. This was accomplished by hanging someone from a tree or poll from their arms. Sometimes there was a cross bar where the arms would be outstretched as Jesus apparently was. Hands or wrists were either tied or nailed to the cross so that when the body weight hung on them, it would not only be painful, but hard to breath. In order to prolong death, the feet or ankles would be tied or nailed to the cross in a way that would allow support of the body weight, thus making it easier for the person to take a breath. Of course this was done in a way that would cause extreme pain each time weight was put on the legs to take a breath. One of the methods that was used to hasten death was to break the legs, making it difficult to support the body weight

to breath. Crucifixion was considered so cruel and dehumanizing that Roman citizens could not be executed that way except in some cases of military desertion.<sup>502</sup> It was also intended to be a deterrent to rebellion or criminal behavior.

As I contemplate this, I wonder how people can be so cruel that they would be able to inflict such torture on a fellow human being. I think one of the ways people have justified this to themselves was to think themselves a higher form of life, than the slaves or poor that would be subject to crucifixion. I think another way this is justified is by hatred. In the case of the Roman/Jew relationship, rebels of a conquered people who would kill your own soldiers or citizens are easier to hate. Ultimately, I believe that it shows the nature of sin, that people would be able to justify torturing others this way, and that Satan could wish this upon his own creator.

There were at least seven instances of things said or done during the crucifixion that the Gospel writers pointed out fulfilled prophecy. To think that God would know the suffering that His own creation would inflict on Him, and yet willingly subject Himself to it is an incredible statement of His love. I think the love shown by God is the complete opposite of the hatred demonstrated by Satan and those who crucified Him.

In the timeline presented, Jesus was lifted up on the cross at the third hour of the day which would have been the equivalent of 9 AM Friday morning. There are other ideas and proposals about the day of the crucifixion, but I believe the day to be Friday. During the hours from 9 to noon, many were still mocking Jesus as He hung on the cross. Talk about kicking someone when they are down. I think Pilate was angry with himself for being manipulated by the Jews, and partly to spite them, he made a sign on which he wrote "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS." To make sure everyone could read it, he wrote it in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. So, in support of their claim that they had no king but Caesar, Pilate tried to make it appear that the priests were Roman sympathizers and wanted Jesus killed because the people were embracing Jesus as their king. They realized this and tried to get Pilate to change the sign, but he flatly refused.

Probably one of the brightest moments for Jesus on the cross was His conversation with the repentant thief. It is one of the best examples from the mouth of Jesus Himself that we are not saved by our good works, but only by accepting the gift of salvation that is offered to all, regardless of their past sins. It is unfortunate that this beautiful scene has become a source of contention for those who believe in death as sleep as opposed to the doorway to the afterlife. Since I include myself in this camp, I must try to explain what Jesus meant by the statement to the thief that made it sound like he would be in Paradise after he died that same day. Our most common argument is that the statement by Jesus as originally written does not have punctuation, which was of course added later by translators. Clearly the placement of the comma can have a big difference on the implication of His words.

- Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise
- Assuredly, I say to you today, you will be with Me in Paradise

In my opinion, I think the translators were influenced by their current beliefs regarding the state of the dead. The question is, if the Bible is the inspired Word of God, would that inspiration not extend to its translations as well? I believe it should and hence, we should try to understand the statement on the cross without arguing punctuation. But

---

<sup>502</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crucifixion>

before you can do that you must first understand what really happened, based on Jesus's own words after He was resurrected.

[John 20:17](#) Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and [to] My God and your God.' " [John 20:17 NKJV](#)

After His resurrection, Jesus Himself had still not been to heaven. I would say that even with the comma where it is, we can interpret it a couple ways that would still be consistent with John 20:17.

- When we accept Jesus and the gift of salvation that He offers, we are truly saved at that moment and in a way can experience paradise on earth.
- Knowing the thief would die that day, Jesus knew that the next thing he would experience upon waking from the sleep of death, would be the resurrection of the righteous.

Following this Strong chose to insert the naming of the faithful women who were there with Jesus at the cross. It should be noted that only one of the twelve disciples, John, was at the cross. These are the names or associations of the women who were there.

- Mary the mother of Jesus
- The sister of Mary the mother of Jesus
- Mary the wife of Clopas, who may have been the same person as the sister mentioned above
- Mary Magdalene
- Mary the mother of James and Joses
- The mother of the disciples, James and John, the sons of Zebedee
- Salome, who may be the same person as the mother of James and John mentioned above

Obviously, Mary was a very popular name among the Jews at that time. Wikipedia has an article that discusses the Mary's in the New Testament and who they possibly were.<sup>503</sup> I wrote an Appendix on the [Women at the cross and tomb](#), which also goes into detail about the possible relationships of these faithful women.

In the timeline of the crucifixion day, the next thing that is mentioned is the 6<sup>th</sup> hour of the day, or noon. The gospel record is very brief about the three hours from noon to 3 PM. Matthew, Mark and Luke all mention that there was darkness over the whole land during these three hours. Ellen White had the following to say about this period:

With amazement angels witnessed the Saviour's despairing agony. The hosts of heaven veiled their faces from the fearful sight. Inanimate nature expressed sympathy with its insulted and dying Author. The sun refused to look upon the awful scene. Its full, bright rays were illuminating the earth at midday, when suddenly it seemed to be blotted out. Complete darkness, like a funeral pall, enveloped the cross. "There was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour." There was no eclipse or other natural cause for this darkness, which was as deep as midnight without moon or stars. It was a miraculous testimony given by God that the faith of after generations might be confirmed.

In that thick darkness God's presence was hidden. He makes darkness His pavilion, and conceals His glory from human eyes. God and His holy angels were beside the cross. The Father was with His Son. Yet His presence was not revealed. Had His glory flashed forth from the cloud, every human beholder would have been destroyed.

<sup>503</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_Testament\\_people\\_named\\_Mary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Testament_people_named_Mary)

And in that dreadful hour Christ was not to be comforted with the Father's presence. He trod the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with Him.

In the thick darkness, God veiled the last human agony of His Son. All who had seen Christ in His suffering had been convicted of His divinity. That face, once beheld by humanity, was never forgotten. As the face of Cain expressed his guilt as a murderer, so the face of Christ revealed innocence, serenity, benevolence,—the image of God. But His accusers would not give heed to the signet of heaven. Through long hours of agony Christ had been gazed upon by the jeering multitude. Now He was mercifully hidden by the mantle of God. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p753-754](#)<sup>504</sup>

At 3 PM after six hours on the cross, Jesus cried out “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Then after tasting the vinegar wine, He said “Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'” I believe the death of Jesus on the cross was similar to the second or final death that will be experienced by those who are lost. It is actually fitting because that is the death the saved will be pardoned from experiencing from because they have accepted Jesus as their substitute. It was quite unusual for someone to die within six hours of being lifted up on the cross, so it is somewhat natural to speculate about the cause of Jesus’ death, which I will do in the next chapter.

---

What do you believe?

- Why did Jesus allow Himself to die such a terrible death?
- Would a much less painful death have paid the price for sin?
- How do you interpret the statement by Jesus, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise”?

---

<sup>504</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p753-754.  
<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=753>

## The burial of Jesus

[Matthew 27:51-54,57-61](#), [Mark 15:38-39,42-47](#), [Luke 23:45,47-48,50-56](#), [John 19:31-42](#)<sup>505</sup>

[Matthew 27:51](#) Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split,<sup>52</sup> and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised;<sup>53</sup> and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.<sup>54</sup> So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened,

they feared greatly, saying,

"Truly this was the Son of God!" [Matthew 27:51-54 NKJV](#)

[Mark 15:38](#) Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

<sup>39</sup> So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him,

saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said,

"Truly this Man was the Son of God!" [Mark 15:38-39 NKJV](#)

[Luke 23:45](#) ... and the veil of the temple was torn in two.—

<sup>47</sup> So when the centurion saw what had happened,

he glorified God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous Man!"

<sup>48</sup> And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned. [Luke 23:45,47-48 NKJV](#)

[John 19:31](#) Therefore, because it was the Preparation [Day], that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and [that] they might be taken away.<sup>32</sup> Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him.<sup>33</sup> But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.<sup>34</sup> But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.<sup>35</sup> And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.<sup>36</sup> For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled,

"Not [one] of His bones shall be broken."

[Psalm 34:20](#) ... Not one of them is broken. [Psalm 34:20 NKJV](#)

<sup>37</sup> And again another Scripture says,

"They shall look on Him whom they pierced."

[Psalm 22:17](#) ... They look [and] stare at Me.<sup>16</sup> ... They pierced My hands and My feet; [Psalm 22:17,16 NKJV](#)

<sup>505</sup> Strong. p363. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/362/mode/2up>

[Mark 15:42](#) Now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, <sup>43</sup> Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member,

who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

<sup>44</sup> Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time.

[John 19:38](#) ... and Pilate gave [him] permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. <sup>39</sup> And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds.

[John 19:40](#) Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.

<sup>41</sup> Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.

<sup>42</sup> So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation [Day], for the tomb was nearby.

[John 19:31-42 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 27:57](#) Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph,

who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. <sup>58</sup> This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ...

[Matthew 27:58](#) ... he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

<sup>60</sup> and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed.

[Luke 23:54](#) That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near. — <sup>50</sup> Now behold, [there was] a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. <sup>51</sup> He had not consented to their decision and deed. [He was] from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God. <sup>52</sup> This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

[Mark 15:46](#) Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen.

And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.

[John 19:38](#) After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; ...

[Mark 15:45](#) So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph.

[Matthew 27:58](#) ... Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. <sup>59</sup> When Joseph had taken the body, ...

[Luke 23:53](#) Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen,

and laid it in a tomb [that was] hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. —

[Luke 23:55](#) And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid.

[Matthew 27:61](#) And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb. [Matthew 27:57-61 NKJV](#)

[Mark 15:47](#) And Mary Magdalene and Mary [the mother] of Joses observed where He was laid. [Mark 15:42-47 NKJV](#)

<sup>56</sup> Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment. [Luke 23:50-56 NKJV](#)

Immediately after Jesus said it is finished and died, there was an earthquake and the veil of the Temple was torn. I have always assumed this to be the curtain separating the Holy from the Most Holy place in the Temple. Only the High Priest was allowed to go into the Most Holy place and even he was only to go in there once a year. If this was the veil that was torn, then only the priest on duty, if he were in the Holy place at the time would have seen it happen. Regardless of who could see it, this was a symbolic act. To me this was God's way of saying that the sanctuary and its sacrificial services were no longer needed. They had served their purpose and now that the actual sacrifice of the Son of God was accomplished, the symbols and services that pointed forward to that event no longer had a purpose. From this point forward sinners should confess their sins directly to God in prayer, rather than over an animal sacrifice. In fact, even the system of priests was ended, because Jesus would be our mediator in heaven. Paul, speaking of Jesus after He had returned to heaven wrote:

[Hebrews 8:1](#) Now [this is] the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, <sup>2</sup> a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man. <sup>3</sup> For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore [it is] necessary that this One also have something to offer. <sup>4</sup> For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; <sup>5</sup> who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See [that] you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." <sup>6</sup> But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. [Hebrews 8:1-6 NKJV](#)

[Hebrews 4:14](#) Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast [our] confession. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all [points] tempted as [we are, yet] without sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. [Hebrews 4:14-16 NKJV](#)

The sequence of the resurrected saints is a little puzzling to me? Were these saints raised when Jesus died or when He was resurrected on Sunday? Matthew who is the only one to mention it says:

[Matthew 27:52](#) and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; <sup>53</sup> and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. [Matthew 27:52-53 NKJV](#)

Taken very literally, it sounds like tombs were opened by the earthquake. Certain saints came back to life, but didn't come out of their tombs until Jesus was resurrected. I think I will choose to interpret the sequence as follows. When Jesus died, there was an earthquake and tombs were opened. But when Jesus was resurrected, certain selected saints

were also resurrected and went into Jerusalem and spread the word that Jesus was alive. So, in the next chapter covering the resurrection, I will speculate more about these saints who were brought to life.

I don't know what if any the Roman centurion knew or heard of Jesus before this day, but at the end of the day, he was willing to outwardly declare his belief that Jesus was truly the Son of God. The Bible doesn't tell us anymore about this character, but it is likely that after the resurrection, he became a follower of Jesus. One legend in Christian history identifies a man named Longinus as the centurion who pierced the side of Jesus.<sup>506</sup> It is an interesting footnote, but the identity of this man is not the important thing. What is, is that a non-Jew, a career soldier, a man used to violence and death, recognized in the innocent suffering Jesus, the Son of God. A few more interesting questions that may arise are: since Romans believed in many gods, did this centurion believe Jesus to be one of these? Why did he say Son of God? Or did he understand Jesus to be the Son of the God of the Jews, or the Son of the God of all people?

Now I'm pretty sure it was not unheard of for criminals and rebels to be left hanging on the cross over the weekend. And it's not as if the priests could hide what they had done, after all Jesus was crucified in broad daylight and had been on the cross for the better part of the day. However, I suspect they were thinking of all the pilgrims who would be coming into the city for the Passover, and did not wish for them to be greeted by the sight of Jesus, who was very popular with the common people, hanging on the cross. They now requested Pilate to have the soldiers break the legs of the criminals, to speed up their death, so they could be removed from the crosses. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, as the upper body tired from hanging on the cross, the legs were needed to lift the body to be able to expand the lungs and take a breath. I suspect Pilate was also anxious to avoid any additional attention or questions about the events of that day, so he readily granted their request. I believe the centurion and the soldiers at the cross probably already knew that Jesus was dead, but when they received the command of Pilate, they broke the legs of the two criminals but saw no need to do the same to Jesus. Without knowing it they played their part in the fulfillment of prophecy, by not breaking His bones but instead by piercing His side, to prove or make sure that He was already dead.

In addition to the next day being the Sabbath, John adds that it was a high day. I don't know exactly what he meant, because he didn't elaborate, but some of the possible interpretations are:

- It was one of the annual or festival Sabbaths, and not necessarily a weekly Sabbath day.<sup>507</sup>
- According to Matthew Henry, it was a weekly Sabbath that occurred during one of the annual festival days.<sup>508</sup>
- Seventh-Day Adventists among others believe it meant it was a weekly Sabbath that coincided with one of their festival Sabbaths.<sup>509</sup> Some have attempted to use this correlation to narrow down the year(s) that Jesus was crucified, assuming the Jewish lunar calendar back then was consistent with what we can extrapolate.

I believe the crucifixion took place at the start of Passover in the spring of 31 A.D., which fulfilled another segment of the 70-week prophecy from [Daniel 9:24-27](#). You can read the details of my conclusions in [Appendix B – Prophetic time & Daniel's 70 week prophecy](#).

It is a pretty widely held belief that Nicodemus and Joseph were both members of this council mentioned in [Mark 15:43](#) and [Luke 23:50](#). This is the first we hear of Joseph of Arimathea, but this is the same Nicodemus who visited Jesus, at night, earlier in His ministry [[John 3](#)]. [John 3:1](#) identifies him as a Pharisee and calls him a ruler of the Jews, and [John 7:48-50](#) reconfirms this identity. This ruling council which today we call the Sanhedrin, was as much political as it was

<sup>506</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Longinus>

<sup>507</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High\\_Sabbaths](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High_Sabbaths)

<sup>508</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Jhn/Jhn\\_019.cfm?a=1016031](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Jhn/Jhn_019.cfm?a=1016031)

<sup>509</sup> <http://sdanet.org/atissue/books/27/27-19.htm>



religious, and contained representatives from different parties, the two most prominent being the Pharisees and the Sadducees. There was thought to be one national council, and also regional and local councils, not unlike the federal/state/county/city government structure in the United States. This is discussed in greater detail with references in my chapter titled [Nicodemus](#) where I covered [John 3](#). Ellen White suggested the following about these two men, possibly based on [John 7:50-51](#).

Neither Joseph nor Nicodemus had openly accepted the Saviour while He was living. They knew that such a step would exclude them from the Sanhedrin, and they hoped to protect Him by their influence in its councils. For a time they had seemed to succeed; but the wily priests, seeing their favor to Christ, had thwarted their plans. In their absence Jesus had been condemned and delivered to be crucified. Now that He was dead, they no longer concealed their attachment to Him. While the disciples feared to show themselves openly as His followers, Joseph and Nicodemus came boldly to their aid. The help of these rich and honored men was greatly needed at this time. They could do for their dead Master what it was impossible for the poor disciples to do; and their wealth and influence protected them, in a great measure, from the malice of the priests and rulers. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p773-774](#)<sup>510</sup>

Nicodemus, when he saw Jesus lifted up on the cross, remembered His words spoken by night in the Mount of Olives: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:14, 15. On that Sabbath, when Christ lay in the grave, Nicodemus had opportunity for reflection. A clearer light now illuminated his mind, and the words which Jesus had spoken to him were no longer mysterious. He felt that he had lost much by not connecting himself with the Saviour during His life. Now he recalled the events of Calvary. The prayer of Christ for His murderers and His answer to the petition of the dying thief spoke to the heart of the learned councilor. Again he looked upon the Saviour in His agony; again he heard that last cry, "It is finished," spoken like the words of a conqueror. Again he beheld the reeling earth, the darkened heavens, the rent veil, the shivered rocks, and his faith was forever established. The very event that destroyed the hopes of the disciples convinced Joseph and Nicodemus of the divinity of Jesus. Their fears were overcome by the courage of a firm and unwavering faith. [White. \*Desire of Ages\*. p775-776](#)<sup>511</sup>

Being on the council gave Joseph and Nicodemus access to Pilate, and when they made their request of him, he was surprised to hear that Jesus was already dead. He called for his centurion and got a full account of the events of the crucifixion. Whether the centurion added any other information about his conclusions about the nature of Jesus, we are not told. Believing Jesus was innocent, Pilate possibly felt some regret or sympathy and readily granted their request.

Thus, even as Jesus rested on the Sabbath after He completed His work of creating the world, he now rested in the tomb on the Sabbath after completing His work of redemption.

---

What do you believe?

- Why do you think the veil in the temple was torn?
- What do you think the centurion meant when he called Jesus the Son of God?

---

<sup>510</sup> White, Ellen G. *The Desire of Ages*. Oakland, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, p773-774.

<https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=773>

<sup>511</sup> White. p775-776. <https://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=DA&lang=en&pagenumber=775>

- Do you think the priests were heartless in asking for legs to be broken rather than just running them all through with spears? Or do you think there was a specific reason they requested this method of accelerating death?

## Resurrection and appearance to the women

[Matthew 27:62-28:15](#), [Mark 16:1-11](#), [Luke 24:1-11](#), [John 20:1-18](#)<sup>512</sup>

[Matthew 27:62](#) On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, <sup>63</sup> saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' <sup>64</sup> "Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him [away], and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first." <sup>65</sup> Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make [it] as secure as you know how." <sup>66</sup> So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard. [Matthew 27:62-66 NKJV](#)

[Mark 16:1](#) Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary [the mother] of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him.—

[Matthew 28:2](#) And behold, [Mark 16:9](#) Now when [He] rose early on the first [day] of the week, ... — there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow.—

<a href="#">Mark 16:2</a> Very early in the morning, on the first [day] of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen.	<a href="#">Matthew 28:1</a> Now after the Sabbath, as the first [day] of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.—	<a href="#">Luke 24:1</a> Now on the first [day] of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain [other women] with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared.	<a href="#">John 20:1</a> Now on the first [day] of the week, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, ...
--	--	---	--

<a href="#">Mark 16:3</a> And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" <sup>4</sup> But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away--for it was very large.	<a href="#">Luke 24:2</a> But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb.	<a href="#">John 20:1</a> ... while it was still dark, and saw [that] the stone had been taken away from the tomb.
---	---	--

The following "she" is Mary Magdalene.

[John 20:2](#) Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." [John 20:2 NKJV](#)

<sup>512</sup> Strong. p367. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/366/mode/2up>

The following "they" are the other women.

<p>Luke 24:3 Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup> And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. <sup>5</sup> Then, as they were afraid and bowed [their] faces to the earth, they said to them,</p>	<p><a href="#">Matthew 28:5</a> But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.</p>	<p>Mark 16:5 And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed.</p>
<p>"Why do you seek the living among the dead?"</p> <p><sup>6</sup> "He is not here, but is risen!</p>	<p>Mark 16:6 But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified.</p>	<p>Mark 16:7 "But go, tell His disciples--and Peter--that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."</p>
<p>Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup> "saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.' " <sup>8</sup> And they remembered His words.</p>	<p>Mark 16:8 So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.</p>	<p>Mark 16:9 "But go, tell His disciples--and Peter--that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you."</p>

Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup> "saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.' " <sup>8</sup> And they remembered His words.

<p><a href="#">Matthew 28:7</a> "And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."</p>	<p>Mark 16:7 "But go, tell His disciples--and Peter--that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you."</p>
--	--

<p>Matthew 28:8 So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy,</p>	<p>Mark 16:8 So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.</p>
---	---

and ran to bring His disciples word. <sup>9</sup> And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go [and] tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."

[Luke 24:9](#) Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. <sup>10</sup> It was ... Joanna, Mary [the mother] of James, and the other [women] with them, who told these things to the apostles. <sup>11</sup> And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them.

[Matthew 28:11](#) Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. <sup>12</sup> When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, <sup>13</sup> saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him [away] while we slept.' " <sup>14</sup> "And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure." <sup>15</sup> So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. [Matthew 28:1-15 NKJV](#)

It was Mary Magdalene who earlier ran from the tomb that is now speaking to "them" who are the disciples.

John 20:2 ... and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." <sup>3</sup> Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. <sup>4</sup> So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. <sup>5</sup> And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying [there]; yet he did not go in.

<sup>John 20:6</sup> Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying [there],  
<sup>7</sup> and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. <sup>8</sup> Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. <sup>9</sup> For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. <sup>10</sup> Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.

<sup>Luke 24:12</sup> Nevertheless, Peter got up and ran to the tomb; and when he stooped and looked in, he saw the linen wrappings only;

and he went away to his home, marveling at what had happened.

<sup>John 20:11</sup> But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down [and looked] into the tomb. <sup>12</sup> And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. <sup>13</sup> Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."

<sup>14</sup> Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing [there], and did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup> Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away."

<sup>Mark 16:9</sup> ... He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons.

<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher).

<sup>17</sup> Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and [to] My God and your God.' "

<sup>18</sup> Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and [that] He had spoken these things to her.

<sup>Mark 16:10</sup> She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept.

<sup>Luke 24:10</sup> ... Mary Magdalene ... [Luke 24:1-11 NKJV](#)

[John 20:1-18 NKJV](#)

<sup>Mark 16:11</sup> And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe. [Mark 16:1-11 NKJV](#)

The earth quaked at the moment Jesus died and again the moment He came back to life. The Bible doesn't tell us how many guards were there to witness the actual event but they were the only people privileged to see it with their own eyes. Something that I wondered was, did the priests actually believe it was over when they crucified Jesus on the cross? Did they really believe they could keep someone in the grave who could raise the dead, heal any kind of sickness, control the weather and create matter (multiplying bread and fish)? I think they probably hoped that Jesus would remain dead and realized there was nothing they could do to stop Him from coming to life, but at least they could make sure the disciples didn't steal the body and then tell people He was alive. In the end, their action to prevent the fake news of the resurrection of Jesus, provided eyewitnesses to the event. Yes, the eyewitness account was corrupted by money but I believe the guards told some people the truth before they reached the priests, and I think in private, they probably told others the truth as well. After all which story made them look more incompetent? I wonder how many of those guards if any chose to become followers of Jesus after that experience.

Even though the Bible verses covering this were in the previous chapter, I wanted to pick up the topic again of the resurrected saints. Recall what Matthew wrote:

[Matthew 27:52](#) and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; <sup>53</sup> and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. [Matthew 27:52-53 NKJV](#)

Who were these people and what became of them? Since the Bible doesn't directly tell us anymore than we have just read, we can only speculate. It is very possible that some of the tombs that were maintained by the Pharisees, the ones for known martyrs from their past history, were broken open. Recall what Jesus said to them about the tombs of the prophets that had been killed in the days of their fathers.

[Matthew 23:29](#) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, <sup>30</sup> "and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' [Matthew 23:29-30 NKJV](#)

When Jesus cried out with a loud voice "It is finished," and died, He finished His work of providing a substitute death to pay the price for our sin.

[Romans 6:23](#) For the wages of sin [is] death, but the gift of God [is] eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. [Romans 6:23 NKJV](#)

In effect He rescued humanity from the clutches of death. What better way to symbolize this defeat of death than to free some of its prisoners? In the rituals and ceremonies given to the Israelites, there is a commonly used term that comes to mind in this case. In fact, Paul directly associated the resurrection of Jesus with it.

[1 Corinthians 15:20](#) But now Christ is risen from the dead, [and] has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. [1 Corinthians 15:20 NKJV](#)

Ten times Jesus referred to the salvation of humanity, or the resurrection at the end of the age as a harvest. In the Old Testament the firstfruits were the first portion of the harvest which were to be ceremonially presented to the Lord as an offering. Paul clearly identified the resurrected Jesus as the firstfruit of those who were asleep. I think it is fitting that He would have additional firstfruits of His labor to present to God when He ascended to heaven. Ellen white had the following to say about this:

When Jesus, as he hung upon the cross, cried out, It is finished, the rocks rent, the earth shook, and some of the graves were shaken open; for when Jesus arose from the dead, and conquered death and the grave; when he walked forth from his prison house a triumphant conqueror; while the earth was reeling and shaking, and the excellent glory of heaven clustered around the sacred spot, obedient to his call, many of the righteous dead came forth as witnesses that he had risen. Those favored, resurrected saints came forth glorified. They were a few chosen and holy ones who had lived in every age from creation, even down to the days of Christ. And while the chief priests and Pharisees were seeking to cover up the resurrection of Christ, God chose to bring up a company from their graves to testify that Jesus had risen, and to declare his glory.

Those who were resurrected were of different stature and form. I was informed that the inhabitants of earth had been degenerating, losing their strength and comeliness. Satan has the power of disease and death, and in every age the curse has been more visible, and the power of Satan more plainly seen. Some of those raised were more noble in appearance and form than others. I was informed that those who lived in the days of Noah and

Abraham were more like the angels in form, in comeliness and strength. But every generation has been growing weaker, and more subject to disease, and their lives of shorter duration. Satan has been learning how to annoy men, and to enfeeble the race.

Those holy ones who came forth after the resurrection of Jesus appeared unto many, telling them that the sacrifice for man was completed, that Jesus, whom the Jews crucified, had risen from the dead, and added, We be risen with him. They bore testimony that it was by his mighty power that they had been called forth from their graves. Notwithstanding the lying reports circulated, the matter could not be concealed by Satan, his angels, or the chief priests; for this holy company, brought forth from their graves, spread the wonderful, joyful news; also Jesus showed himself unto his sorrowing, heart-broken disciples, dispelling their fears, and causing them gladness and joy. [Spiritual Gifts, Volume 1. White. p69-70](#)<sup>513</sup>

Getting back to the women who were at the cross and at the tomb when Jesus was buried, I think Jesus honored the love and devotion of these women by appearing to them first. I made a table and discussed them in [Appendix H- Women at the cross and the tomb](#). I had generally thought that among the women, Jesus had only appeared to Mary Magdalene, before ascending to heaven. But upon reading Strong's arrangement, I realize that from [Matthew 28:9-10](#), it says Jesus met and greeted "them," which if taken literally should not be referring to Mary Magdalene alone. Since a single Gospel account doesn't mention both meetings, I suppose they could also be interpreted and explained as a single encounter. Strong proposed the following timeline of events resurrection morning.<sup>514</sup>

Time (AM)	Occurrence	Matthew 28	Mark 16	Luke 24	John 20
4:00	Earthquake and Resurrection	2-4	9		
4:15	The women set out for the sepulcher	1	2-3	1	1
4:30	They arrive, Mary Magdalene returns		4	2	2
4:35	Their interview with two angels	5-7	5-7	3-8	
4:45	Mary Magdalene reaches Peter and John's house				2
4:45	The other women flee from the sepulcher	8	8	9	
4:50	Peter, John and Mary Magdalene set out for it			12	3
4:50	The other women meet Jesus	9-10			
4:55	The soldiers report their disaster	11-15			
4:57	John arrives as the sepulcher			12	4-5
5:00	Peter arrives there, their observation				6-9
5:05	They both return home			12	10
5:05	Mary Magdalene arrives at the sepulcher				11
5:05	The other women report their interview with Christ, to the other Apostles			9-11	
5:07	Mary Magdalene sees the two angels				12-13
5:10	She meets with Christ		9		14-17
5:30	She reports to the disciples		10-11	11	18

<sup>513</sup> White, Ellen. *Spiritual Gifts, Volume 1*. 1858, p69-70.

<http://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=1SG&lang=en&pagenumber=69>

<sup>514</sup> Strong. p370. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/370/mode/2up>

I suppose something that deserves some discussion before we end this chapter is the three days in the tomb. Here are some of the statements Jesus made regarding this time span. There were several ways this three-day statement was made. 1) Three days and three nights. 2) After three days. 3) Three days later. 4) In three days.

[Matthew 12:40](#) "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. [Matthew 12:40 NKJV](#)

[Mark 8:31](#) And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. [Mark 8:31 NKJV](#)

[Mark 9:31](#) For He taught His disciples and said to them, "The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day." [Mark 9:31 NKJV](#)

[John 2:19](#) Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." [John 2:19 NKJV](#)

The priests understood Jesus to mean "After three days."

[Matthew 27:63](#) saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' [Matthew 27:63 NKJV](#)

According to common belief, Jesus wasn't in the tomb for three nights, nor was He even there for three full days. He was there for the last portion of Friday, all of Saturday, and the first part of Sunday. Taken literally, these different statements of Jesus cannot all be reconciled. One way of reconciling this is understanding that the Jews would count any part of a day as a full day when doing this type of counting. There are many Bible verses to support this idea as well including the following statement of Jesus.

[Luke 13:32](#) And He said to them, "Go, tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third [day] I shall be perfected.'<sup>33</sup> "Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the [day] following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem. [Luke 13:32-33 NKJV](#)

Thus, the last portion of Friday counted as one day, all of Saturday counted as the second day, and any part of Sunday after sunset on Saturday counted as the third day. Another very simple familiar way to express it is "the day after tomorrow."<sup>515</sup> I believe the three days and three nights was a figure of speech. Many who take the three full days and nights literally explain this by saying that Thursday was a ceremonial Sabbath, and that Jesus was crucified on Wednesday. So, you get Wednesday, Thursday, Friday nights and Jesus was resurrected after sunset on Saturday.<sup>516 517</sup> Finally, there was a third interesting explanation I came across from Amazing Facts. Doug Batchelor said one could interpret the heart of the earth in a way that would begin the three days and three nights with the suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane on Thursday.

So the phrase "in the heart of the earth" can easily be translated as "in the midst of the world"—or in the grip of this lost planet—that Jesus came to save!<sup>518</sup>

<sup>515</sup> <https://www.amazingfacts.org/media-library/book/e/81/t/three-days-and-three-nights>

<sup>516</sup> Fredrick, William. *Infallible Proof by Three Immutable Witnesses proving Wednesday Crucifixion*. Clyde, OH. 1916.

[https://books.google.com/books?id=WBQAQAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=WBQAQAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)

<sup>517</sup> Nuesch, John. *Exposition of Heavenly Truths*. 1902, p212. <https://books.google.com/books?id=iPFMAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA212>

<sup>518</sup> <https://www.amazingfacts.org/news-and-features/news/item/id/10899/t/three-days-and-three-nights>

This provides yet another way to harmonize the three-day statements.

---

What do you believe?

- Do you think these saints who were resurrected were all over the world, or just in Jerusalem?
- Do you think there was one or two separate meetings with Jesus before He went up to heaven?
- How long do you believe Jesus was in the tomb?

## The walk to Emmaus

[Luke 24:13-49](#), [Mark 16:12-18](#), [John 20:19-22](#), [Luke 10:19](#)<sup>519</sup>

[Luke 24:13](#) Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> And they talked together of all these things which had happened. <sup>15</sup> So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. <sup>16</sup> But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. [Mark 16:12](#) After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country.

<sup>17</sup> And He said to them, "What kind of conversation [is] this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?"

<sup>18</sup> Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?"

<sup>19</sup> And He said to them, "What things?" So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup> "and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. <sup>21</sup> "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. <sup>22</sup> "Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. <sup>23</sup> "When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. <sup>24</sup> "And certain of those [who were] with us went to the tomb and found [it] just as the women had said; but Him they did not see."

<sup>25</sup> Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

<sup>26</sup> "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" <sup>27</sup> And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

<sup>28</sup> Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther.

<sup>29</sup> But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them.

<sup>30</sup> Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke [it], and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup> Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

<sup>32</sup> And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"

---

<sup>519</sup> Strong. p376. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/376/mode/2up>



Luke 24:33 So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those [who were] with them gathered together, <sup>34</sup> saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" <sup>35</sup> And they told about the things [that had happened] on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

Mark 16:13 And they went ...

[1 Corinthians 15:5](#) and that He appeared to Cephas ...

Mark 16:13 ... and told [it] to the rest, [but] they did not believe them either.

Luke 24:36 Now as they said these things,

[John 20:19](#) Then, the same day at evening, being the first [day] of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews,

Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them,

Mark 16:14 Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; ...

Jesus came and stood in the midst,

1 Corinthians 15:5 ... then by the twelve. [1 Corinthians 15:5 NKJV](#)

and said to them, "Peace to you." <sup>37</sup> But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit.

and said to them, "Peace [be] with you."

Luke 24:38 And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?"

Mark 16:14 ... and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.

Luke 24:39 "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." <sup>40</sup> When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. <sup>41</sup> But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?" <sup>42</sup> So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. <sup>43</sup> And He took [it] and ate in their presence.

[John 20:20](#) When He had said this, He showed them [His] hands and His side.

Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

Luke 24:44 Then He said to them, "These [are] the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and [the] Prophets and [the] Psalms concerning Me." <sup>45</sup> And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

<sup>46</sup> Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, <sup>47</sup> "and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> "And you are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." [Luke 24:13-49 NKJV](#)

[John 20:21](#) So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

Mark 16:15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. <sup>16</sup> "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. <sup>17</sup> "And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; <sup>18</sup> "they will take up serpents; and if they drink [Luke 10:19](#) "Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. they will lay hands on the sick, and they will [Luke 10:19 NKJV](#) recover." [Mark 16:12-18 NKJV](#)

John 20:22 And when He had said this, He breathed on [them], and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup> "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the [sins] of any, they are retained." [John 20:19-23 NKJV](#)

The geographical location of this town of Emmaus is not known, and there is not even any commemorative site to visit.<sup>520</sup> Since Jesus and these disciples were talking as they were walking, I would estimate they were probably travelling at a leisurely pace, which could have taken roughly three to four hours for the 7-mile journey. Since Jesus was crucified and resurrected at Passover time, we can know that sunset was approximately 7 PM. I would guess the disciples had left around 3 PM to give them plenty of time to arrive home before dark, but in their concentrated attention to the words of Jesus, they may have taken closer to four hours. I wondered, why were these two disciples who were not among the twelve apostles, privileged to get the first extended face to face visit from Jesus? Only one of them was named, a man named Cleopas. Many have speculated that he could be the same person John called Clopas who would be the uncle of Jesus through marriage to His mother's sister.

[John 19:25](#) Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the [wife] of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. [John 19:25 NKJV](#)

I was suddenly struck with the thought that maybe the second, the unnamed person was the wife or Cleopas. After all, if they were both in Jerusalem for the Passover, what would be more natural than for them to be travelling back home together?

In His wisdom, Jesus realized that the two would be too excited to pay attention to the conversation if they had known who He was, so He hid His identity. In that 3-4 hour Bible study, Jesus explained to them how all their scriptures, our Old Testament, pointed forward to Him. Oh, how I would love to read a transcript of that conversation.

In their excitement on finally discovering who their traveling companion was, these two disciples now retraced their steps at night, which was probably not the safest thing to do. When they reached the upper room where the twelve had been hanging out, I think they were received with a combination of belief and doubt. Simon Peter had seen and spoken to Jesus, but I think the others may have wondered why Jesus hadn't appeared to them yet. Suddenly, Jesus just appeared among them, frightening them. Jesus gently reproved them for their unwillingness to believe the testimony of those who had seen Him. Finally, after seeing the scars in his hands and feet and side, and seeing Him eat something, they finally were reassured that it really was Jesus in the flesh.

Next, I believe Jesus gave the same Bible study to the entire group that he had given to the two on the road to Emmaus. It was critical for their commission to be able to know and explain from the scriptures that Jesus was indeed the Messiah

<sup>520</sup> <http://www.seetheholyland.net/emmaus/>

that had been promised to humanity, and that the Jews had anticipated their entire history. I love what it says in Luke 24:45.

[Luke 24:45](#) And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. [Luke 24:45 NKJV](#)

This is what most Bible scholars would hopefully wish for, to actually understand what God meant, by the words He inspired. This is what we should ask for each time we sit down to study the Bible. I think we have all experienced varying degrees of clarity or obscurity when studying the Bible. The Apostle Paul described it as seeing in a mirror dimly as opposed to face to face.

Finally, I have to comment on the verses from John which seem to justify the practice the Catholic Church has of receiving confession and giving absolution. Is this what Jesus intended? Is there anywhere else in the Bible that seems to give human beings the authority to receive confession and give absolution for sin? There are many places in the Bible which speak of God granting pardon or forgiveness for sin. There was also the exchange between the Jewish scribes and Jesus when they thought or said to each other, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

[Mark 2:1](#) And again He entered Capernaum after [some] days, and it was heard that He was in the house.

<sup>2</sup> Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive [them], not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. <sup>3</sup> Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four [men]. <sup>4</sup> And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.

<sup>5</sup> When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." <sup>6</sup> And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, <sup>7</sup> "Why does this [Man] speak blasphemies like this? **Who can forgive sins but God alone?**"

<sup>8</sup> But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts?" <sup>9</sup> "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, '[Your] sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk?'" <sup>10</sup> "But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"--He said to the paralytic, <sup>11</sup> "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." <sup>12</sup> Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw [anything] like this!" [Mark 2:1-12 NKJV](#)

Notice that Jesus didn't dispute the thought that only God can forgive sin, but He demonstrated that He had the power to forgive because He was God, by healing the man as well. That doesn't mean that everyone who can heal, even miraculously is God, because there were many people in Bible stories who healed. I don't think that there is really any debate that forgiveness for sin comes from God. I think the debate is whether God has given any person on earth the right to forgive on His behalf. The Catholic Church claims that God gave to the Apostles and consequently to the Catholic priesthood, the commission to stand and act in His place on earth.<sup>521 522 523</sup> I did a word search in the Bible for the words confess/confession and there were three hits in the NKJV New Testament that had to do with sins.

[James 5:16](#) **Confess** [your] trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. [James 5:16 NKJV](#)

<sup>521</sup> [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc\\_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c2a4.htm](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c2a4.htm)

<sup>522</sup> <http://www.scripturecatholic.com/sacrament-confession-forgiveness-sins/>

<sup>523</sup> <https://www.catholic.com/tract/the-forgiveness-of-sins>

The one in James is also quoted by the Catholic Church as evidence that we should confess to a Priest. I would argue that it doesn't say to confess your sins to the Apostles or the church, but to each other. Nor does it say that we absolve each other, but that we pray for each other.

[1 John 1:9](#) If we **confess** our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. [1 John 1:9 NKJV](#)

[Hebrews 4:14](#) Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast [our] **confession**.<sup>15</sup> For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all [points] tempted as [we are, yet] without sin.<sup>16</sup> Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. [Hebrews 4:14-16 NKJV](#)

John makes it clear that it is God who forgives us and cleanses us, and Paul that we bring our confession with confidence to our high priest in heaven. I did not find any place in the New Testament where the Apostles taught that sins must be confessed to them in order for people to receive forgiveness.

So, if Jesus' statement didn't apply to forgiveness, then what did He mean by it. Wayne Jackson states a Biblical idiom whereby one is said to actually do what he is merely authorized to declare. For example, Pharaoh's butler said regarding Joseph:

[Genesis 41:13](#) "And it came to pass, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened. He restored me to my office, and he hanged him." [Genesis 41:13 NKJV](#)

Joseph did not actually restore the butler to his office, nor did he personally hang the baker. He merely announced, by prophetic insight, what the fate of these men would be. In other words, the apostles (and others since that time) were only authorized to declare forgiveness consistent with what the Lord had already determined.<sup>524</sup>

Ángel Manuel Rodríguez summarized his explanation of this verse in the following way:

In other words, the authority bestowed on the church by Christ—to forgive or not to forgive—is the authority to preach the gospel and to decide who can or cannot be baptized. It is a tremendous responsibility that should not be taken lightly.<sup>525</sup>

Numerous others interpret the verse to apply to discipline of church members which we do have evidence of in the New Testament. For example, when Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Apostles, Peter said they were lying to the Holy Spirit and they died.

[Acts 5:1](#) But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession.<sup>2</sup> And he kept back [part] of the proceeds, his wife also being aware [of it], and brought a certain part and laid [it] at the apostles' feet.<sup>3</sup> But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back [part] of the price of the land for yourself?<sup>4</sup> "While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

<sup>524</sup> <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/763-can-man-forgive-sins>

<sup>525</sup> <https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/bible-nt-texts/john-2023>

<sup>5</sup> Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things. <sup>6</sup> And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried [him] out, and buried [him]. [Acts 5:1-6 NKJV](#)

Paul also spoke of church discipline in [1 Corinthians 5](#), [Galatians 6:1](#), [2 Thessalonians 3:6-15](#), [1 Timothy 5:19-20](#), [Titus 3:9-11](#). (texts compiled by Jonathan Leeman<sup>526</sup>) This is not to say that sinners are not welcome in church, after all Jesus embraced and welcomed them into His presence. I think it means that there comes a time when a person who refuses to repent or acknowledging their wrong and is doing harm to other members and to the reputation of God, that they must be disowned.

What do you believe?

- Do you think Jesus had anything particular in mind by appearing to the women and other people before appearing to the bulk of the twelve?
- Why doesn't God help everyone to see clearly when they pray for understanding of the Scriptures?
- What do you think the verse about forgiving and retaining sins refers to?

## Jesus appears to more than 500 people over forty days before ascending to heaven

[John 20:24-21:25](#), [Matthew 28:16-20](#), [Mark 16:19-20](#), [Luke 24:50-53](#), [Acts 1:1-12](#), [1 Corinthians 15:6-7](#)<sup>527</sup>

[John 20:24](#) Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

<sup>26</sup> And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" <sup>27</sup> Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand [here], and put [it] into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

<sup>28</sup> And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

<sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed [are] those who have not seen and [yet] have believed." [John 20:24-29 NKJV](#)

[Mathew 28:16](#) Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, ...

[John 21:1](#) After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed [Himself]: <sup>2</sup> Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the [sons] of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. <sup>3</sup> Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. <sup>4</sup> But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?" They answered Him, "No."

<sup>526</sup> <https://www.9marks.org/article/church-discipline-primer/>

<sup>527</sup> String. p381. <https://archive.org/stream/newharmonyexposi00stro#page/380/mode/2up>

<sup>6</sup> And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find [some]." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.

<sup>7</sup> Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on [his] outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. <sup>8</sup> But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish. <sup>9</sup> Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. <sup>10</sup> Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught."

<sup>11</sup> Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken. <sup>12</sup> Jesus said to them, "Come [and] eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?"--knowing that it was the Lord. <sup>13</sup> Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.

<sup>14</sup> This [is] now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.

<sup>15</sup> So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, [son] of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs."

<sup>16</sup> He said to him again a second time, "Simon, [son] of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep."

<sup>17</sup> He said to him the third time, "Simon, [son] of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. <sup>18</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry [you] where you do not wish." <sup>19</sup> This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."

<sup>20</sup> Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?" <sup>21</sup> Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what [about] this man?"

<sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what [is that] to you? You follow Me." <sup>23</sup> Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If I will that he remain till I come, what [is that] to you?"

[1 Corinthians 15:6](#) After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, ...

[Mathew 28:16](#) ... to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. <sup>17</sup> When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.

<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, [even] to the end of the age." Amen. [Matthew 28:16-20 NKJV](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:7](#) After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. [1 Corinthians 15:6-7 NKJV](#)

[Acts 1:3](#) to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. — <sup>2</sup> until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, —

<sup>4</sup> And being assembled together with [them], He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," [He said], "you have heard from Me; <sup>5</sup> "for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." <sup>6</sup> Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" <sup>7</sup> And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. <sup>8</sup> "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

[Acts 1:9](#) Now when He had spoken these things, ...

[Mark 16:19](#) So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, ...

[Luke 24:50](#) And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. <sup>51</sup> Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.

<a href="#">Acts 1:9</a> ... while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.	<a href="#">Mark 16:19</a> ... He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.
--	---

[Acts 1:10](#) And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, <sup>11</sup> who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This [same] Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

[Acts 1:12](#) Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. [Acts 1:2-12 NKJV](#)

[Luke 24:52](#) And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy,

[Luke 24:53](#) and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen. [Luke 24:50-53 NKJV](#)

[Mark 16:20](#) And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with [them] and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen. [Mark 16:19-20 NKJV](#)

[Acts 1:1](#) The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, [Acts 1:1 NKJV](#)

[John 21:24](#) This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true. <sup>25</sup> And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen. [John 21:1-25 NKJV](#)

[John 20:30](#) And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. [John 20:30-31 NKJV](#)

Thomas' claim of unbelief I think was more about his hurt feelings because Jesus had not appeared to him. It's hard to imagine that he could really doubt the testimony of the other ten disciples that much. Jesus gently rebuked him just like he had the other disciples for not believing the testimony of others. I believe Jesus really wanted to emphasize the point of needing to believe without seeing because of all the people who would need to do so after He returned to heaven.

At the start of His ministry, Jesus performed a fishing miracle when He first started calling disciples to follow. He now repeats this miracle, I believe reaffirming their calling and His commitment to support them. I think they were still uncertain of what they would be doing and whether Jesus would remain with them, in fact just before He ascended to

heaven, they asked if the kingdom would now be restored to Israel. Shortly after the miracle of the fish, and the breakfast Jesus had prepared for the disciples, He reaffirmed Peter's standing among the disciples. I'm sure there were questions among the others after they heard of his denials. Jesus now asked three times, once for each denial, if Peter loved Him. Each time Peter answered yes, Jesus affirmed his calling to lead and mentor the converts to the faith. Jesus concluded this conversation by letting Peter know how he would die for his faith.

We don't know exactly how many times Jesus appeared and to how many people but these are the encounters that we know about.

- He appeared to Mary Magdalene and probably the other faithful women first on Sunday morning
- He appeared to Peter and the two disciples on the walk to Emmaus in two separate encounters Sunday
- He appeared to ten disciples not including Thomas, the two from Emmaus, and anyone else who happened to be in the upper room on Sunday night
- Eight days after appearing to the group in the upper room, He appeared there again, this time with Thomas present
- He appeared to the eleven or at least to the fishermen at the sea where He performed a miracle for them
- He had a teaching session with more than 500 in attendance
- According to Paul, He appeared to James. I believe Paul was referring to the brother of Jesus and not the Apostle James

The famous last words from Jesus in Matthew have been referred to as the great commission. It contains a command and a promise which was made to not only the Apostles but to all followers till the end of the age.

[Matthew 28:19](#) "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"<sup>20</sup> "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, [even] to the end of the age." Amen. [Matthew 28:19-20 NKJV](#)

It must have been difficult for Jesus to give this commission and leave knowing how horribly wrong it would go in the dark ages.

---

What do you believe?

- Why do you think Jesus only appeared to people here and there rather than living with them as He did before He died?
- Do you think the disciples really understood their commission when Jesus ascended?
- Do you believe the world is better off with flawed representatives for God, than none at all?



# Appendix B – Prophetic time & Daniel's 70-week Prophecy

I believe that one of the primary purposes of the prophecies given to us in the Bible is to give it credibility. If we believe that the Bible is the Word of God to us, and that it contained predictions of events that actually happened, then we can have faith that God knows and cares about our future. At this point in time, I believe that most Bible prophecies have been fulfilled, but that is a subject which is much debated. My reason for this belief is that when the prophecies are studied, and the key to unlocking them is discovered, a picture begins to emerge which looks a lot like the history of our world.

I believe the majority of prophecies in the Bible are found in the books of Daniel and Revelation. Daniel, through dreams and visions he received or interpreted, gives us a picture of world history which stretches from his time to the end of the world. If we can find consistency in one of the more obvious prophecies in Daniel, we will hopefully have some of the tools necessary to pursue an understanding of other Bible prophecies and hopefully even some of Daniel's more difficult ones.

## Seventy-week prophecy

For me, the key to unlocking this understanding is the 70-week prophecy in Daniel

[Daniel 9:24](#) "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy. <sup>25</sup> "Know therefore and understand, [That] from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, [There shall be] seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. <sup>26</sup> "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it [shall be] with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. <sup>27</sup> Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate." [Daniel 9:24-27 NKJV](#)

It seems fairly obvious that this prophecy is talking about the coming of the Messiah. So, the natural questions are:

1. What and when is the starting event?
2. What and when is the ending event?
3. What is the literal duration of the 70 weeks?

The answer to the first question is stated pretty clearly, "from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem." The when is not quite as straightforward. There were actually three notable events involving the Jews, building and a Medo-Persian king.

1. Somewhere around 538-536 BC at the end of the seventy years of captivity, Cyrus decreed that the Jews could return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple.<sup>528 529 530 531 532 533</sup>
2. In 457 BC, the fifth month of the seventh year of Artaxerxes I, Ezra carried a decree from the King providing supplies for the temple services and commanding that Jewish law or government be re-established. Bypassing the challenges in arriving at this date for now, here are some references from admittedly religious sources.<sup>534 535</sup>  
536 537 538
3. In 445 BC, the 20th year of Artaxerxes I, Nehemiah travelled to Jerusalem with letters from the king to supply material for the completion of the work begun in 457 BC.<sup>539 540</sup>

The second question concerning the ending event is really not so much about the end as it is about the end of all the subdivisions of the 70 weeks.

- 7 weeks – The verse says it will be built again with plaza and moat, but according to [Nehemiah 6:15](#), the wall was completed in 52 days. So I really don't know exactly what major event marked the end of the first 49 years. Some say that was when the full government was re-established. In a footnote, Maxwell said "Unfortunately, historical records from Palestine around the year 408 are too scanty for this concept to be verified."<sup>541</sup>
- 62 weeks – Messiah will be cut off *after* this
- 1/2 week – Messiah will put an end to sacrifices and grain offerings
- 1/2 week – to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy *place*

Since the Bible doesn't conveniently give us dates, scholars have attempted to correlate historical references to statements in the Bible to arrive at dates for the birth, death and baptism in the life of Jesus. As will be seen, there are differences of opinion but generally accepted ranges on these proposed dates.<sup>542</sup> A couple common approaches to dating the start of Christ's ministry are:

---

<sup>528</sup> [Ezra 1:1-4](#)

<sup>529</sup> Abbott, Jacob. *Cyrus the Great*. New York and London, Harper Brothers Publishers, 1901, p 222.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=gOU9AAAAYAAJ&pg=PA222>

<sup>530</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/538\\_BC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/538_BC)

<sup>531</sup> Guy, Joseph. *Guy's General School Question Book*. London, Baldwin and Cradock, 1829, p 9.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=mvgIAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA9>

<sup>532</sup> Tyler, Moses Coit. *Library of Universal History - Volume II*. New York and Chicago, Union Book Company, 1899, p 382.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=uMw6AQAAMAAJ&pg=PR382>

<sup>533</sup> Clare, Israel Smith. *Illustrated Universal History: Being a clear and concise history of all nations*. J. C. McCurdy & Co. Philadelphia, PA; Cincinnati, OH; Chicago, IL, St. Louis, MO, 1881, p 25, 34. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA25>,

<http://books.google.com/books?id=Cs1EAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA34>

<sup>534</sup> [Ezra 7:13-28](#)

<sup>535</sup> Rollin and other authentic sources. *Ancient History - History of the Persians*. London, Religious Tract Society, 1842, p 74.

[http://books.google.com/books?id=\\_opCAAAIAAJ&pg=PA74](http://books.google.com/books?id=_opCAAAIAAJ&pg=PA74)

<sup>536</sup> Nicoll, W. Robert; Smith, G. A., *The Expositor*. London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1906, p 9.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=B6cQAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA9>

<sup>537</sup> Power, Francis Armstrong. *The Book of Texts of Ancient and Modern History, &c*. London, Sampson, Low, Marston & Co. 1879, p

230. <https://books.google.com/books?id=iYkBAAAQAAJ&pg=PA230>

<sup>538</sup> <http://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/prophecy/when-did-seventy-weeks-daniel-924-begin>

<sup>539</sup> [Nehemiah 2:1-8](#)

<sup>540</sup> Nicoll. p9. <https://books.google.com/books?id=B6cQAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA9>

<sup>541</sup> Maxwell, C Mervyn. *God Cares vol1 – The Message of Daniel for you and your family*. Nampa, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1981, p218.

<sup>542</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chronology\\_of\\_Jesus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chronology_of_Jesus)

- [Luke 3:1-3](#) tells us that in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, John the Baptist began preaching. However there are two possible dates for the start of the Tiberius' reign. 11 or 12, when he became co-regent<sup>543</sup> with Augustus, or 14 when Augustus died.<sup>545</sup> This would place the start of the ministry of John in the year 26/27 or 29, with the baptism marking the start of Jesus' ministry presumably shortly after. Those who don't choose the co-regent option and wish to harmonize this statement with the following forty-six year dating approach, claim the 15th year of Tiberius, 781/2 from the founding of Rome, or 27/28 AD as the end of John the Baptist's ministry.<sup>546 547</sup>
- Another popular method for dating the ministry of Christ is from the statement, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" [John 2:20](#) The thinking is that the Temple had been in under some form of construction since Herod began building it forty-six years ago. Multiple sources place this statement during the first Passover of Christ's ministry in the year 781 from the founding of Rome, or 27 AD give or take a year.<sup>548 549 550 551</sup>

The book of John clearly mentions three Passovers in the adult life of Jesus from which we conclude that His ministry was at least two years. [[2:23](#), [6:4](#), [11:55](#)] Some propose the feast of the Jews in [John 5:1](#), was also a Passover, which would make His ministry at least 3 years.

There are of course ranges in the dates proposed for all of the following events. I have proposed a specific set of dates (except for the birth of Jesus) for the following events with references:

---

<sup>543</sup> "Rome," *The Encyclopædia Britannica - Eleventh Edition*. New York, The Encyclopædia Britannica Company, 1911, p 648.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=1i4qAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA648>

<sup>544</sup> Gilman, Daniel Coit. *The New International Encyclopædia*. New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1911, p 485.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=eNM7AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA485>

<sup>545</sup> Morris, Robert. *The twelve Caesars (Julius to Domitian)*. La Grange, Kentucky, Published for the author, 1877, p 13.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=mf4VAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA13>

<sup>546</sup> Didon, Henry. *Jesus Christ, Our Savior's Person, Mission and Spirit*. New York, D Appleton & Company, 1891, p 409.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=ZHRCAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA409>

<sup>547</sup> Pressensé, Edmond De. *Jesus Christ: His Life, Times, and Work*. London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1871, p 223.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=l7k0AQAAIAAJ&pg=PA223>

<sup>548</sup> Didon. p 409. <http://books.google.com/books?id=ZHRCAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA409>

<sup>549</sup> Pressensé. p 223. <http://books.google.com/books?id=l7k0AQAAIAAJ&pg=PA223>

<sup>550</sup> Hill, William Bancroft. *The Life of Christ*. New York, Fleming H. Revell, Company, 1917, p 55.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=FFNCAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA55>

<sup>551</sup> Gilman. p 485. <http://books.google.com/books?id=eNM7AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA485>

- 6-4 BC. Birth of Jesus<sup>552 553 554 555</sup>
- 27 Baptism of Jesus (Fall)<sup>556 557 558 559</sup>
- 31 Crucifixion of Jesus (Passover/Spring)<sup>560 561</sup>
- 34 Stoning of the deacon Stephen, and end of probation for the Jewish Nation (Fall)<sup>562 563 564</sup>

If we choose 457 BC, we can create the following timeline showing the prophetic week and the year. The fall/spring distinctions are needed to account for the half years. I would like to point out that the exact year for the birth of Jesus is not critical, because the prophecy doesn't have any subdivision terminating on that event. It should however be consistent with the statement that Jesus was about thirty years of age when He began His ministry [[Luke 3:23](#)]. The year 4 BC is considered the latest because it is generally accepted to be the year that Herod the Great died.

---

<sup>552</sup> Benson, Christopher. *The Chronology of our Saviours Life or An Inquiry into the True Time of the Birth, Baptism, and Crucifixion, of Jesus Christ*. Cambridge, University Press, 1810, p116. <https://books.google.com/books?id=SwAWAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA116>

<sup>553</sup> Wieseler, Karl. *A Chronological Synopsis of the Four Gospels*. Cambridge, Deighton, Bell & Co. 1864, p125. <https://books.google.com/books?id=OEVVAAAACAAJ&pg=PA114>

<sup>554</sup> G. F. P. *Sunday-School Lessons on the Life of Jesus*. Boston, Unitarian Sunday-School Society, 1881, p6. <https://books.google.com/books?id=qNwPAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA6>

<sup>555</sup> Bond. p12. <https://books.google.com/books?id=F3mcB6GnOtlC&pg=PR12>

<sup>556</sup> Benson. p188. <https://books.google.com/books?id=SwAWAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA188>

<sup>557</sup> Pinnock, W. H., *An Analysis of Ecclesiastical History from the Birth of Christ to the Council of Nice, A.D. 325.*, Cambridge, Hall & Son, 1852, p16. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Ss0CAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA16>

<sup>558</sup> Hales, William. *New Analysis of Chronology and Geography, History and Prophecy - Vol 1*. London, C. J. G. & F. Rivington, 1830, p 97. <http://books.google.com/books?id=zFkQAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA97>

<sup>559</sup> Fallows, Samuel. *The Popular and critical Bible encyclopedia*. Chicago, The Howard-Severance Company, 1911, p424. <http://books.google.com/books?id=LLNUAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA424>

<sup>560</sup> Pinnock. p29. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Ss0CAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA29>

<sup>561</sup> Hales. p 98. <http://books.google.com/books?id=zFkQAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA98>

<sup>562</sup> Pinnock. p45. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Ss0CAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA45>

<sup>563</sup> Shimeall, R. C., *The Age of the World*. New York, Swords, Stanford & Co. 1843, p 238.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=zN83AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA238>

<sup>564</sup> Hales. p 99. <http://books.google.com/books?id=zFkQAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA99>

Week	Year/Event
0	457 BC Artaxerxes' decree
≈	
	6-4 BC Jesus was born
	1 BC to 1 skipped year 0
69	27 Jesus was baptized
Mid wk	31 Jesus was crucified
70	34 Stephen stoned/gospel to gentiles

## Day for a year conclusion

While there are variations for the dates proposed, if we put them all together in the timeline above, they interlock like pieces of a puzzle. If we are willing to accept this timeline as fulfillment of this prophecy, then the inescapable conclusion is that a day in prophecy can and in many cases will be interpreted as a literal year. This conclusion should not be too surprising given the fact that often time prophecies are composed of symbols that represent something else literally. The following bible verses also give credence to the idea of a day representing a year:

[Numbers 14:34](#) "According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, [namely] forty years, and you shall know My rejection. [Numbers 14:34 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 4:6](#) "And when you have completed them, lie again on your right side; then you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days. I have laid on you a day for each year. [Ezekiel 4:6 NKJV](#)

## Time, times, half-time

One other prophetic time unit that needs to be addressed are the terms "time" and "times." These are used several times in Daniel and Revelation. Probably the most straight forward explanation comes from the book of Daniel, where he tells Nebuchadnezzar that he will lose his mind and his kingdom for seven times which was well accepted to mean seven years.

[Daniel 4:25](#) They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses. [Daniel 4:25 NKJV](#)

It is not my preferred practice to draw major conclusions from a single verse, but as we discuss days in a month in the next section, we will see how everything fits together like a puzzle.

## Days in a month and days in a year

Now, if we should find ourselves having to convert from prophetic years or months to days, it would be necessary to know how many days are counted in a month and how many days are counted in a year. Obviously we know that a solar year is approximately 365.25 days, but that doesn't mean in prophetic symbols that the same number of days should be used to represent a year. In fact, for the sake of using symbols it might make more sense to use more symbolic numbers. For example, 360 days in a year, like 360 degrees in a circle. 12 months of 30 days each would also multiply out to 360 days in a year. Can we find any basis for these numbers in the Bible? Let's take a look at the Genesis story of the flood.

[Genesis 7:11](#) In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. [Genesis 7:11 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 7:24](#) And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days. [Genesis 7:24 NKJV](#)

[Genesis 8:4](#) Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. [Genesis 8:4 NKJV](#)

From these three verses we have a span of 5 months and presumably the same span given as 150 days. Some simple math will reveal that in this case dividing 150 days by 5 months yields 30 days/month. Let's take a look at another.

[Revelation 11:1](#) Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. <sup>2</sup> "But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot [for] **forty-two months**. <sup>3</sup> "And I will give [power] to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy **one thousand two hundred and sixty days**, clothed in sackcloth." [Revelation 11:1-3 NKJV](#)

This prophecy in Revelation seem to equate a 42 month period with 1260 days. Dividing 1260 days by 42 months gives us 30 days/month which seems to support the use of uniform 30 day months in prophetic time.

[Revelation 12:13](#) Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male [Child]. <sup>14</sup> But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for **a time and times and half a time**, from the presence of the serpent. <sup>15</sup> So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. <sup>16</sup> But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. <sup>17</sup> And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> [see footnote] [Revelation 12:13-18 NKJV](#)

[Revelation 13:1](#) Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. <sup>2</sup> Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like [the feet of] a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. <sup>3</sup> And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. <sup>4</sup> So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who [is] like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" <sup>5</sup> And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for **forty-two months**. <sup>6</sup> Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. <sup>7</sup> It was granted to him to make war with

the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. <sup>8</sup> All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. <sup>9</sup> If anyone has an ear, let him hear. <sup>10</sup> He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. [Revelation 13:1-10 NKJV](#)

These verses we just read from Revelation seem to equate the "time, times and half a time," which I previously determined to be 3.5 years, to the 42 months which I also previously determined to be equivalent to 1260. If we divide 1260 days by 3.5 years, we get 360 days/year.

## Conclusion and Summary

I believe that based on these examples, not to mention the nice math of using the round numbers 30 and 360 rather than dealing with the fractions that would be involved with using lunar months or solar years, that prophetic time should be calculated in this way:

- The conversion from prophetic time to real time should be used if the prophecy is given in terms of symbols that represent something else
- 1 day in prophetic time is 1 year in real time
- 1 month in prophetic time is 30 days in prophetic time and 30 years in real time
- 1 year in prophetic time is 360 days in prophetic time and 360 years in real time
- 1 "time" is 1 year of prophetic time and 360 years in real time
- 1 "times" is 2 years of prophetic time and 720 years in real time
- 1 "half time" is 1/2 a year of prophetic time and 180 years in real time

# Appendix C – The age of the world

There has been much speculation about the age of the world and the universe. According to Wikipedia, secular science teaches the following:

- The universe is about 13.7 billion years old<sup>565</sup>
- The earth was formed about 4.57 billion years ago<sup>566</sup>
- Life began somewhere between 3.5 and 2.5 billion years ago<sup>567</sup>

Among Christian viewpoints, Young Earth Creationists (YEC), believe based on the biblical account in Genesis that life on earth began 5700-10000 years ago.<sup>568</sup> Some interesting numbers or beliefs from the YEC wiki page are:

- The earth and the universe were created by the God of the Bible in six literal days
- They believe the Bible is historically accurate, and a factually inerrant record of natural history
- The YEC view was the dominant view during the 1500-1800's
  - During this time James Ussher, an Archbishop who lived from 1582-1656, after extensive research published a creation date as the week preceding Sunday October 23, 4004 BC.<sup>569 570</sup>
  - Among the many proposed dates, Ussher's became most prominent, probably because it was published with the King James Bible
- Support for the YEC viewpoint declined after the 1800's with the rise of the scientific revolution
- YEC views had a revival with fundamentalist Christians in the 1900's
- Depending on the poll, 40-50% of people in the United States identify with the YEC viewpoint, but the number drops to only 22% among people with post graduate degrees
- A 2008 Gallup poll came up with the following statistics:
  - 36% of U.S. adults agreed with the statement that "human beings developed over millions of years from less advanced forms of life, but God guided this process."
  - 14% believed that "Human beings have developed over millions of years from less advanced forms of life, but God had no part in this process."
  - 44% of US adults agreed with the statement "God created human beings pretty much in their present form at one time within the last 10,000 years or so."

My beliefs are mostly in line with YEC views. I do not believe that God had to create the entire universe at the same time. He made our world to be consistent with the Genesis account. I feel that simply creating our own solar system or maybe our local cluster could have sufficed for creating sun moon and stars on the fourth day.

Now let's begin to discuss how one arrives at the figure of approximately 4000 BC for the creation of our world.

---

<sup>565</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline\\_of\\_the\\_Big\\_Bang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_Big_Bang)

<sup>566</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_the\\_Earth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Earth)

<sup>567</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abiogenesis>

<sup>568</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Young\\_Earth\\_creationism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Young_Earth_creationism)

<sup>569</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\\_Ussher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Ussher)

<sup>570</sup> [http://creation.com/images/pdfs/other/timeline\\_of\\_the\\_bible.pdf](http://creation.com/images/pdfs/other/timeline_of_the_bible.pdf)



- 1656 years from Adam to the flood
  - [Genesis 5](#) gives us a very clear genealogy from Adam down to Noah's birth which covers 1056 years (see [The Antediluvian World](#))
  - [Genesis 7:6](#) tells us that Noah was 600 years old when the flood came
- 222 years from the start of the flood to the birth of Terah, father of Abraham
  - [Genesis 8](#) tells us that Noah and his family came out of the ark in the 601<sup>st</sup> year of his life
  - [Genesis 11:10](#) gives us a time based genealogy from the second year after the flood, through 8 generations from the flood to the birth of Terah the father of Abraham. (see [Decreasing lifespan after the flood](#))
- 70 or 130 years: There is some debate about whether Abraham was born when Terah was 70 or 130 (see [Decreasing lifespan after the flood](#))
  - [Genesis 11:27](#) tells us that Terah didn't start having children until he was 70. Was Abraham the first born?
  - [Genesis 11:32-12:4](#) tells us that Terah died in Haran at 205 years of age, then Abraham left Haran at the age of 75 which would have made Terah 130 when Abraham was born
- 290 years from the birth of Abraham to the start of the Israelites sojourn in Egypt (See [Decreasing lifespan after the flood](#))
  - [Genesis 21:5](#) Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born
  - [Genesis 25:26](#) Isaac was 60 years old when Esau & Jacob were born
  - [Genesis 47:9](#) Jacob was 130 years old when he went to Egypt
- 215-430 years: There is some debate about how long the children of Israel were in Egypt (see [The length of the sojourn in Egypt](#))
  - [Genesis 15:13](#) prediction about his descendants mistreatment in Egypt for 400 years and four generations
  - [Exodus 12:40-41](#) says 430 years
  - [Exodus 6:16-20](#) names only the four generations with life span but not ages at birth as the earlier genealogies did
    - Levi 137 years, and in [The children of Israel enslaved, birth of Moses](#), I estimate Levi was 43 when he went to Egypt, meaning he lived there for 92 years
    - Kohath 133 years
    - Amram 137 years
    - Moses 80 years at the Exodus
  - [Acts 7:6](#) enslaved and mistreated for 400 years
  - [Galatians 3:17](#) 430 years from the covenant to Abraham to the ten commandments which are considered to have been given the year of the Exodus
- 479 years: [1 Kings 6:1](#) tells us that the fourth year of Solomon's reign was the 480<sup>th</sup> year after the Exodus
- 37 years: [2 Chronicles 9:30](#) tells us that Solomon reigned 40 years, so 40 minus the three above gives 37
- 345 years: The books of Kings and Chronicles gives us a fairly good idea of the duration of time from the end of Solomon's reign to the captivity of the Southern Kingdom of Judah to Babylon. Just adding up the length of reigns given in the Bible, one would arrive at 387. But Edwin Thiele showed that there must have been some overlapping reigns and in addition, you have to decide whether the transition year is counted for both king's reigns or not.<sup>571</sup> (see also [The divided kingdom](#))

<sup>571</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Mysterious\\_Numbers\\_of\\_the\\_Hebrew\\_Kings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Mysterious_Numbers_of_the_Hebrew_Kings)

- 70 years in Babylon: [Jeremiah 25:11,12](#); [29:10-14](#); [2 Chronicles 36:20-23](#); [Daniel 9:2](#); [Ezra 1:1](#)
- 538 years before Christ, according to multiple historical sources was when the Jews were released by Cyrus the Great and commissioned to rebuild the Jewish temple.<sup>572 573 574</sup>

Adding these numbers up, we get 3922-4197 years before Christ. It is not the purpose of this article to debate the 215 vs. 430 year sojourn in Egypt, nor the age of Terah at the birth of Abraham. The precise timeline of the Jewish kings has been a subject of intense study and research by many people. Edwin Thiele,<sup>575</sup> a Seventh-day Adventist, missionary, archaeologist, and scholar wrote a book titled, "[The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings](#)," on this topic.<sup>576</sup> In spite of these questions, if the pre and post flood chronologies are accepted at face value, and the days of creation are taken to be literal 24 hour days, it is pretty easy to arrive at the 6000 year age of the world since creation, which is what I believe.

---

What do you believe?

1. Do you believe that the Bible is a historically accurate book?
2. Do you think it's possible to be a scientist and believe in a 6000 year old earth?
3. How do you think the flood could have affected secular science's views on the age of the earth?

---

<sup>572</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple\\_in\\_Jerusalem#Second\\_Temple](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_in_Jerusalem#Second_Temple)

<sup>573</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/530s\\_BC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/530s_BC)

<sup>574</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline\\_of\\_Jewish\\_history#Biblical\\_period](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_Jewish_history#Biblical_period)

<sup>575</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edwin\\_R.\\_Thiele](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edwin_R._Thiele)

<sup>576</sup> [http://www.auss.info/auss\\_publication\\_file.php?pub\\_id=840&journal=1&type=pdf](http://www.auss.info/auss_publication_file.php?pub_id=840&journal=1&type=pdf), [copy on <http://btib.org/1992-1-03.pdf>]

# Appendix E – Hands, feet, eyes and ears of God

Have you ever wondered why God doesn't do more to provide for and protect the powerless and the defenseless in this world? Have you ever wondered whether God cared? As I have been studying the Bible, I have noticed that this topic comes up quite often. So I did a word search and gathered up most of the verses that have something to do with this. I searched for the following words in the context of us or God caring for this class of people, so if a verse simply described someone with one of these key words, I didn't include it. I do not claim this is an exhaustive search, including every applicable verse.

Word	Count
Poor	44
Orphan or fatherless	23
Alien, stranger, sojourner	21
Widow	20
Oppress or mistreat	17
Justice or Judgment	16
Destitute or needy	12
Afflicted or humble	3

So, does this word search tell us if God cares about the plight of this class of people? In some of these verses, God says that He will protect and defend them, but I found that in most cases He asks us to do it, and He condemns those who do the opposite.

I think most of us have this idea that the ancient Israelites failed God because they forsook Him and worshipped idols. But what I found in many cases was that, God condemned them for the exploitation and mistreatment of this class of people and did not even mention idolatry.

So why doesn't God just step in and take care of and protect these people all the time? I think there are several reasons.

1. I think that God and Satan have some ground rules about when and where they can intervene and impose their will. If not, what would prevent Satan from just possessing or killing anyone he wanted? I think you can see that he often works by getting people to do his evil deeds. In the same way God wants to use us to do His good work.
2. We were created with free will to choose and to learn by suffering the natural consequences of our choices. In many cases, intervening would negate the consequences of choices that were made either by the oppressed or the oppressor.
3. Just as there are natural consequences of making poor choices, I believe there are laws of nature that govern the consequences of making good decisions. In other words, by choosing to care for and defend this class of people, good consequences will naturally come to us. Now I'm not trying to say that for each good deed we perform, one good thing will happen to us. I'm saying that if you live a life where your general pattern is to do good for others, to treat people as you would like to be treated, the same should come back to you.

I am also not saying that sinners and bad people will never treat you poorly, but as it says in Ecclesiastes, what you give will eventually come back to you.

[Ecclesiastes 11:1](#) Cast your bread upon the waters, For you will find it after many days. [Ecclesiastes 11:1 NKJV](#)

Notice, that it doesn't say you will immediately find it. I think I should also add that I don't believe that the good that comes back will always be in the same form that you gave it.

So, if you wanted to allow yourself to become the eyes, ears, hands and feet of God, what are some things you can do?

- Can you go over to Africa and deal with the corrupt regimes who abuse their power and don't seem to care if their people are starving? [what can you do?]
- Can you spend billions of dollars on research and development as Bill Gates does to try to end malaria in third world countries? [what can you do?]
- Can you feed all the hungry people in your city, let alone your country or the world? [what can you do?]
- Can you provide shelter for homeless people in your city? [what can you do?]
- Can you prevent bad parents from abusing or neglecting their kids? [what can you do?]
- Can you adopt an orphan? [what can you do?]
- What was the plight of widows in Bible times? [how does that apply today?]
- What is an alien and how are they disadvantaged? [how can you help them?]

## Word search results:

[Exodus 22:22](#) "You shall not afflict any **widow** or **fatherless** child. [Exodus 22:22 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 22:25](#) "If you lend money to [any of] My people [who are] **poor** among you, you shall not be like a moneylender to him; you shall not charge him interest. [Exodus 22:25 NKJV](#)

[Exodus 23:6](#) "You shall not pervert the **judgment** of your **poor** in his dispute. [Exodus 23:6 NKJV](#)

[Leviticus 25:35](#) 'If one of your brethren becomes **poor**, and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him, like a **stranger** or a **sojourner**, that he may live with you. [Leviticus 25:35 NKJV](#)

[Leviticus 25:39](#) 'And if [one of] your brethren [who dwells] by you becomes **poor**, and sells himself to you, you shall not compel him to serve as a slave. [Leviticus 25:39 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 10:17](#) "For the LORD your God [is] God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. <sup>18</sup> "He administers **justice** for the **fatherless** and the **widow**, and loves the **stranger**, giving him food and clothing. <sup>19</sup> "Therefore love the **stranger**, for you were **strangers** in the land of Egypt. [Deuteronomy 10:17-19 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 14:28](#) "At the end of [every] third year you shall bring out the tithe of your produce of that year and store [it] up within your gates. <sup>29</sup> "And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the **stranger** and the **fatherless** and the **widow** who [are] within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do. [Deuteronomy 14:28-29 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 15:7](#) "If there is among you a **poor** man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your **poor** brother, <sup>8</sup> "but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs.

<sup>9</sup> "Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of release, is at

hand,' and your eye be evil against your **poor** brother and you give him nothing, and he cry out to the LORD against you, and it become sin among you. <sup>10</sup> "You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand. <sup>11</sup> "For the **poor** will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your **poor** and your **needy**, in your land.' <sup>12</sup> "If your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you and serves you six years, then in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. [Deuteronomy 15:7-12 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 24:10](#) "When you lend your brother anything, you shall not go into his house to get his pledge. <sup>11</sup> "You shall stand outside, and the man to whom you lend shall bring the pledge out to you. <sup>12</sup> "And if the man [is] **poor**, you shall not keep his pledge overnight. <sup>13</sup> "You shall in any case return the pledge to him again when the sun goes down, that he may sleep in his own garment and bless you; and it shall be righteousness to you before the LORD your God. [Deuteronomy 24:10-13 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 24:14](#) "You shall not **oppress** a hired servant [who is] **poor** and **needy**, [whether] one of your brethren or one of the **aliens** who [is] in your land within your gates. <sup>15</sup> "Each day you shall give [him] his wages, and not let the sun go down on it, for he [is] **poor** and has set his heart on it; lest he cry out against you to the LORD, and it be sin to you. [Deuteronomy 24:14-15 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 24:17](#) "You shall not pervert **justice** due the **stranger** or the **fatherless**, nor take a **widow's** garment as a pledge. [Deuteronomy 24:17 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 24:19](#) "When you reap your harvest in your field, and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the **stranger**, the **fatherless**, and the **widow**, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. <sup>20</sup> "When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the **stranger**, the **fatherless**, and the **widow**. <sup>21</sup> "When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean [it] afterward; it shall be for the **stranger**, the **fatherless**, and the **widow**. [Deuteronomy 24:19-21 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 26:12](#) "When you have finished laying aside all the tithe of your increase in the third year--the year of tithing--and have given [it] to the Levite, the **stranger**, the **fatherless**, and the **widow**, so that they may eat within your gates and be filled, <sup>13</sup> "then you shall say before the LORD your God: 'I have removed the holy [tithe] from [my] house, and also have given them to the Levite, the **stranger**, the **fatherless**, and the **widow**, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed Your commandments, nor have I forgotten [them]. [Deuteronomy 26:12-13 NKJV](#)

[Deuteronomy 27:19](#) 'Cursed [is] the one who perverts the **justice** due the **stranger**, the **fatherless**, and **widow**.' "And all the people shall say, 'Amen!' [Deuteronomy 27:19 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 10:12](#) Arise, O LORD!

O God, lift up Your hand!

Do not forget the **humble**.

<sup>13</sup> Why do the wicked renounce God?

He has said in his heart,

"You will not require [an account]."

<sup>14</sup> But You have seen, for You observe trouble and grief,

To repay [it] by Your hand.

The helpless commits himself to You;

You are the helper of the **fatherless**.

<sup>15</sup> Break the arm of the wicked and the evil [man];

Seek out his wickedness [until] You find none. [Psalm 10:12-15 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 82:3](#) Defend the **poor** and **fatherless**;

Do **justice** to the **afflicted** and **needy**. [Psalm 82:3 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 102:17](#) He shall regard the prayer of the **destitute**,

And shall not despise their prayer. [Psalm 102:17 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 140:12](#) I know that the LORD will maintain

The cause of the **afflicted**,

[And] **justice** for the **poor**. [Psalm 140:12 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 146:7](#) Who executes **justice** for the **oppressed**,

Who gives food to the hungry.

The LORD gives freedom to the prisoners. [Psalm 146:7 NKJV](#)

[Psalm 146:9](#) The LORD watches over the **strangers**;

He relieves the **fatherless** and **widow**;

But the way of the wicked He turns upside down. [Psalm 146:9 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 14:31](#) He who **oppresses** the **poor** reproaches his Maker,

But he who honors Him has mercy on the **needy**. [Proverbs 14:31 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 15:25](#) The LORD will destroy the house of the proud,

But He will establish the boundary of the **widow**. [Proverbs 15:25 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 19:17](#) He who has pity on the **poor** lends to the LORD,

And He will pay back what he has given. [Proverbs 19:17 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 21:13](#) Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the **poor**

Will also cry himself and not be heard. [Proverbs 21:13 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 22:9](#) He who has a generous eye will be blessed,

For he gives of his bread to the **poor**. [Proverbs 22:9 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 22:16](#) He who **oppresses** the **poor** to increase his [riches],

[And] he who gives to the rich, [will] surely [come] to poverty. [Proverbs 22:16 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 28:27](#) He who gives to the **poor** will not lack,

But he who hides his eyes will have many curses. [Proverbs 28:27 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 29:7](#) The righteous considers the cause of the **poor**,

[But] the wicked does not understand [such] knowledge. [Proverbs 29:7 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 29:14](#) The king who judges the **poor** with truth,

His throne will be established forever. [Proverbs 29:14 NKJV](#)

[Proverbs 31:20](#) She extends her hand to the **poor**,  
Yes, she reaches out her hands to the **needy**. [Proverbs 31:20 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 1:17](#) Learn to do good;  
Seek **justice**,  
Rebuke the **oppressor**;  
Defend the **fatherless**,  
Plead for the **widow**. [Isaiah 1:17 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 1:23](#) Your princes [are] rebellious,  
And companions of thieves;  
Everyone loves bribes,  
And follows after rewards.  
They do not defend the **fatherless**,  
Nor does the cause of the **widow** come before them. [Isaiah 1:23 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 3:14](#) The LORD will enter into **judgment**  
With the elders of His people  
And His princes:  
"For you have eaten up the vineyard;  
The plunder of the **poor** [is] in your houses.  
<sup>15</sup> What do you mean by crushing  
My people And grinding the faces of the **poor**?"  
Says the Lord GOD of hosts. [Isaiah 3:14-15 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 10:1](#) "Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees,  
Who write misfortune,  
[Which] they have prescribed  
<sup>2</sup> To rob the **needy** of **justice**,  
And to take what is right from the **poor** of My people,  
That **widows** may be their prey,  
And [that] they may rob the **fatherless**. [Isaiah 10:1-2 NKJV](#)

[Isaiah 58:6](#) "[Is] this not the fast that I have chosen:  
To loose the bonds of wickedness,  
To undo the heavy burdens,  
To let the **oppressed** go free,  
And that you break every yoke?  
<sup>7</sup> [Is it] not to share your bread with the hungry,  
And that you bring to your house the **poor** who are cast out;  
When you see the naked, that you cover him,  
And not hide yourself from your own flesh? [Isaiah 58:6-7 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 5:28](#) They have grown fat, they are sleek;  
Yes, they surpass the deeds of the wicked;  
They do not plead the cause,  
The cause of the **fatherless**;

Yet they prosper,  
And the right of the **needy** they do not defend. [Jeremiah 5:28 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 7:5](#) "For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute **judgment** between a man and his neighbor, <sup>6</sup> "[if] you do not **oppress** the **stranger**, the **fatherless**, and the **widow**, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, or walk after other gods to your hurt, <sup>7</sup> "then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever. [Jeremiah 7:5-7 NKJV](#)

[Jeremiah 22:3](#) 'Thus says the LORD: "Execute **judgment** and righteousness, and deliver the plundered out of the hand of the **oppressor**. Do no wrong and do no violence to the **stranger**, the **fatherless**, or the **widow**, nor shed innocent blood in this place. [Jeremiah 22:3 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 16:49](#) "Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the **poor** and **needy**. [Ezekiel 16:49 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 18:12](#) If he has **oppressed** the **poor** and **needy**,  
Robbed by violence,  
Not restored the pledge,  
Lifted his eyes to the idols,  
[Or] committed abomination; [Ezekiel 18:12 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 18:17](#) [Who] has withdrawn his hand from the **poor**  
[And] not received usury or increase,  
But has executed My **judgments**  
And walked in My statutes--  
He shall not die for the iniquity of his father;  
He shall surely live! [Ezekiel 18:17 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 22:6](#) "Look, the princes of Israel: each one has used his power to shed blood in you. <sup>7</sup> "In you they have made light of father and mother; in your midst they have **oppressed** the **stranger**; in you they have **mistreated** the **fatherless** and the **widow**. [Ezekiel 22:6-7 NKJV](#)

[Ezekiel 22:29](#) "The people of the land have used **oppressions**, committed robbery, and **mistreated** the **poor** and **needy**; and they wrongfully **oppress** the **stranger**. [Ezekiel 22:29 NKJV](#)

[Daniel 4:27](#) Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; break off your sins by [being] righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to [the] **poor**. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity." [Daniel 4:27 NKJV](#)

[Hosea 14:3](#) Assyria shall not save us,  
We will not ride on horses,  
Nor will we say anymore to the work of our hands,  
'[You are] our gods.'  
For in You the **fatherless** finds mercy." [Hosea 14:3 NKJV](#)

[Amos 4:1](#) Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who [are] on the mountain of Samaria,  
Who **oppress** the **poor**,  
Who crush the **needy**,



Who say to your husbands,  
"Bring [wine], let us drink!"

<sup>2</sup> The Lord GOD has sworn by His holiness:

"Behold, the days shall come upon you  
When He will take you away with fishhooks,  
And your posterity with fishhooks. [Amos 4:1-2 NKJV](#)

[Amos 5:11](#) Therefore, because you tread down the **poor**

And take grain taxes from him,  
Though you have built houses of hewn stone,  
Yet you shall not dwell in them;  
You have planted pleasant vineyards,  
But you shall not drink wine from them.

<sup>12</sup> For I know your manifold transgressions

And your mighty sins:  
Afflicting the just [and] taking bribes;  
Diverting the **poor** [from **justice**] at the gate. [Amos 5:11-12 NKJV](#)

[Zechariah 7:9](#) "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'Execute true **justice**,  
Show mercy and compassion  
Everyone to his brother.

<sup>10</sup> Do not **oppress** the **widow** or the **fatherless**,  
The **alien** or the **poor**.

Let none of you plan evil in his heart  
Against his brother.' [Zechariah 7:9-10 NKJV](#)

[Malachi 3:5](#) And I will come near you for **judgment**;

I will be a swift witness  
Against sorcerers,  
Against adulterers,  
Against perjurers,  
Against those who exploit wage earners and **widows** and **orphans**,  
And against those who turn away an **alien**--  
Because they do not fear Me,"  
Says the LORD of hosts. [Malachi 3:5 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 19:21](#) Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the **poor**, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." [Matthew 19:21 NKJV](#)

[Mark 10:21](#) Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the **poor**, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me." [Mark 10:21 NKJV](#)

[Luke 14:13](#) "But when you give a feast, invite [the] **poor**, [the] maimed, [the] lame, [the] blind. [Luke 14:13 NKJV](#)

[Luke 18:22](#) So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the **poor**, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." [Luke 18:22 NKJV](#)

[James 2:1](#) My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, [the Lord] of glory, with partiality. <sup>2</sup> For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a **poor** man in filthy clothes, <sup>3</sup> and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the **poor** man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," <sup>4</sup> have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? <sup>5</sup> Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the **poor** of this world [to be] rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? <sup>6</sup> But you have dishonored the **poor** man. Do not the rich **oppress** you and drag you into the courts? <sup>7</sup> Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called? [James 2:1-7 NKJV](#)

# Appendix F – Seventh year sabbaths and the year of Jubilee

The word sabbath is translated from the Hebrew [שַׁבָּת, shabbath](#)<sup>577</sup> which is used 108 in the KJV Old Testament. It is primarily used in reference to the seventh day Sabbath, but is also used in the context of seventh year sabbaths, and other days associated with Israelite festivals, that are to be observed as holy days. This particular discussion aims to focus on the purpose behind the seventh year sabbaths, which are primarily described in Leviticus 25 and Deuteronomy 15. Let's just begin by reading the relevant verses from these chapters.

[Deuteronomy 15:1](#) "At the end of [every] seven years you shall grant a release [of debts].<sup>2</sup> "And this [is] the form of the release: Every creditor who has lent [anything] to his neighbor shall release [it]; he shall not require [it] of his neighbor or his brother, because it is called the LORD's release.<sup>3</sup> "Of a foreigner you may require [it]; but you shall give up your claim to what is owed by your brother,<sup>4</sup> "except when there may be no poor among you; for the LORD will greatly bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess [as] an inheritance—<sup>5</sup> "only if you carefully obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe with care all these commandments which I command you today.<sup>6</sup> "For the LORD your God will bless you just as He promised you; you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow; you shall reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over you.

<sup>7</sup> "If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother,<sup>8</sup> "but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs.<sup>9</sup> "Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand,' and your eye be evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing, and he cry out to the LORD against you, and it become sin among you.<sup>10</sup> "You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand.<sup>11</sup> "For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land.'

<sup>12</sup> "If your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you and serves you six years, then in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you.<sup>13</sup> "And when you send him away free from you, you shall not let him go away empty-handed;<sup>14</sup> "you shall supply him liberally from your flock, from your threshing floor, and from your winepress. [From what] the LORD your God has blessed you with, you shall give to him.<sup>15</sup> "You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this thing today.<sup>16</sup> "And if it happens that he says to you, 'I will not go away from you,' because he loves you and your house, since he prospers with you,<sup>17</sup> "then you shall take an awl and thrust [it] through

<sup>577</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=H7676&t=NKJV>

his ear to the door, and he shall be your servant forever. Also to your female servant you shall do likewise. <sup>18</sup> "It shall not seem hard to you when you send him away free from you; for he has been worth a double hired servant in serving you six years. Then the LORD your God will bless you in all that you do. [Deuteronomy 15:1-18 NKJV](#)

[Leviticus 25:1](#) And the LORD spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give you, then the land shall keep a sabbath to the LORD. <sup>3</sup> 'Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruit; <sup>4</sup> 'but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the LORD. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard. <sup>5</sup> 'What grows of its own accord of your harvest you shall not reap, nor gather the grapes of your untended vine, [for] it is a year of rest for the land. <sup>6</sup> 'And the sabbath [produce] of the land shall be food for you: for you, your male and female servants, your hired man, and the stranger who dwells with you, <sup>7</sup> 'for your livestock and the beasts that [are] in your land--all its produce shall be for food.

<sup>8</sup> 'And you shall count seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years; and the time of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years. <sup>9</sup> 'Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth [day] of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land. <sup>10</sup> 'And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout [all] the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family. <sup>11</sup> 'That fiftieth year shall be a Jubilee to you; in it you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of its own accord, nor gather [the grapes] of your untended vine. <sup>12</sup> 'For it [is] the Jubilee; it shall be holy to you; you shall eat its produce from the field.

<sup>13</sup> 'In this Year of Jubilee, each of you shall return to his possession. <sup>14</sup> 'And if you sell anything to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor's hand, you shall not oppress one another. <sup>15</sup> 'According to the number of years after the Jubilee you shall buy from your neighbor, and according to the number of years of crops he shall sell to you. <sup>16</sup> 'According to the multitude of years you shall increase its price, and according to the fewer number of years you shall diminish its price; for he sells to you [according] to the number [of the years] of the crops. <sup>17</sup> 'Therefore you shall not oppress one another, but you shall fear your God; for I [am] the LORD your God.

<sup>18</sup> 'So you shall observe My statutes and keep My judgments, and perform them; and you will dwell in the land in safety. <sup>19</sup> 'Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill, and dwell there in safety.

<sup>20</sup> 'And if you say, "What shall we eat in the seventh year, since we shall not sow nor gather in our produce?"

<sup>21</sup> 'Then I will command My blessing on you in the sixth year, and it will bring forth produce enough for three years. <sup>22</sup> 'And you shall sow in the eighth year, and eat old produce until the ninth year; until its produce comes in, you shall eat [of] the old [harvest].

<sup>23</sup> 'The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land [is] Mine; for you [are] strangers and sojourners with Me.

<sup>24</sup> 'And in all the land of your possession you shall grant redemption of the land.

<sup>25</sup> 'If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold [some] of his possession, and if his redeeming relative comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold. <sup>26</sup> 'Or if the man has no one to redeem it, but he himself becomes able to redeem it, <sup>27</sup> 'then let him count the years since its sale, and restore the remainder to the man to whom he sold it, that he may return to his possession. <sup>28</sup> 'But if he is not able to have [it] restored to himself, then what was sold shall remain in the hand of him who bought it until the Year of Jubilee; and in the Jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his possession.

<sup>29</sup> 'If a man sells a house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold; [within] a full year he may redeem it. <sup>30</sup> 'But if it is not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house in the walled city shall belong permanently to him who bought it, throughout his generations. It shall not be released in the Jubilee. <sup>31</sup> 'However the houses of villages which have no wall around them shall be counted as the fields of the country. They may be redeemed, and they shall be released in the Jubilee. <sup>32</sup> 'Nevertheless the cities of the Levites, [and] the houses in the cities of their possession, the Levites may redeem at any time. <sup>33</sup> 'And if a man purchases a house from the Levites, then the house that was sold in the city of his possession shall be released in the Jubilee; for the houses in the cities of the Levites [are] their possession among the children of Israel. <sup>34</sup> 'But the field of the common-land of their cities may not be sold, for it [is] their perpetual possession.

<sup>35</sup> 'If one of your brethren becomes poor, and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you. <sup>36</sup> 'Take no usury or interest from him; but fear your God, that your brother may live with you. <sup>37</sup> 'You shall not lend him your money for usury, nor lend him your food at a profit. <sup>38</sup> 'I [am] the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan [and] to be your God.

<sup>39</sup> 'And if [one of] your brethren [who dwells] by you becomes poor, and sells himself to you, you shall not compel him to serve as a slave. <sup>40</sup> 'As a hired servant [and] a sojourner he shall be with you, [and] shall serve you until the Year of Jubilee. <sup>41</sup> 'And [then] he shall depart from you--he and his children with him--and shall return to his own family. He shall return to the possession of his fathers. <sup>42</sup> 'For they [are] My servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as slaves. <sup>43</sup> 'You shall not rule over him with rigor, but you shall fear your God. <sup>44</sup> 'And as for your male and female slaves whom you may have--from the nations that are around you, from them you may buy male and female slaves. <sup>45</sup> 'Moreover you may buy the children of the strangers who dwell among you, and their families who are with you, which they beget in your land; and they shall become your property. <sup>46</sup> 'And you may take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit [them as] a possession; they shall be your permanent slaves. But regarding your brethren, the children of Israel, you shall not rule over one another with rigor.

<sup>47</sup> 'Now if a sojourner or stranger close to you becomes rich, and [one of] your brethren [who dwells] by him becomes poor, and sells himself to the stranger [or] sojourner close to you, or to a member of the stranger's family, <sup>48</sup> 'after he is sold he may be redeemed again. One of his brothers may redeem him; <sup>49</sup> 'or his uncle or his uncle's son may redeem him; or [anyone] who is near of kin to him in his family may redeem him; or if he is able he may redeem himself. <sup>50</sup> 'Thus he shall reckon with him who bought him: The price of his release shall be according to the number of years, from the year that he was sold to him until the Year of Jubilee; [it shall be] according to the time of a hired servant for him. <sup>51</sup> 'If [there are] still many years [remaining], according to them he shall repay the price of his redemption from the money with which he was bought. <sup>52</sup> 'And if there remain but a few years until the Year of Jubilee, then he shall reckon with him, [and] according to his years he shall repay him the price of his redemption. <sup>53</sup> 'He shall be with him as a yearly hired servant, and he shall not rule with rigor over him in your sight. <sup>54</sup> 'And if he is not redeemed in these [years], then he shall be released in the Year of Jubilee--he and his children with him. <sup>55</sup> 'For the children of Israel [are] servants to Me; they [are] My servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt: I [am] the LORD your God. [Leviticus 25:1-55 NKJV](#)

Deuteronomy is all about release of debts and slaves on the sabbath year, while Leviticus is about the treatment of the land. Only Leviticus mentions the year of jubilee and the laws regarding redemption rights. I found [Leviticus 25:47](#) a little

confusing regarding who is allowed to eat the produce that grows naturally. [Verse 4](#) clearly says not to sow or prune, or harvest or gather. But [verses 6-7](#) say:

[Leviticus 25:6](#) 'And the sabbath [produce] of the land shall be food for you: for you, your male and female servants, your hired man, and the stranger who dwells with you, <sup>7</sup> 'for your livestock and the beasts that [are] in your land--all its produce shall be for food. [Leviticus 25:6-7 NKJV](#)

So, you are not supposed to sow, prune, harvest or gather, but “all of you shall have the sabbath products of the land for food?” I found the following verses from Exodus to possibly help clear up my confusion.

[Exodus 23:10](#) "Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its produce, <sup>11</sup> "but the seventh [year] you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat. In like manner you shall do with your vineyard [and] your olive grove. [Exodus 23:10-11 NKJV](#)

Here is an outline of what I gleaned from these chapters on sabbath years and the year of jubilee.

- Every seventh year is called a sabbath year
  - Israelites who have sold themselves as slaves must be freed, but do not send them away empty handed
    - Give them some livestock
    - Give them some food
  - Loans to Israelites are to be canceled, but you may continue to collect from foreigners
  - You shall not till the ground or plant or harvest from your fields
  - With God’s blessing, the sixth year will yield enough to live on for three years (is the extra produce the “sabbath products” in [verse 6](#)?)
  - It seems that the landowner and anyone living under his protection (including his livestock?) should not eat any of the produce of the ground in the seventh year, but the following who wouldn’t have the “sabbath products” stored up are allowed:
    - Needy in general
    - Slaves who have been set free that year
    - People who had been hired to work the land but are now unemployed
    - Foreigners
    - Beasts of the field
  - You are not allowed to take advantage of the needy in general by selling them food at a profit or loaning fellow Israelites money with interest. Perhaps that is one reason why God would bless with triple (rather than just double) produce on the sixth year.
- Seven cycles of seven years adds up to forty nine years. The fiftieth year is called the year of jubilee
  - Any land that has been sold is to be returned to the families that originally owned it
  - I believe the treatment of the land and its natural produce during that year is the same as that outlined for the seventh year’s
- The redemption laws allowed slaves to be freed and land to be returned without waiting for the sabbath and jubilee years with a payoff from a kinsman:
  - The kinsman should buy back their relative’s land that was sold. [[Leviticus 25:25-34](#)]
  - The kinsman should redeem their relative from slavery or servitude. [[Leviticus 25:47-54](#)]
  - Avenge the murder of a relative. [[Numbers 35:12,19-27](#), [Deuteronomy 19:11,12](#)]
  - To appear in a lawsuit as a helper for a relative. [[Proverbs 23:11](#), [Jeremiah 50:34](#), [Psalm 119:154](#)]
  - Produce an heir for a deceased brother. [[Deuteronomy 25:5,6](#)]

- But ultimately if there was no kinsman willing or able to fulfill the role, the sabbath and jubilee years were God's way of filling at least the first two roles. Of course, from a spiritual perspective (saving us from sin and Satan), God fulfills all five of the roles of the kinsman redeemer for us.

Rabbi Zev Farber wrote a nice article titled, *The Law of the Hebrew Slave: Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy*, where he compared and contrasted the law regarding release of slaves on sabbath years.<sup>578</sup>

I wanted to write down some thoughts that I have had regarding the care of the poor and homeless that seem to be related to these laws. I think most would agree that every person is different and that there will always be people who are more ambitious and hardworking and those who are less. I think most would also agree that there will always be people who are not able to take care of and provide for themselves, whether it is from age, physical or mental disability or plain laziness. If everything were to be kept equal all the time, there would be little incentive for the more ambitious to produce more than they needed, then they would have nothing to share with those who were in need. By hard and smart work, they were able to produce more food than they needed, thus allowing them to sell their surplus and in turn hire people to help them produce more. Those who didn't have the ability to plan and organize to produce, could hire themselves out as laborers, thus allowing them to buy food for their families. One of the limits I spoke of were that the wealthy were not to charge interest when loaning currency to their fellow Israelites. However human nature being what it is, some borrowers would naturally not be able to repay. In that case, they could sell their land or even themselves as slaves to the lender. This was not like the slavery in the early years of America, because God said they were to be treated as hired help. As a slave, a person would be guaranteed a job, food and a place to live, and I believe they could be compelled to work. I believe God realized it was necessary to allow people to accumulate land, hired help and even slaves to work it, otherwise some who didn't have the ability to produce food on their own and would starve. But every seven years debts would be canceled, and slaves freed, and every fifty years, all land was to be returned to the original families that owned it. I believe this system still allowed people to benefit from hard and smart work and retain some wealth through these corrections, but it also prevented entire families from being born into slavery because one of lazy ancestor. I think what God gave the Israelites was a free market economy with limits and periodic corrections.

Of course, with these rules or commands from God, the Israelites had to decide whether they would obey them or not. The very next chapter of Leviticus gives a pretty detailed description of what would happen if they did and if they didn't obey these and other laws God gave them.

[Leviticus 26:1](#) 'You shall not make idols for yourselves; neither a carved image nor a [sacred] pillar shall you rear up for yourselves; nor shall you set up an engraved stone in your land, to bow down to it; for I [am] the LORD your God. <sup>2</sup> You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary: I [am] the LORD. <sup>3</sup> 'If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them, [Leviticus 26:1-3 NKJV](#)

There are four things God mentions specifically that He required the Israelites to do or not do:

- NOT set up and bow down to idols
- Keep His sabbaths
- Reverence His sanctuary
- Keep His commandments

<sup>578</sup> <http://thetorah.com/hebrew-slave-exodus-leviticus-and-deuteronomy/>

This is followed in verses [4-13](#) with a detailed description of the blessings and good things God will do for them if they do as He says. Verses [14-26](#) tell of the punishments God will bring on the people if they disobey, in hopes that they will repent. Verse 27 through the end of the chapter is where the word desolate or desolation (in bold) is used:

[Leviticus 26:27](#) 'And after all this, if you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me, <sup>28</sup> then I also will walk contrary to you in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. <sup>29</sup> You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters. <sup>30</sup> I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars, and cast your carcasses on the lifeless forms of your idols; and My soul shall abhor you. <sup>31</sup> I will lay your cities waste and bring your sanctuaries to **desolation**, and I will not smell the fragrance of your sweet aromas. <sup>32</sup> I will bring the land to **desolation**, and your enemies who dwell in it shall be astonished at it. <sup>33</sup> I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be **desolate** and your cities waste. <sup>34</sup> Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as long as it lies **desolate** and you [are] in your enemies' land; then the land shall rest and enjoy its sabbaths. <sup>35</sup> As long as [it] lies **desolate** it shall rest--for the time it did not rest on your sabbaths when you dwelt in it. <sup>36</sup> 'And as for those of you who are left, I will send faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; the sound of a shaken leaf shall cause them to flee; they shall flee as though fleeing from a sword, and they shall fall when no one pursues. <sup>37</sup> They shall stumble over one another, as it were before a sword, when no one pursues; and you shall have no [power] to stand before your enemies. <sup>38</sup> You shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. <sup>39</sup> And those of you who are left shall waste away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; also in their fathers' iniquities, which are with them, they shall waste away. <sup>40</sup> '[But] if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, and that they also have walked contrary to Me, <sup>41</sup> and [that] I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt—<sup>42</sup> then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember; I will remember the land. <sup>43</sup> The land also shall be left empty by them, and will enjoy its sabbaths while it lies **desolate** without them; they will accept their guilt, because they despised My judgments and because their soul abhorred My statutes. <sup>44</sup> Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, nor shall I abhor them, to utterly destroy them and break My covenant with them; for I [am] the LORD their God. <sup>45</sup> But for their sake I will remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I [am] the LORD.' "

<sup>46</sup> These [are] the statutes and judgments and laws which the LORD made between Himself and the children of Israel on Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses. [Leviticus 26:27-46 NKJV](#)

As we know, the land of Israel was made desolate a couple times, after the destruction of the Temple and the entire city of Jerusalem. The first was in 586 BC by Nebuchadnezzar at the start of the seventy-year exile to Babylon.<sup>579</sup> The second was in AD 70 by the Romans.<sup>580</sup> I found it interesting that during the seventy year exile in Babylon, the land was desolate for seventy consecutive years, thus giving it seventy consecutive sabbath years' rest. If you multiply that by seven, you get a total of 490 years. Was this seventy years of desolation to make up for 490 years of not observing the sabbath year laws? I found it a little interesting that the monarchy in Jerusalem lasted almost 490 years. 345+120 (reigns of Saul, David, Solomon) = 465 years. [see chapter on [The age of the world](#) for the 345 years] Of the 147 times the word desolate is found in the NKJV, 81 of them occur in the books written by Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who were both around to see first-hand the desolation during the 70-year Babylonian exile.

<sup>579</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege\\_of\\_Jerusalem\\_\(587\\_BC\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_(587_BC))

<sup>580</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege\\_of\\_Jerusalem\\_\(AD\\_70\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_(AD_70))



What do you believe?

- Does the way it is written in the Bible seem almost as if the land is an animate object that needs the rest?
- Do you think that being a slave in the household of a very compassionate master is better than the poverty and hardship that some experience on their own?
- Why did God say in [Deuteronomy 15:4](#) that there would be no poor among them, then [3 verses](#) later He instructs them how to treat the poor, in fact the Bible is full of instruction regarding the treatment of the poor?

## Appendix G – Unanswered prayer

I imagine that every single person who has prayed more than once and made requests of God has had the experience of not always getting what they asked for. As a child I was told that God always answers, He just doesn't always give you what you want. There are many verses, quotes by Jesus, which have been memorized and recited as promises for answers to prayer. The problem with memory verses is that the text is usually lifted out of its context. Let's examine some of these statements, attempting to understand the context of each, then see if we can make a unifying statement about the topic.

[Matthew 7:7](#) "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup> "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. [Matthew 7:7-8 NKJV](#)

[Luke 11:9](#) "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup> "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. [Luke 11:9-10 NKJV](#)

These first two seemed completely unconditional on the surface. The context surrounding these words was that the disciples approached Jesus and asked Him to teach them how to pray. He taught them what we call the Lord's Prayer, but followed that up with the teaching that these verses are a part of. Immediately surrounding these verses He spoke of being persistent in our requests, and followed it up with an illustration that even sinful human fathers like to give good things to their children, so how much more will our Heavenly Father want to give good things to those who ask. So even though the statements seem unconditional if isolated, He speaks of persistence, which doesn't imply immediate answers. He also is talking about asking for things that are good for us.

[Matthew 17:20](#) So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. [Matthew 17:20 NKJV](#)

[Matthew 21:20](#) And when the disciples saw [it], they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither away so soon?" <sup>21</sup> So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. [Matthew 21:20-22 NKJV](#)

[Mark 11:22](#) So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. <sup>23</sup> "For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. <sup>24</sup> "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive [them], and you will have [them]. [Mark 11:22-24 NKJV](#)

[Luke 17:6](#) So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. [Luke 17:6 NKJV](#)

The next four, even though they sound similar did not all come from the same teaching of Jesus. The first is after the Transfiguration when Jesus came down from the mountain and cast a demon out of a boy. The disciples wanted to

know why they couldn't do it. The next two were from the day after Jesus cursed the barren fig tree and the disciples were amazed that it was already withered. The fourth, from Luke, is in response to a request from the disciples to increase their faith. The larger context is a teaching session apparently in front of disciples, possibly some Pharisees and teachers of the Laws, and probably the general public. The first thing to notice is that faith or belief is a condition of receiving the answer to our prayer. What seems strange in this case is that the example Jesus gave of requesting that a mountain or tree be move from its place into the sea, doesn't seem to be practical or beneficial for our eternal salvation. The question is, how is quantity of faith measured? Maybe most of us have never truly had the kind of Faith Jesus had when He lived here on earth. How many of us have prayed for the mountain to be cast into the sea and when it didn't happen, say to ourselves, I didn't really think it would happen. What does that say about your faith? I believe there are plenty of examples in the Bible of prophets and apostles having the faith to perform miracles. There is even an example of someone in the Bible making an outrageous, useless request just to see if God really mean what He said [[Judges 6:36-40](#)]. I guess what I could conclude here is that if we truly had the faith and belief that was required to perform miracles, we might be at a place where we wouldn't be making useless requests of God. If we had that level of faith in God, we wouldn't need signs from Him.

[Mark 9:23](#) And Jesus said to him, "'If You can?' All things are possible to him who believes." [Mark 9:23 NKJV](#)

[John 15:7](#) "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. [John 15:7 NKJV](#)

The next two are not from the same occasion or teaching by Jesus. The first is actually Jesus talking to the father of the demon possessed boy from the same incident of the [Matthew 17:20](#) example quoted above. Clearly belief is a requirement for receiving what we ask of God, which is essentially the same thing Jesus told His disciples. [John 15:7](#) is from the teaching Jesus gave the disciples between the Last Supper and the Garden of Gethsemane about the vine and the branches. I wrote a chapter about this conversation [[Jesus is the vine and we are the branches](#)]. In that chapter we discussed that there were different levels of abiding, from the branch that is connected but not bearing fruit, that Jesus said would be cut off, to the branch that bears fruit. Presumably this statement is in regard to the branch that is bearing fruit. I think we have the notion of a deeper connection with Jesus, perhaps a relationship which would influence the type of request we would make of God.

[John 14:12](#) "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater [works] than these he will do, because I go to My Father. <sup>13</sup> "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> "If you ask anything in My name, I will do [it]. [John 14:12-14 NKJV](#)

[John 15:16](#) "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and [that] your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. [John 15:16 NKJV](#)

[John 16:23](#) "And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. <sup>24</sup> "Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. [John 16:23-24 NKJV](#)

The last three statements by Jesus all have in common that the request is being made in His name. One might ask if these statements were made to the disciples, which they were between the Last Supper and the Garden of Gethsemane, do they apply to every single human being? Would it not be taking these statements out of context to claim them without putting ourselves in the place of the disciples? What type of requests were the disciples making in Jesus name during the start of the early church? If we find ourselves having the same spirit as the Apostles, doing the same work for God, making requests in Jesus name, I believe that is where the promise might apply to us as well.

[1 John 5:14](#) Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.  
<sup>15</sup> And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. [1 John 5:14-15 NKJV](#)

[James 1:5](#) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. <sup>6</sup> But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. [James 1:5-6 NKJV](#)

[James 5:15](#) And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. [James 5:15 NKJV](#)

[1 John 3:22](#) And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. [1 John 3:22 NKJV](#)

The next four are not statements by Jesus but by those of the Apostles and those carrying on the work of Jesus after He went back to heaven. In combination, the answer is dependent on faith, belief and compliance with God's will.

To summarize, let me start by saying that we can probably all agree that it is not in the best interest of a child to get everything they ask for. If prayer was just about saying the right words and getting what you asked for, then it would be like a magic incantation. God is not like a genie in a bottle granting a certain quantity of unconditional requests. What I am concluding is that to claim these promises of answers to prayer, one should be connected to Jesus, doing His work and have faith that He will do what is best. I am not at all saying that God will never answer prayer outside of this framework, but I think possibly this is where Jesus was coming from when He made these statements.

---

What do you believe?

- Do you think faith the size of a mustard seed is a lot or just a little?
- How can you quantify faith by size?
- Have you ever sincerely prayed a prayer that you were sure was God's will but didn't get the answer you wanted?

# Appendix H – Women at the cross and tomb

There were several women named, who were at the cross when Jesus died, and who were the first at the tomb on resurrection morning. Let's tabulate the four Gospel accounts and see what bubbles to the surface.

<p><a href="#">Matthew 27:55</a> And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, <sup>56</sup> among whom were <b>Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses</b>, and the mother of Zebedee's sons. <a href="#">Matthew 27:55-56 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Mark 15:40</a> There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were <b>Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses</b>, and Salome, <a href="#">Mark 15:40 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 23:49</a> But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things. <a href="#">Luke 23:49 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">John 19:25</a> Now there stood by the cross of Jesus <b>His mother</b>, and His <b>mother's sister</b>, <b>Mary the [wife] of Clopas</b>, and <b>Mary Magdalene</b>. <a href="#">John 19:25 NKJV</a></p>
<p><a href="#">Matthew 27:61</a> And <b>Mary Magdalene</b> was there, and the <b>other Mary</b>, sitting opposite the tomb. <a href="#">Matthew 27:61 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Mark 15:47</a> And <b>Mary Magdalene</b> and <b>Mary [the mother] of Joses</b> observed where He was laid. <a href="#">Mark 15:47 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 23:55</a> And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. <sup>56</sup> Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment. <a href="#">Luke 23:55-56 NKJV</a></p>	

<p><a href="#">Matthew 28:1</a> Now after the Sabbath, as the first [day] of the week began to dawn, <b>Mary Magdalene</b> and the <b>other Mary</b> came to see the tomb. <a href="#">Matthew 28:1 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Mark 16:1</a> Now when the Sabbath was past, <b>Mary Magdalene, Mary [the mother] of James,</b> and <b>Salome</b> bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. <a href="#">Mark 16:1 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Luke 24:1</a> Now on the first [day] of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain [other women] with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. ... <sup>10</sup> It was <b>Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary [the mother] of James,</b> and the other [women] with them, who told these things to the apostles. <a href="#">Luke 24:1, 10 NKJV</a></p>	<p><a href="#">John 20:1</a> Now on the first [day] of the week <b>Mary Magdalene</b> went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw [that] the stone had been taken away from the tomb. <a href="#">John 20:1 NKJV</a></p>
--	---	---	---

Even though only John mentions it, I think there would be no argument that **Mary the mother of Jesus** was at the cross.

Luke only mentions names of the women who went to the tomb on resurrection morning almost as an afterthought. Now if we consider that there were three occasions that names were mentioned: who was at the cross, the burial, and the empty tomb. Multiply that by four, but Luke doesn't mention names for two and John doesn't mention who went with Joseph and Nicodemus to the tomb, so that leaves nine.

**Mary Magdalene** was mentioned in all nine, so there should also be no argument that she was there.

Next there is another **Mary, the mother of James and Joseph (or Joses)** who was mentioned five times. For the second and third incidents, Matthew refers to "**the other Mary.**" John refers to a **Mary the wife of Clopas** and **sister of His mother**. If we choose to believe that these all refer to the same Mary, some interesting relationships arise. If we assume James the less is the disciple also known as James the son of Alphaeus, then one of Jesus' disciples was His cousin, and the names Clopas and Alphaeus refer to the same person. Even though these associations cannot be proved or disproved, there have been church traditions, in support of them.<sup>581 582</sup> If this is true, I find it strange that there was no point made of the relationship in any of the four Gospels.

A third person named **Salome** is mentioned in Mark, and a third person who was the **mother of the sons of Zebedee** is named in Matthew. If the third woman in both of these mentions was the same, then we can assume that Salome was the wife of Zebedee and the mother of James and John. Even though much less was said about this person, there have also been church traditions in support of this association as well.

Finally Luke mentions **Joanna**, who was named with Mary Magdalene as one of those who financially supported Jesus [[Luke 8:3](#)]. Luke also says that there were other women with them, who presumably went to the tomb, and were then trying to convince the disciples that Jesus had risen. I would like to believe that Susanna, who was also one of the financial supporters [[Luke 8:3](#)], was there as well.

<sup>581</sup> <http://www.internationalstandardbible.com/A/alphaeus.html>

<sup>582</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James,\\_son\\_of\\_Alphaeus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James,_son_of_Alphaeus)

What do you believe?

- Why do you think Mary Magdalene was mentioned so often in the Gospels?
- In such a patriarchal culture, why were these women mentioned?
- Do you think some of these women spent as much time with Jesus as the twelve disciples?