

1. (118)

JESUS' APPROACH TO JERUSALEM

Matthew 21:1-9; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:28-40; John
12:12-19

The morning after His meal with Lazarus, Jesus continued on His way to Jerusalem (John 12:12). It was probably the first day of the week.

As He got underway, He said to two of His disciples,

“Go to the village ahead of you,
and at once you will find
a donkey tied there, with her colt by her.
Untie them and bring them to me.”

Matthew 21:2 NIV

Jesus also said,

“If anyone asks you,
‘Why are you doing this?’
tell him, ‘The Lord needs it
and will send it back here shortly.’”

Mark 11:3 NIV

The two disciples went and found the donkey and a colt, tied just as Jesus had said. Some of the people standing there asked, “What are you doing, untying that colt” (Mark 11:5 NIV)?

The two disciples answered as Jesus had told them to answer, and the people let the animals go (Mark 11:6).

The two disciples then brought the animals to Jesus. They threw their cloaks over the animals, and Jesus sat on them (Matthew 21:7).

The Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 21:4) says this took place to fulfill Old Testament prophecy that the Messiah would enter Jerusalem riding on a donkey. Matthew quotes,

“Say to the Daughter of Zion,
‘See, your king comes to you,
gentle and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”

Matthew 21:5 NIV (Zechariah 9:9)

However, the disciples did not, at that time, realize that these things were happening in fulfillment of prophecy. It was only after Jesus had been glorified that they recalled that such things had been written about Him (John 12:16).

Many people had come to Jerusalem (John 12:12) for the Passover. Those of them that had witnessed the awakening of Lazarus were telling everyone about it (John 12:17). So when the people heard that Jesus was approaching the city, many of them went out to meet Him.

When they met up with Him, they accompanied Him on His way to Jerusalem. Some went on ahead and some followed behind (Matthew 21:9a). They were shouting,

“Hosanna to the Son of David!”
Blessed is he
who comes in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest!”

Matthew 21:9b NIV

They also shouted,

“Blessed is the coming kingdom
of our father David!”

Mark 11:10a NIV

Further, they shouted,

“Blessed is the King of Israel!”

John 12:13c NIV

Many of the people spread their cloaks ahead of Jesus, as He made His way toward the city. Others cut off branches from trees in the fields and spread them ahead of Him (Mark 11:8; Luke 19:36).

As He came near the place where the road goes down from the Mount of Olives to the Kidron Valley, the whole crowd began to praise God joyfully, with loud voices. They praised God because of all the miracles they had seen (Luke 19:37). They shouted,

“Blessed is the king
who comes in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

Luke 19:38 NIV

The Pharisees, however, could not tolerate hearing Jesus praised in such magnificent terms; so they said to Him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples” (Luke 19:39 NIV)!

To them Jesus replied,

“I tell you, if they keep quiet,
the stones will cry out.”

Luke 19:40 NIV

The Pharisees were frustrated over the good reception that Jesus was receiving from the people. They said to one another, “See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him” (John 12:19 NIV)!

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. The Gospel of Matthew leaves the impression that Jesus may have sat on both the donkey and the colt (Matthew 21:7). Do you have any idea how He did this?
2. What were the people asserting when they shouted “Hosanna to the Son of David,” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord,” “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David,” and “Blessed is the King of Israel?” Were they asserting that Jesus was the Christ (Messiah)? What do you think?
3. Jesus did not rebuke His disciples for such elaborate praise? Why did He not? What do you think?
4. Was the manner in which Jesus approached Jerusalem an open declaration of His Messiahship? What do you think?

2. (119)
JESUS' TRIUMPHAL ENTRANCE INTO
JERUSALEM
Matthew 21:10-11; Mark 11:11; Luke 19:41-44

As Jesus approached Jerusalem, He looked out over the city and tears came to His eyes (Luke 19:41).

As if speaking to the city, He said wistfully,

“If you, even you,
had only known
on this day what would bring you peace--”
Luke 19:42a NIV

He sadly conceded,

“...but now it is hidden from your eyes.”
Luke 19:42b NIV

He made a dire prediction about what was going to happen to Jerusalem. He said,

“The days will come upon you
when your enemies will build
an embankment against you
and encircle you
and hem you in on every side.

They will dash you to the ground,
you and the children within your walls.”
Luke 19:43-44a

Jesus explained why this would happen. He said,
“They will not leave one stone on another,
because you did not recognize
the time when God came to inspect you.”
Luke 19:44b

When Jesus finally entered the city, all the people of Jerusalem were excited. They asked, “Who is this” (Matthew 21:10 NIV)?

Some people, who were not fully aware of who Jesus was, answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee” (Matthew 21:11 NIV).

The first thing that Jesus did upon entering the city of Jerusalem as its King, was to go up to the temple area and look around at everything.

Since it was already late in the day, however, He did not do very much at the temple that day (Mark 11:11). Instead, He returned to Bethany with His disciples, where He spent the night.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. What was Jesus talking about when He said, “The days will come...when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side” (Luke 19:43 NIV)? Was He predicting

the encirclement and destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD? What do you think?

2. Jesus said that the people of Jerusalem did not realize that God had come to inspect them (Luke 19:44)? What does that mean? Does it mean that God came to them in Jesus and they did not realize who He was? What do you think?
3. If the people of Jerusalem had understood who Jesus was, and if they had received Him as their King, would it have made a difference in what later happened to them? What do you think?

3. (120)

JESUS CAUSED A FIG TREE TO WITHER and HE CLEARED OUT THE TEMPLE

Matthew 21:12-22; Mark 11:12-19; Luke 19:45-48

According to the order of events, as given in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus and His disciples left Bethany (Mark 11:12) early the next morning, the morning after His triumphal entrance into Jerusalem.

On His way back to Jerusalem, Jesus got hungry (Matthew 21:18); and He saw, from a distance, a fig tree by the side of the road. It was too early in the year for figs to be ripe (Mark 11:13), but the tree did have leaves on it. The leaves suggested that the tree might, at least, have green figs, which poor people sometimes ate.

When Jesus and His disciples got to where the tree was, they found no figs on it at all. So Jesus said to the tree,

“May no one
ever eat fruit from you again.”

Mark 11:14 NIV

Jesus’ disciples heard Him say this (Mark 11:14), but they were amazed as they watched the fig tree wither (Matthew 21:20a).

They asked Jesus, “How did the fig tree wither so quickly” (Matthew 21:20b NIV)?

Jesus replied,

“I tell you the truth,
if you have faith and do not doubt,
not only can you do
what was done to the fig tree,
but also you can say to this mountain,
‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’
and it will be done.”

Matthew 21:21 NIV

He added,

“If you believe,
you will receive
whatever you ask for in prayer.”

Matthew 21:22 NIV

After saying this, Jesus continued on His way to Jerusalem.

When He got to Jerusalem, He went up to the temple and began driving the people out that were buying and selling things. He overturned their tables (Mark 11:15) and would not allow anyone to carry a container through the temple area (Mark 11:16).

He said,

“Is it not written:

‘My house will be called

a house of prayer for all nations?’

But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’”

Mark 11:17 NIV; Isaiah 56:7

Then blind and lame people came to Him and He healed them (Matthew 21:14).

The chief priests and scribes saw the amazing things that Jesus did; and they heard the children shouting in the temple area: “Hosanna to the Son of David.” All of this caused them to become extremely indignant; and they said to Jesus, “Do you hear what these children are saying?”

He replied,

“Yes,

have you never read,

‘From the lips of children and infants

you have ordained praise.’”

Matthew 21:16 NIV; Psalm 8:2

The chief priests and the scribes feared Jesus, because all the people were enthralled with His teaching (Mark 11:18) and hung on His every word (Luke 19:47-48).

Therefore, the chief priests and scribes wanted to kill Him, but they could not find a way to do it.

When evening came, Jesus and His disciples left Jerusalem and returned to Bethany (Matthew 21:17 and Mark 11:19).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Jesus caused the fig tree to wither because it did not bear fruit. Is there a lesson in this for us? If so, what is the lesson?
2. Is there a sense in which all people, Christians and non-Christians alike, can accomplish great things if they believe they can? What do you think?
3. Did Jesus mean that everyone that has faith can cause a tree to wither by speaking to it? Or did He mean that His apostles would be able to do things like that, provided they had faith? What do you think?
4. When Christian people pray, should they expect that their requests will be granted? See John 15:7.
5. Was this the first time that Jesus had cleared out the temple area? See John 2:13-22.

6. What was wrong with people exchanging money and selling doves in the temple area? Please explain.
7. Why were the chief priests and the scribes afraid of Jesus? What do you think?

4. (121)

THE FIG TREE AGAIN and JESUS' AUTHORITY QUESTIONED

Matthew 21:23-27; Mark 11:20-33; Luke 20:1-8

After Jesus and His disciples had spent another night at Bethany, they returned to Jerusalem.

As they walked along, they passed the fig tree, which Jesus had caused to wither the day before, and they saw that it had withered from the roots (Mark 11:20).

The apostle Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered” (Mark 11:21 NIV).

Jesus then reinforced His remarks of the day before, saying,

“Have faith in God.
I tell you the truth,
if anyone says to this mountain,

‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’
and does not doubt in his heart
but believes that what he says will happen,
it will be done for him.”

Mark 11:22-23 NIV

Jesus added,

“Therefore I tell you,
whatever you ask for in prayer,
believe that you have received it,
and it will be yours.”

Mark 11:24 NIV

Jesus also said,

“And when you stand praying,
if you hold anything against anyone,
forgive him,
so that your Father in heaven
may forgive you your sins.”

Mark 11:25 NIV

When they reached Jerusalem, Jesus went up to the
temple and walked about (Mark 11:27). As He was
teaching and preaching the gospel (Luke 20:1), a

delegation of the most powerful and learned men of the nation came to Him. It was composed of chief priests, scribes, and elders of the people. They wanted to know by what authority He was doing all these things. They demanded, “Who gave you this authority” (Luke 20:2)?

He replied,

“I will ask you one question.
Answer me, and I will tell you
by what authority I am doing these things.”
Mark 11:29 NIV

Jesus’ question had to do with John the Baptist. Jesus asked,

“John’s baptism--
where did it come from?
Was it from heaven, or from men?”
Matthew 21:25a NIV

They discussed it among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From men’--we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet” (Matthew 21:25b-26 NIV).

So they answered, “We do not know where it was from” (Luke 20:7 NIV).

Then Jesus said to them,

“Neither will I tell you
by what authority I am doing these things.”

Mark 11:33 NIV

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Jesus said, “If anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him” (Mark 11:22-23 NIV). Was Jesus talking about a person who has faith in his or in her own ability to accomplish things? Or was Jesus talking about a person who has faith in God’s help? Is there a difference? What do you think?
2. Is the promise found in Mark 11:24 a promise for everyone or only for those people who love Jesus and walk in His ways? What do you think?
3. Do Christian people sometimes have to prove that they have faith by supplementing it with action? What do you think?
4. Does God sometimes grant our requests in ways that we do not anticipate? Can you give an example from your own experience?

5. Does God sometimes say “no” to our requests? Are you prepared to accept His decision with regards to your requests?
6. Will God forgive us if we do not forgive others? See Mark 11:25.

5. (122)
THE PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS
Matthew 21:28-32

Jesus told the following parable to a delegation of religious leaders that questioned His authority. He said to them,

“What to you think?
There was a man who had two sons.
He went to the first and said,
“Son, go and work today
in the vineyard.”

Matthew 21:28 NIV

The son said, “I will not,” but later changed his mind and went and worked in His father’s vineyard (Matthew 21:29).

Jesus continued His parable by saying,

“Then the father went to the other son
and said the same thing.
He answered, ‘I will, sir,..’”

Matthew 21:30a NIV

But that son did not go (Matthew 21:30b).

So Jesus asked the leaders that had questioned His authority,

“Which of the two did
what his father wanted?”

Matthew 21:31a NIV

“The first,” they answered.

Then Jesus said to them,

“I tell you the truth,
the tax collectors and the prostitutes
are entering the kingdom of God
ahead of you.”

Matthew 21:31b NIV

Jesus explained the point of His Parable about the Two Sons. He said,

“For John [the Baptist] came to you
to show you the way of righteousness,
and you did not believe him,
but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did.
And even after you saw this,
you did not repent and believe him.”

Matthew 21:32 NIV

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Which of the two sons in Jesus' parable did the religious leaders most resemble, the first or the second? Please explain.
2. It seems that more tax collectors and prostitutes (Matthew 21:32) followed Jesus than religious leaders. Why was that? What do you think?
3. Religious leaders should be the first to follow Jesus. Yet this is often not the case. Why is it so difficult for some religious leaders to do what Jesus said? What do you think?
4. Are there people today who want to enjoy the blessings, which come from being a child of God, but who are not willing to work in His kingdom? What do you think?

6. (123)

THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED TENANTS

Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19

Jesus had just finished telling a parable to the religious leaders. It was a parable about a man that had two sons. One of the sons obeyed his father and the other did not.

Afterwards, Jesus told the religious leaders a parable about a landowner that had planted a vineyard. In the parable, the landowner put a wall around his vineyard, dug a winepress in it, and built a watchtower over it.

Then he rented out his vineyard to tenants and went on a long journey (Matthew 21:33).

When the harvest came, the owner of the vineyard sent a slave to the tenants to collect a part of the fruit of the vineyard (Mark 12:2); but the tenants seized the slave, beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. (Mark 12:3).

Then the owner sent another slave. This one they struck on the head and treated shamefully (Mark 12:4). Him, too, they sent away empty-handed.

The owner sent yet a third slave. Him they wounded and threw out of the vineyard (Luke 20:12).

In the course of time, the owner sent many other slaves.

Some they beat and some they killed. (Mark 12:5).

Finally, the owner of the vineyard said to himself,

“What shall I do?
I will send my son, whom I love;
perhaps they will respect him.”

Luke 20:13 NIV

Last of all, the owner sent his only son. But when the tenants saw the son, they said to one another, “This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours” (Mark 12:7 NIV).

So, as the tenants were throwing the son out of the vineyard, they killed him (Luke 20:15).

At this point, Jesus asked His listeners,

“Therefore,
when the owner of the vineyard comes,
what will he do to those tenants?”

Matthew 21:40 NIV

They replied, “He will put those horrible men to a horrible death. Then he will lease the vineyard to other farmers who will give him his produce at harvest time” (Matthew 21:41 ISV).

Jesus agreed with their answer and added,

“He will come
and destroy those vinedressers
and give the vineyard to others.”

Luke 20:16 NIV

The religious leaders apparently understood that Jesus meant that their nation would be taken away from them and be given to others, for they said, “May this never be” (Luke 20:16b NIV).

Whereupon, Jesus looked straight at them and asked,

“Have you never read in the Scriptures
‘The stone the builders rejected
has become the capstone;
the Lord has done this,
and it is marvelous in our eyes?’”

Matthew 21:42 NIV; Psalm 118:22-23

He continued,

“Therefore I tell you
that the kingdom of God
will be taken away from you
and given to a people
who will produce its fruit.”

Matthew 21:43 NIV

Then He warned,

“He who falls on this stone
will be broken to pieces,
but he on whom it falls will be crushed.”

Matthew 21:44 NIV

The religious leaders knew that Jesus had spoken this parable against them (Luke 20:19); so they looked for a way to arrest Him immediately.

However, they were afraid of the people, who held Jesus for a prophet (Matthew 21:46). So the leaders left Jesus and went away (Mark 12:12).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. In the Parable of the Wicked Tenants, the “owner of the vineyard” represents someone. Who is the owner?
2. Who are the “wicked tenants” in this parable? Who are the “slaves,” who were sent to the wicked tenants?
3. Was Jesus referring to Himself when He spoke of “the stone,” which “the builders rejected (Matthew 21:42)? What do you think?
4. Jesus said, “He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed” (Matthew 21:44 NIV)? Did Jesus think it would go badly with the children of Israel if they rejected Him? What do you think?
5. Did Jesus think it possible that the kingdom of God would be taken from Israel and given to others? What do you think? See Matthew 21:43.

6. Was the kingdom of God actually taken away from Israel and given to others? If so, why was it taken away and to whom was it given? When was it taken away from them? What do you think?

7. (124)

THE PARABLE OF THE WEDDING FEAST

Matthew 22:1-15

As we have seen, a group of religious leaders came to Jesus as He was teaching at the temple, and they were questioning Him about His authority (Matthew 21:23).

Jesus was replying to them with parables that were critical of them.

For that reason, they were looking for a way to arrest Him; but they had not found a way to do it as yet (Matthew 22:45-46).

In spite of their hostility, Jesus told them another parable. It was about a wedding feast. He said,

“The kingdom of heaven is like a king
who prepared a wedding feast
for his son.”

Matthew 22:2

When everything was ready, the king sent some of his slaves to tell the invited guests to come, but they did not want to attend (Matthew 22:3.)

So the king sent other slaves with a more urgent message, saying,

“Tell those that have been invited
that I have prepared my meal:
My oxen and fattened cattle
have been butchered,
and everything is ready.
Come to the wedding feast.”

Matthew 22:4

The invited guests, however, disregarded this invitation, too. One of them went away to his field and another one to his business (Matthew 22:5). Others of them seized the king's slaves, mistreated them, and killed them (Matthew 22:6).

Jesus said,

“The king was enraged.
He sent his army
and destroyed those murderers
and burned their city.”

Matthew 22:7 NIV

The king remarked to his slaves,

“The wedding feast is ready,

but those that were invited
were not worthy.”

Matthew 22:8

Then the king commanded his slaves, saying,

“Go to where all the streets intersect
and whomever you find
invite to the wedding.”

Matthew 22:9

So the slaves went out into the streets and gathered
everyone they found, both bad people and good; and the
wedding hall was filled with guests (Matthew 22:10).

Now, when the king came in to observe the guests, he
noticed a certain man present that was not dressed in
wedding clothes; and he asked him,

“Fellow, how did you get in here
without wedding clothes?”

Matthew 22:12

The man did not have anything to say; so the king told
the attendants,

“Tie him hand and foot,
and throw him outside,
into the darkness,
where there will be weeping
and gnashing of teeth.”

Matthew 22:13 NIV

Jesus concluded His parable by remarking,

“For many are called [invited],
but few are chosen.”

Matthew 22:14

After Jesus had said this, the Pharisees went away and discussed among themselves how they could possibly entrap Him in something He might say (Matthew 22:15).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. The guests that were originally invited to the wedding feast represent someone? Whom do they represent?
2. Is God willing for bad people to be in His kingdom? If He is not willing, why did Jesus say that “bad people” were brought in from the streets? How do you explain this?

3. One of the guests was not wearing wedding clothes. Why was that guest not permitted to stay at the feast? What do you think?

4. Were the bad people that came to the feast expected to change their ways? Were they expected to change their ways before they got to the feast? What do you think?

5. Jesus said, “For many are called [invited], but few are chosen” (Matthew 22:14). What did He mean by that? What do you think?

6. Did you notice that Jesus implied that more people were “called” (invited) than were “chosen?” Is it true today that Jesus invites more people into His kingdom than are chosen to be in the kingdom? On what basis are people chosen?

8. (125)

PAYING TAX TO CAESAR

Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17; Luke 20:20-26

The scribes and Pharisees were angry with Jesus, because they knew that He was directing His parables against them (Luke 20:19).

As a result, they wanted to arrest Him immediately; but did not, because they feared what the people might do. So they went away and discussed plans to entrap Him in something He might say (Matthew 22:15).

Later that day (Tuesday), the Pharisees sent some of their disciples and some of the Herodians to spy on Jesus.

The spies came to Jesus and spoke politely to Him, saying, “Teacher, we know you are a man of integrity. You aren’t swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth” (Mark 12:14 NIV).

The spies pretended to be sincere; but they were actually laying a trap for Jesus (Mark 12:13), so they could turn Him over to the governor’s power and authority (Luke 20:20).

After they had complimented Him, they tried to spring their trap. They said, “Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not” (Matthew 22:17 NIV)?

Jesus saw through their treachery and did not fall into their trap. He responded to them by saying,

“You hypocrites,

why are you trying to trap me?”

Matthew 22:18 NIV

He said to them,

“Show me the coin used for paying the tax.”

Matthew 22:19 NIV

They brought Him a denarius.
He asked them,

“Whose portrait is this?
And whose inscription?”

Matthew 22:20 NIV

“Caesar’s,” they replied.
He said to them,

“Then give to Caesar what is Caesar’s,
and to God what is God’s.”

Matthew 22:21b

When they heard this, they were amazed at His answer,
because there was nothing they could say against it.

They were unable to catch Him in what He said (Luke
20:26). So they were amazed and went away (Matthew
22:22).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Their question, “Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar,” was a trap. How was it a trap? If Jesus had said it is not right to pay taxes to Caesar, of what would they have accused Him?

2. If Jesus had said it is right to pay taxes to Caesar, what would they have done? What do you think?
3. Did Jesus Himself pay taxes? See Matthew 17:24-27.
4. Is it right for Jesus' followers to pay taxes? See Romans 13:7.

9. (126)

MARRIAGE AND THE RESURRECTION

Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-40

When the Sadducees saw that the scribes and Pharisees had not been successful in their attempt to entrap Jesus, the Sadducees thought they would try it (Matthew 22:23).

Now, the Sadducees believed that there is no resurrection.

So they said to Jesus, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and have children for his brother'" (Matthew 22:24 ISV).

Then the Sadducees described a hypothetical situation. They said, "Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother" (Matthew 22:25 NIV).

They continued their description by saying, "The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh. Finally, the woman died" (Matthew 22:26-27 NIV).

Having said that, the Sadducees asked, “Now then, at the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her” (Luke 20:33 NIV)?

It was not at all difficult for Jesus to answer this question, for He knew the Old Testament well. He also knew what happens to people when they die. So He replied to the Sadducees,

“Are you not in error
because you do not know the Scriptures
or the power of God?”

Mark 12:24 NIV

Whereupon, He proceeded to highlight Sadducees’ ignorance of the power of God, by saying,

“Those who belong to this age
marry and are married,
but those who are considered worthy
of a place in that age
and in the resurrection from the dead
neither marry nor are given in marriage.
Nor can they die anymore,
for they are like the angels and,
since they share in the resurrection,
are God’s children.”

Luke 20:34-36 ISV

He then highlighted their ignorant of the Scriptures, by saying,

“Now about the dead rising--
have you not read in the book of Moses,
in the account of the bush,
how God said to him,
‘I am the God of Abraham,
the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?’”
Mark 12:26 NIV; Exodus 3:6

When God said that He is the God of Abraham, Isaac,
and Jacob (Exodus 3:6), God implied that Abraham, Isaac,
and Jacob were still living.

Concerning this Jesus said,

“He is not the God of the dead,
but of the living,
for to him all are alive.”
Luke 20:38 NIV

Then, to the Sadducees Jesus said,

“You are badly mistaken!”
Mark 12:27b NIV

When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at
His teaching (Matthew 22:33).

Even some of the scribes approved of the reply that
Jesus had given the Sadducees, for the scribes believed in
the resurrection.

Therefore, they remarked to Jesus, “Teacher, well said” (Luke 20:39)!

After that, none (of the Sadducees) dared ask Him any more questions (Luke 20:40).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. The Sadducees were wealthy and politically powerful. Why did they want to entrap Jesus? What do you think?
2. Where else does the Old Testament teach, in addition to Exodus 3:6, that the dead will be resurrected? See Psalm 16:9-10; Isaiah 26:19; and Daniel 12:2.
3. What is the purpose of the husband-wife relationship on earth? See Malachi 2:15.
4. Will men and women be living in a husband-wife relationship in heaven? See Luke 20:34-36.
5. Do you think the crowd (Matthew 22:33) enjoyed hearing Jesus get the better of the Sadducees in an argument?

10. (127)
THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT
Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they met together (Matthew 22:34). One of them, who was both a lawyer (Matthew 22:35) and a scribe (Mark 12:28), observed that Jesus had answered the Sadducees well (Mark 12:28); so he decided to test Jesus with a question.

He asked Jesus, “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law” (Matthew 22:36 NIV)?

Jesus answered,

“The most important one is this:
‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God,
the Lord is one.
Love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul
and with all your mind
and with all your strength.’”

Mark 12:29-30 NIV

Jesus added further,

“This is the first
and greatest commandment.”

Matthew 22:38 NIV

Then He said,

“The second is this:
‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’
There is no commandment greater
than these.”

Mark 12:31 NIV

Jesus concluded His answer to the Pharisee, who was both a scribe and a lawyer, by saying,

“All the Law and the Prophets
hang on these two commandments.”

Matthew 22:40 NIV

The man responded to Jesus, “Well said, teacher. You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices” (Mark 12:32-33 NIV).

When Jesus heard that the man had responded wisely, He said to him,

“You are not far
from the kingdom of God.”

Mark 12:34a NIV

From then on none (of the Pharisees) dared ask Him any more questions (Mark 12:34 NIV).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Is the commandment, “Love your neighbor as yourself” found in the Old Testament? See Leviticus 19:18b. Is it found in any other places in the New Testament? See Galatians 5:14 and James 2:8.

2. What did Jesus mean when He said, “All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Matthew 22:40 NIV)? What do you think?
3. Jesus told the Pharisee that he was not far from the kingdom of God (Mark 12:34). What did Jesus mean by that? What do you think?

11. (128)

WHOSE SON IS HE?

Matthew 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44

The leaders in Jerusalem spent much of the day on Tuesday of the last week trying to get Jesus to say something that they could use against Him; but Jesus turned all their questions back on themselves.

While the Pharisees (Matthew 22:41) were gathered close to where Jesus was teaching in the temple (Mark 12:35), He asked them,

“What do you think about the Christ?
Whose son is he?”

Matthew 22:42 NIV

The Pharisees were confident that they knew the answer to this question. So without delay, they answered that the Christ (Messiah) would be “the son of David” (Matthew 22:42b). Their answer showed that they expected the Christ to be a king just like king David, except perhaps more powerful.

After the Pharisees had said that the Christ was to be David’s son, Jesus pointed out that their answer was incorrect. It stood in contrast with what David had said.

Jesus asked,

“How is it then that David,
speaking by the Spirit,
calls him ‘Lord?’”

Matthew 22:43 NIV

Jesus was referring, of course, to the 110th Psalm, where David wrote,

“The Lord said to my Lord:

‘Sit at my right hand
until I put your enemies
under your feet.’”

Matthew 22:44 NIV; Psalm 110:1

The first “Lord” in this sentence refers to “Yahweh,” God. Consequently, the sentence says that God told someone to sit as His (God’s) right hand until He (God) would put all of that person’s enemies under that person’s feet.

Who is the person to whom God said this?

Jesus knew, and Christians believe, that is it the Christ to whom God said this. Also the Pharisees would have agreed that it is the Christ.

So, the point of contention between Christ and the Pharisees was about the kind of king the Christ

(Messiah) would be. The Pharisees believed that the Christ would be merely David's son. In response to their belief, Jesus asked,

***“If then David calls him ‘Lord,’
how can he be his [David’s] son?”***

Matthew 22:45 NIV

Following this, the Pharisees could not say a word in reply (Matthew 22:46); for they had said that the Christ would be David's son, but Jesus had shown that the Christ would be David's Lord.

This shows that Jesus' concept of the Christ (Messiah) was entirely different from the concept that the Pharisees had. They wanted a king on earth, but Jesus knew that the Christ (Messiah) would be a heavenly king, sitting at the right hand of God.

So with this exchange, Jesus stumped the Pharisees in debate; and from that day forward, none of His adversaries dared ask Him any more questions (Matthew 22:46).

The large crowd of people that heard Jesus debate with the Pharisees that day, enjoyed the debate very much

(Mark 12:37). They knew that Jesus had gotten the better of the Pharisees.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

- 1. Did the Christ sit down at God's right hand? If He did, when did He do it? See Mark 16:19.**
2. David wrote (Psalm 110:1) that God said that the Christ would reign until He (God) had put all of Christ's enemies under His (Christ's) feet. Has God already put all of Christ's enemies under Christ's feet? See 1 Corinthians 15:26.
3. If all of Christ's enemies have not yet been put under Christ's feet, does that indicate that Christ is still reigning? What do you think?
4. If Christ is still reigning, when will His reign be completed? See 1 Corinthians 15:25-26.
5. What will happen when Christ's reign has been completed? See 1 Corinthians 15:24, 28.

12. (129)

JESUS DENOUNCED THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES

Matthew 23:1-12; Mark 12:38-40; Luke 20:45-47

After Jesus had silenced the scribes and Pharisees, He continued to teach His disciples and others, who were gathered around Him.

He warned them to be wary of the scribes, saying,

“Beware of the scribes.
They like to walk around in flowing robes
and love to be greeted in the marketplaces.
They devour widows’ houses
and for a show make lengthy prayers.
Such men will be punished most severely.”
Luke 20:46-47 NIV

Jesus described what the scribes and Pharisees of His day were doing. He said,

“The scribes and the Pharisees
sit in Moses’ seat.
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.”
Matthew 23:2-3 NKJV

Jesus continued describing them, saying,

“They tie up burdens
that are heavy and unbearable
and lay them on people’s shoulders,
but they refuse to lift a finger
to remove them.”

Matthew 23:4 ISV

Much of what the scribes and Pharisees did was done to make them appear holy in people's eyes (Matthew 23:5a). Jesus explained,

“They make their phylacteries wide
and the tassels on their garments long;
they love the place of honor at banquets
and the most important seats
in the synagogues;
they love to be greeted in the marketplaces
and to have men call them ‘Rabbi.’”

Matthew 23:5-7 NIV

In order to keep His disciples from acting as the Pharisees did, Jesus said to them,

“Don't be called ‘rabbi’ (teacher)
for you have one Teacher,
and you are all brethren.”

Matthew 23:8

Jesus warned His disciples not to call anyone on earth, “Father,” cautioning them,

“And do not call anyone on earth ‘father,’
for you have one Father,
and he is in heaven.”

Matthew 23:9 NIV

He also warned His disciples against allowing themselves to be called “Masters.” He said,

“Don’t be called ‘Masters’
for you have one Master,
the Christ.”

Matthew 23:10

He reminded them of what He had said earlier (Matthew 20:26-27), namely,

“The greatest among you
will be your servant.”

Matthew 23:11 NIV

Then He reminded them of something else He had said earlier (Luke 14:11 and Luke 18:14), namely,

“For whoever exalts himself
will be humbled,
and whoever humbles himself
will be exalted.”

Matthew 23:12 NIV

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Did Jesus want His disciples to make a show of piety and religion? What do you think?
2. Our word “doctor” means “a teacher,” and our word “master” means someone that is so proficient in a skill or a subject that he or she can teach it. Do you think Jesus’ followers should seek titles, such as “Doctor of Divinity,” “Doctor of Religion,” “Master of Divinity,” and “Master of Religion?” What is wrong with Jesus’ disciples wearing titles like these?
3. Is it by accident that many academic titles, which are awarded today, are the very same titles that Jesus warned His disciples against? What do you think?
4. When Jesus said, “Do not call anyone on earth ‘father’” (Matthew 23:9), did He mean that His disciples should not call their own earthly fathers, “father?” Or did He mean that none of His disciples should call anyone “Father” in a religious sense? What do you think?
5. The religious leaders of Jesus’ day set a bad example. Can we learn anything from their bad example? What can we learn?

13. (130)
FOUR OF THE “WOES” THAT JESUS
PRONOUNCED OVER THE SCRIBES AND
PHARISEES

Matthew 23:13-22

The scribes and Pharisees had done their best to trip up Jesus with questions. However, He had been able to turn all their questions back on themselves. For that reason, they gave up asking Him questions.

Toward the close of Tuesday of Jesus' last week, He began pronouncing "woes" over the scribes and Pharisees, wherein He repeated some of the things that He had said prior to this (Luke 11:43-52).

He pronounced the first "woe" over them, because they kept people out of the kingdom of heaven. He said,

"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees,
hypocrites!
For you shut the kingdom of heaven
in people's faces.
For you neither enter yourselves
nor allow those who would enter
to go in."

Matthew 23:13 ESV

Some ancient manuscripts and some translations of the New Testament omit the second "woe," possibly because Jesus had used similar wording in Mark 12:40 and Luke 20:47; but that is no reason to think that Jesus could not have repeated Himself here.

The second "woe" that Jesus pronounced was:

“Woe to you,
scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!
For you devour widows’ houses
and for a pretense you make long prayers;
therefore you will receive greater
condemnation.”

Matthew 23:14 ESV

He pronounced His third “woe” because the scribes and Pharisees made people worse instead of making them better. He said,

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees,
hypocrites!
For you travel across sea and land
to make a single proselyte,
and when he becomes a proselyte,
you make him
twice as much a child of hell
as yourselves.”

Matthew 23:15 ESV

He pronounced His fourth “woe” because the scribes and Pharisees avoided doing what they had sworn to do. He said,

“Woe to you, blind guides, who say,
‘If anyone swears by the temple,
it is nothing,
but if anyone swears
by the gold of the temple,
he is bound by his oath.’”

Matthew 23:16 ESV

Jesus castigated them, saying,

“You blind fools!
For which is greater,
the gold or the temple
that has made the gold sacred?”

Matthew 23:17 ESV

He further described their deception, saying,

“And you say,
‘If anyone swears by the altar,
it is nothing,
but if anyone swears by the gift
that is on the altar,
he is bound by his oath.’”

Matthew 23:18 ESV

Because of such deceit, Jesus called them “blind men.” He asked,

“For which is greater,
the gift or the altar
that makes the gift sacred?”

Matthew 23:19 ESV

In an attempt to correct their thinking, He said,

“So whoever swears by the altar
swears by it and by everything on it.

And whoever swears by the temple
swears by it and by him
who dwells in it.
And whoever swears by heaven
swears by the throne of God
and by him who sits upon it.”

Matthew 23:20-22 ESV

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Jesus said that the scribes and Pharisees neither entered the kingdom of heaven nor allowed other people to go into it (Matthew 23:13). Did He say that because they were not following Him and were trying to keep other people from following Him? What do you think?
2. Jesus said that the scribes and Pharisees were “shutting the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces” (Matthew 23:13). How were they shutting up the kingdom of heaven in peoples’ faces? Were they doing it by telling people not to follow Jesus? What do you think?
3. Did Jesus find joy in pronouncing these “woes” over the leaders of His people? What do you think? How do you think He felt about having to pronounce such “woes?”
4. Should Jesus have kept silent and not castigated the leaders for of the terrible things they were doing? What do you think?

5. What did Jesus teach about taking oaths? See Matthew 5:34-36. Should Jesus' followers take oaths? What do you think?

14. (131)
FOUR MORE “WOES” OVER THE SCRIBES AND
PHARISEES
Matthew 23:23-32

Jesus pronounced His fifth “woe” over the scribes and Pharisees because they emphasized minor things and neglected more important things. He said,

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees,
hypocrites!
For you tithe mint and dill and cumin,
and have neglected
the weightier matters of the law:
justice and mercy and faithfulness.
These you ought to have done,
without neglecting the others.”

Matthew 23:23 ESV

Jesus found that the scribes and Pharisees were poor guides for the people. He said,

“You blind guides,

straining out a gnat
and swallowing a camel!”

Matthew 23:24 ESV

He pronounced His sixth “woe” over them, because they were more interested in cleaning the outside of the cup or the plate than they were in cleaning the inside. He said,

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees,
hypocrites!
For you clean the outside
of the cup and the plate,
but inside they are full of greed
and self-indulgence.”

Matthew 23:25 ESV

Jesus gave them this advice. He said,

“You blind Pharisee!
First clean the inside of the cup
and the plate,
that the outside also may be clean.”

Matthew 23:26 ESV

Jesus pronounced His seventh “woe” over the scribes and Pharisees, because they were like tombs that had been painted white on the outside. He said,

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees,
hypocrites!
For you are like whitewashed tombs,
which outwardly appear beautiful,
but within are full of dead people’s bones
and all uncleanness.”

Matthew 23:27 ESV

He then explained how they were like whitewashed
tombs. He said,

“So you also outwardly
appear righteous to others,
but within you are full of hypocrisy
and lawlessness.”

Matthew 23:28 ESV

Jesus came to the eighth “woe” and pronounced it
over them, because they decorated the tombs of the
prophets, whom their fathers had murdered. Jesus said,

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees,
you hypocrites!
You build tombs for the prophets
and decorate the graves of the righteous.
And you say,
‘If we had lived

in the days of our forefathers,
we would not have taken part with them
in shedding the blood of the prophets.”

Matthew 23:29-30

It may have appeared that, by building monumental tombs for the prophets, the scribes and Pharisees showed their outrage at the murder of the prophets; but it was not so. Rather than showing outrage at what their fathers did, it showed that they a part of a murderous lineage. Jesus said,

“So you testify against yourselves
that you are the descendants
of those who murdered the prophets.”

Matthew 32:31 NIV

After Jesus had said this to the scribes and Pharisees,
He said to them, in derision,

“Fill up, then, the measure of the sin
of your forefathers!”

Matthew 23:32 NIV

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Jesus accused the scribes and Pharisees of being hypocrites (Matthew 23:13-15,23,27,29). What is a “hypocrite?”
2. What did Jesus mean when He said that the scribes and Pharisees strained out a gnat but swallowed a camel

(Matthew 23:24)? Is it possible for people to do that same thing today? Please give an example.

3. In what way were the scribes and Pharisees like cups and plates that had been washed on the outside but not on the inside (Matthew 23:25-26)? How can we avoid being like that?
4. In what way were the scribes and Pharisees like whitewashed tombs? See Matthew 23:27-28. How can we avoid being like that?

15. (132)

JESUS LAMENTED AGAIN OVER JERUSALEM

Matthew 23:33-39

After Jesus had pronounced “woes” over the scribes and Pharisees, He continued speaking to them in the strongest of terms. He said,

“You snakes! You brood of vipers!
How will you escape
being condemned to hell?”

Matthew 23:33 NIV

Jesus foretold how the prophets, the wise men and the teachers would be treated, whom He was planning to send to Jerusalem. He said,

“Therefore I am sending you
prophets and wise men and teachers.
Some of them you will kill and crucify;
others you will flog in your synagogues
and pursue from town to town.”

Matthew 23:34 NIV

Jesus forewarned that Jerusalem would be punished for
the murder of all the righteous people, whose deaths are
recorded in the Old Testament. He said,

“And so upon you will come
all the righteous blood
that has been shed on earth,
from the blood of righteous Abel
to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah,
whom you murdered
between the temple and the altar.”

Matthew 23:35 NIV

Jesus emphasized that retribution would come upon the
generation of people then living. He said,

“I tell you the truth,
all this will come upon this generation.”

Matthew 23:36 NIV

Therefore, Jesus lamented over Jerusalem, as He had done earlier (Luke 13:34). He said,

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,
you who kill the prophets
and stone those sent to you,
how often I have longed
to gather your children together,
as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings,
but you were not willing.”

Matthew 23:37 NIV

Jesus went on to describe the sad state that those who might possibly survive the destruction of Jerusalem. He said,

“Look, your house is left to you desolate.”
Matthew 23:38 NIV

He foretold that they would not see Him again until they said to Him,

“Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord.”
Matthew 23:39; Psalm 118:26

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Jesus said that some of the prophets, the wise men, and the teachers, whom He would send to Jerusalem would be put to death (Matthew 23:34). Can you name a few of the people whom Jesus later sent to Jerusalem?
2. Why were the people of Jesus' generation held accountable for the murder of all of the prophets? What did they do to earn such a fate?
3. What did Jesus mean when He said that He longed to gather the people of Jerusalem together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings (Matthew 23:37)?
4. Did Jesus love Jerusalem? Was Jerusalem, in some special way, a special city to Him? What do you think? Please explain.

16. (133)

THE WIDOW'S OFFERING

Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4

Tuesday was for Jesus a very busy day. One event led to another.

The first opportunity that He had to get away from controversy seems to have been after He had pronounced

eight “woes” over the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23:13-36) and had lamented (Matthew 23:37-39) over Jerusalem.

It may have been at this point, then, that Jesus left the temple grounds and went out to the Mount of Olives, where He spent the night (Luke 21:37).

If this is an accurate portrayal of events, then it was likely on Wednesday that He sat opposite the place where the people were putting their contributions into the temple treasury (Mark 12:41).

Jesus watched as many rich people came by and put large amounts of money into the treasury. He also watched as a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, worth less than a penny (Mark 12:42).

Upon seeing Her do this, Jesus called His disciples to Him and said to them,

“I tell you the truth,
this poor widow has put more
into the treasury than all the others.”

Mark 12:43 NIV

He explained,

“They all gave out of their wealth;
but she, out of her poverty,
put in everything--
all she had to live on.”

Mark 12:44 NIV

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. What motivated the poor widow to put everything that she had into the temple treasury? What is your guess?
2. Does God want His people to be generous with their possessions? Please explain?
3. Did Jesus actually commend the woman for having put everything that she had into the temple treasury, or was He merely commenting on the size of her gift? What do you think?
4. Does God evaluate the size of gifts differently from the way man evaluates them? Please comment on this.

17. (134)

SOME GREEKS ASK TO SEE JESUS

John 12:20-36

There were Greek-speaking worshippers in the city of Jerusalem at that time. Some of them came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida, the same place that Peter and Andrew were from (John 1:44), and said to Philip, “Sir, we would like to see Jesus” (John 22:21).

So Philip went to Andrew and told Andrew; and they both went to Jesus and told Him (John 12:22).

Jesus, presumably talking to the Greek-speaking worshippers, said,

“The hour has come
for the Son of Man to be glorified.”
John 12:23 NASU

Jesus then gave them an illustration that showed how
He would glorify God and why it was necessary for Him to
die. He said,

“I tell you the truth,
unless a kernel of wheat
falls to the ground and dies,
it remains only a single seed.
But if it dies,
it produces many seeds.”

John 12:24 NIV

What is true for seeds is true for humans as well.
Jesus said,

“The man who loves his life
will lose it,
while the man who hates his life
in this world
will keep it for eternal life.”

John 12:25 NIV

Jesus promised His followers that if they lived self-
sacrificial lives here on earth, they would have the privilege
of being with Him and God would honor them. He said,

“Whoever serves me

must follow me;
and where I am,
my servant also will be.
My Father will honor
the one who serves me.”

John 12:26 NIV

Jesus revealed His feelings concerning what was about to
happen to Him. He said,

“Now is my soul troubled.
And what shall I say?
‘Father, save me from this hour’?
No, for this purpose
I have come to this hour.”

John 12:27 RSV

After that, in a brief prayer He said,

“Father, glorify your name!”

John 12:28a NIV

In response to His prayer, a voice from heaven spoke,
saying,

“I have glorified it,
and will glorify it again.”

John 12:28b NIV

The crowd of people, which was standing nearby, heard the voice. Some of them said it had thundered. Others said that an angel had spoken to Jesus (John 12:29).

Jesus Himself said,

“This voice was not for my benefit,
but for yours.”

John 12:30

Jesus knew that the world was approaching an hour of decision. He said,

“Now is the time for judgment
on this world;
now the prince of this world
will be driven out.”

John 12:31 NIV

Next, He predicted one of the effects that His death would have, saying,

“But I,
when I am lifted up from the earth,
will draw all men to myself.”

John 12:32 NIV

By saying He would be “lifted up from the earth,” Jesus showed how certain He was that He was going to die (John 12:33).

What Jesus said confused the crowd. So they said to Him, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ will remain forever, so how can you say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up?’”

They also asked, “Who is this ‘Son of Man’” (John 12:34 NIV)?

Jesus replied to them,

“For a little while longer
the Light is among you.
Walk while you have the Light,
so that darkness will not overtake you;
he who walks in the darkness
does not know where he goes.”

John 12:35 NASU

Jesus admonished them,

“While you have the Light,
believe in the Light,
so that you may become sons of Light.”

John 12:36a NASU

After He had said these things, He hid Himself from them (John 12:36b).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Jesus gave a reason as to why it was necessary for Him to die. What reason did He give? See John 12:24.
2. Who is the “prince of this world” (John 12:31)?
3. How does Jesus’ sacrificial death represent a judgment on this world? What do you think?
4. To what was Jesus referring when He said, “But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself” (John 12:32 NIV)?
5. Some of the people thought that the Christ (Messiah) would remain on earth forever (John 12:34). What kind of a Messiah were they expecting? What do you think?
6. Jesus said, “While you have the Light, believe in the Light” (John 12:36 NASU). Was Jesus implying that He was the light, which people should believe in? What do you think?

18. (135)

BEING JUDGED BY THE SAYINGS OF JESUS

John 12:37-50

The Gospel of John makes it clear that the children of

Israel did not, as a whole, believe on Jesus. They did not

believe, in spite of the fact that He did many miraculous signs in their presence (John 12:37).

In the Gospel of John it is pointed out that the people of Jesus' day were a lot like the people in Isaiah's day.

Isaiah the Prophet had said,

“Lord,
who has believed our message
and to whom
has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

Isaiah 53:1; John 12:38 NIV

Isaiah accounted for the disbelief of the people, by saying,

“He [God] has blinded their eyes
and deadened their hearts,
so they can neither see with their eyes,
nor understand with their hearts,
nor turn...”

John 12:40a; Isaiah 6:10

Yet, if they would turn, God said,

“I would heal them.”

John 12:40b NIV; Isaiah 6:10

Isaiah said this because he had seen Jesus' glory (John 12:41).

In spite of the fact that all the people of Israel did not accept Jesus as their Messiah, many individuals did. Even among their religious leaders there were some that accepted Him. Yet they did not openly confess their faith in Jesus, because they feared the Pharisees would have them put out of the synagogue (John 12:42) and because they loved the praise of men more than they loved the praise of God (John 12:43).

Concerning belief in Him, Jesus cried out,

“The one who believes on me,
does not believe on me,
but on the one who sent me.”

John 12:44

Jesus added,

“He who sees me,
sees also the one who sent me.”

John 12:45

Jesus explained that He had come as light. He said,

“I have come as light into the world,
so that no one
who believes on me
stays in darkness.”

John 12:46

Jesus wanted everyone to understand that He had come into the world, not to condemn the world but to save it. He said,

“And if anyone hears my words
and does not keep them,
I do not judge him;
for I came not to judge the world,
but to save the world.”

John 12:47

Jesus knew that it would not be necessary for Him to pass judgment on the people who rejected Him and His teaching. He said,

“He that rejects me
and does not accept my sayings
has one that judges him:
The word that I spoke
will judge him in the last day.”

John 12:48

Jesus claimed no originality for what He had taught. He said,

“For I did not speak of my own accord,
but the Father who sent me

gave me a command
what I should say
and what I should speak.”

John 12:49

Jesus had absolute confidence in what the Father had
told Him. Jesus said,

“And I know that his command
is eternal life.
Therefore the things I say,
I speak just as the Father told me.”

John 12:50

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Does our telling people about Jesus help them to believe in God? What do you think? See John 12:44.
2. What did Jesus mean when He said, “He who sees me, sees also the one that sent me” (John 12:45)? What do you think He meant?
3. Is Jesus still a shining light (John 12:46)? How is He still shining, if He is?
4. Will people at the Judgment be confronted with what Jesus taught? See John 12:48.

5. Jesus had confidence in what God told Him to say (John 12:50). Does Jesus' confidence in what God told Him to do and say help us to have confidence in Jesus and in His teaching? What do you think?

19. (136)
THINGS THAT MUST HAPPEN BEFORE THE END
COMES

Matthew 24:1-14; Mark 13:1-13; Luke 21:5-19

Jesus left the temple (Matthew 24:1) for the last time, presumably on Wednesday of His last week. As He was walking away, His disciples called His attention to how attractive the temple buildings were (Luke 21:5).

They said, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings" (Mark 13:1 NIV)!

Whereupon, He asked them,

"Do you see all these great buildings?"

Mark 13:2a NIV

Then He said,

"I tell you the truth,
not one stone here
will be left upon another;
which will not be thrown down."

Matthew 24:2b

Jesus and His disciples went out of the city of Jerusalem and sat down opposite the temple, on the Mount of Olives (Mark 13:3a).

While Jesus was sitting there, four of His disciples (Peter, James, John, and Andrew) came to Him with questions (Mark 13b). They wanted to know (1) when the temple would be destroyed and what would be the sign that it was about to take place (Luke 21:7).

In addition, they wanted to know (2) what the sign would be of His coming and the end of the age (Matthew 24:3b). (Notice that they rightly connected His coming with the end of the age.)

Jesus answered their second question first. He began by emphasizing that He would not be returning soon. He said,

“Watch out that no one deceives you.

For many will come in my name,
claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’
and will deceive many.”

Matthew 24:4-5 NIV

He predicted that deceivers would say,

“The time is near.”

Luke 21:8b NIV

But He cautioned His disciples,

“Do not follow them.”

Luke 21:8c NIV

He warned them that “wars and rumors of wars” would not be a sign that the end was near. He said,

“And you will hear of wars
and rumors of wars;
see that you are not alarmed;
for this must take place,
but the end is not yet.”

Matthew 24:6 RSV

Then He said,

“These things must happen first,
but the end will not come right away.”
Luke 21:9b NIV (See also Mark 13:7.)

Further, He said,

“Nation will rise against nation,
and kingdom against kingdom.
There will be great earthquakes,
famines and pestilences in various places,
and fearful events
and great signs from heaven.”

Luke 21:10-11 NIV

Not even such things would be signs that His return was near. He said,

“All these are
the beginning of birth pains.”

Matthew 24:8 NIV

Jesus pointed out some of the frightful thing that would happen to His disciples, personally.

He said that people would lay hands on them and persecute them (Luke 21:12). They would hand them over to local counsels, synagogues, and prisons, where they would be flogged (Mark 13:9).

He said that they would be brought before kings and governors on account of His name. The results would be that they would become His witnesses to kings and governors (Luke 21:13).

He warned that some of them would be put to death. In addition, they would be hated by all nations because of Him (Matthew 24:9).

They should not worry, however, about how they would speak when they were arrested and brought to trial (Mark 13:11a). He said,

“But make up your mind
not to worry beforehand

how you will defend yourselves.”

Luke 21:14 NIV

He advised,

“Just say whatever is given you at the time,
for it is not you speaking,
but the Holy Spirit.”

Mark 13:11b NIV

Then He promised,

“For I will give you words and wisdom
that none of your adversaries
will be able to resist or contradict.”

Luke 21:15 NIV

He also predicted that many of His followers would turn away from the faith (Matthew 24:10a) because of these persecutions.

He said that relatives and friends would betray them (Luke 21:16) and that children would rebel against their parents and have them put to death (Mark 12:12).

He predicted that some of His followers would even hate each other and that many false prophets would appear and deceive many people (Matthew 24:10b-11).

In addition, He predicted that love would grow cold in the hearts of many, due to an increase of wickedness (Matthew 24:12).

Apparently speaking about the end, He said,

“Yet not a hair of your head will perish.
By your endurance
You will gain your life.”

Luke 21:18-19 NIV

Then, He spoke an additional word of encouragement, saying,

“But he who stands firm to the end
will be saved.”

Matthew 24:13 NIV

He assured them that the end would not come until the gospel of the kingdom had been preached in the whole world. He said,

“And this gospel of the kingdom
will be preached in the whole world
as a testimony to all nations,
and then the end will come.”

Matthew 24:14 NIV

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Where else in the Gospels did Jesus indicate that His return and the end of the age (world) would take place together? See Matthew 24:30-31; 25:31-32; Luke 17:29-30; John 14:3.
2. Do we hear of wars and rumors of wars today? Do they signal that the end is near? What do you think? See Matthew 24:6 and Mark 13:7.
3. Jesus said to His disciples, “Say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit” (Mark 13:11b). Was Jesus speaking to His Twelve Apostles only when He said this? Or was He speaking to all of His followers, including us? What do you think?
4. Have you ever known anyone personally who had been persecuted because of his or her faith in Jesus? If you have, please tell about it.

5. Jesus said that not a hair would perish (Luke 21:18) on the heads of His disciples, who stand firm (Luke 21:19). How is that to be understood?
6. Jesus said that the gospel of the kingdom would be preached in the whole world before the end came. See Matthew 24:14. Has the gospel already been preached in the whole world? What do you think?

20. (137)

THE SIGN OF THE DESTRUCTION OF TEMPLE

Matthew 24:15-22; Mark 13:14-20; Luke 21:20-24

While Jesus and His disciples were on the Mount of Olives overlooking the temple, Jesus had begun answering His disciples' questions about the future.

He answered their second question first (Matthew 24:3b). It was a question about Jesus' return and the end of the age. He explained that His return and the end of the age would not take place soon (Luke 21:9b).

After He had answered this question, He turned to their first question, which concerned the temple. They had asked what sign would indicate that the temple was about to be destroyed (Luke 21:7).

In answer to this question, Jesus explained that armies would surround Jerusalem. When that happened, it would be the sign that Jerusalem and the temple were about to be destroyed. He said,

“When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near.”
Luke 21:20 NIV

Then He warned that they should flee when they see the city of Jerusalem surrounded. Those of them that were in Judea at that time should also flee. He said,

“Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written.”
Luke 21:21-22 NIV

The prophet Daniel had spoken of an “abomination that causes desolation” (Daniel 9:27), and Jesus used the

same expression for what would soon take place in Jerusalem. He said,

“So when you see standing in the holy place
‘the abomination that causes desolation,’
spoken of through the prophet Daniel--
let the reader understand--
then let those who are in Judea
flee to the mountains.”

Matthew 24:15-16 NIV

Jesus warned His followers to flee the very minute they learned that the temple in Jerusalem had been desecrated. He said,

“Let no one on the roof of his house
go down to take anything out of the house.
“Let no one in the field
go back to get his cloak.”

Matthew 24:17-18 NIV

Jesus was filled with sympathy for His followers, who would have to flee. He remarked, sadly,

“Woe to those who are with child
and to those who nurse babes in those days;
for there will be great distress upon the land,
and wrath to this people.”

Luke 21:23 NAS

Then He described the horrible things that would happen to the people of Jerusalem and Judea, who were not of His followers and who would, therefore, not know to flee. He said,

“And they will fall
by the edge of the sword,
and will be led captive into all the nations;
and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot
by the Gentiles
until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”
Luke 21:24 NAS

He instructed His followers to pray that their suffering would be lessened. He said,

“Pray that your flight will not take place
in winter or on the Sabbath.
For then there will be great distress,
unequaled from the beginning of the world
until now--
and never to be equaled again.
If those days had not been cut short,
no flesh would survive,
but for the sake of the elect
those days will be shortened.”
Matthew 24:20-22

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

7. When was the temple in Jerusalem destroyed? Has it ever been rebuilt? What building stands on the temple site today?
8. Why did Jesus advise His followers to pray that their flight not take place in winter (Matthew 24:20)?
9. Jesus also advised His followers to pray that their flight not take place on the Sabbath (Matthew 24:20). Why did He advise them to pray that?
10. Do you know whether or not Jesus' disciples, who lived in Jerusalem, were actually saved alive when the city was destroyed? Please share what information you have about this.

21. (138)

THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN AND THE END OF THE AGE

Matthew 24:23-31; Mark 13:21-27; Luke 21:25-28

You will recall that Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives (Mark 13:3) answering His disciples' questions about the future. In so doing, He cautioned them not to think that He would return soon (Matthew 24:4-14). He also told them what sign would show that the temple was about to be destroyed (Matthew 24:15-22).

Next, He returned to their question: “And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age” (Matthew 24:3b NAS)?

It should be noted, perhaps, that the word “coming,” which is used in Matthew 24:3, is translated from the Greek word “parousia,” which literally means “presence.” So the disciples were asking, “What will be the sign of your presence?”

In reply, Jesus forewarned them that some people would claim, prematurely, that He had returned. He said,

“At that time if anyone says to you,
‘Look, here is the Christ!’
or, ‘There he is!’
do not believe it.
For false Christs and false prophets
will appear
and perform great signs and miracles
to deceive even the elect

--if that were possible.”

Matthew 24:23-24 NIV

Then He admonished them,

“So be on your guard;
I have told you everything ahead of time.”

Mark 13:23 NIV

He continued,

“So if anyone tells you,
‘There he is, out in the desert,’
do not go out;
or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’
do not believe it.

Matthew 24:26 NIV

His followers should not believe that He would be hidden, for when He comes, all will see Him. Jesus said,

“For as lightning that comes from the east
is visible even in the west,
so will be the coming [parousia]
of the Son of Man.”

Matthew 24:27 NIV

Then He added,

“Wherever there is a carcass,
there the vultures will gather.”

Matthew 24:28 NIV

Following that, Jesus passed from a discussion of the coming of the Son of Man to a discussion of the end of the age (world). He passed from one to the other in such a seamless way that He seemed to link them together. He said,

“Immediately after the distress of those days
‘the sun will be darkened
and the moon will not give
its light;
the stars will fall from the sky,

and the heavenly bodies
will be shaken.””

Matthew 24:29 NIV

Then He described in more detail what would happen
at the end of the age (world), saying,

“There will be signs
in the sun, moon and stars.
On the earth, nations will be in anguish
and perplexity at the roaring
and tossing of the sea.”

Luke 21:25 NIV

He also described how the people on earth would
react to these events. He said,

“Men will faint from terror,
apprehensive of what is coming
on the world,

for the heavenly bodies will be shaken.”

Luke 21:26 NIV

While these things are happening, the Son of Man will
appear. Jesus said,

“At that time the sign of the Son of Man
will appear in the sky,

and all the nations of the earth will mourn.
They will see the Son of Man
coming on the clouds of the sky,
with power and great glory.”

Matthew 24:30 NIV

When the Son of Man (Jesus) comes, He will gather
His elect (chosen people). Jesus said,

“And he will send his angels
with a loud trumpet call,
and they will gather his elect
from the four winds,
from one end of the heavens to the other.”

Matthew 24:31 NIV

He then told His followers how they should react
when they see these things happening. He said,

“When these things begin to take place,
stand up and lift up your heads,
because your redemption is drawing near.”

Luke 21:28 NIV

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. When the sun is darkened and stars fall from the sky will it be the end of the world? What do you think?
2. What did Jesus mean when He said, “Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather” (Matthew 24:28

NIV)? Did Jesus mean that His chosen people would be drawn to Him when He comes again?

3. Why will the nations of the earth mourn (Matthew 24:30) when they see the sign of the Son of Man appearing in the sky? What do you think?
4. How should Jesus' followers react when they see "signs in the sun, moon and stars" and the seas roaring and tossing (Luke 21:25). Should they be afraid? What do you think? See Luke 21:28.

22. (139)

THE LESSON OF THE FIG TREE

Matthew 24:32-36; Mark 13:28-32; Luke 21:29-33

In speaking to His disciples about the future, Jesus mentioned the lesson of the fig tree and all the trees (Luke 21:29). He said,

“Now learn this lesson from the fig tree:
As soon as its twigs get tender
and its leaves come out,
you know that summer is near.”

Matthew 24:32 NIV

This seems to mean that when God starts a process, He continues it inexorably until He finishes it.

Jesus said,

“Even so,
when you see all these things,
you know that it is near,
right at the door.”

Matthew 24:33 NIV

The truthfulness of what the fig tree and the other trees teach will be born out, I believe, when end-time events get started. For when Jesus appears and His people are gathered to Him like vultures (Matthew 24:27), other end-time events will follow inexorably. The sun and the moon will be darkened and stars will fall (Matthew 24:29); and these events will indicate that (the heavenly-phase of) the kingdom of God is near; for Jesus said,

“Even so,
when you see these things happening,
you know that the kingdom of God is near.”
Luke 21:31 NIV

Now, just as the truthfulness of Jesus’ parable about the fig tree and the other trees, will be born out at the end time, so the truthfulness of His parable, as it applied to Jerusalem, was born out when Jerusalem fell. For when Roman armies surrounded Jerusalem, the city’s destruction came about inexorably and soon.

Concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus said,

“I tell you the truth,
this generation will certainly not pass away
until all these things have happened.”
Matthew 24:34 NIV

This proved to be true. Some of the people of Jesus’ generation did, indeed, live to see Jerusalem’s destruction in AD 70.

The proximity of Matthew 24:33 to Matthew 24:34 leads some people to conclude that Jesus expected the world to end when Jerusalem fell. But it is not necessary to conclude that Jesus thought this; because the narrative of

Jesus' conversation with His disciples, as we have it in the Gospels, may represent only a shorted version of His full conversation with them concerning the future.

The full conversation may have extended over several hours. It almost certainly lasted longer than it takes a person to read the accounts of it in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21.

Therefore, it is probable--even likely--that the discussion switched back and forth several times between (1) the destruction of Jerusalem and (2) Jesus' return at the end of the age.

Therefore the principle of interpretation, which says that a person ought first to look at the context of a passage in interpreting it, may not be the only principle that applies

in this case, where the topic of conversation switched back and forth several times.

In a case such as this, we may need to use our best judgment and apply Jesus' comments to whichever of the two topics they best fit, just as the Apostles no doubt did, as they listened to His words. For we would not want to interpret what Jesus said in Matthew 24:34 in a way that would bring it into conflict with what He said elsewhere.

We know that elsewhere Jesus said that the end time was not near (Matthew 24:6-8,14; Mark 13:7-8; Luke 21:9) and that the destruction of Jerusalem was near (Matthew 23:36; Luke 11:50-51).

After saying the above things, Jesus asserted that everything that He had been telling His disciples,

whether about the end time or about the destruction of Jerusalem, would prove to be true. He said,

“Heaven and earth will pass away,
but my words will never pass away.”

Matthew 24:35 NIV

Regarding the return of the Son of Man at the end of the age, however, Jesus said,

“No one knows about that day or hour,
not even the angels in heaven,
nor the Son, but only the Father.”

Matthew 24:36 NIV

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Did Jesus establish a kingdom when He came to earth the first time? See Matthew 16:18-19 and Acts 2:1-41. If He did, what is the kingdom that He established? Is it the church?
2. Does the kingdom that Jesus established still exist today? What do you think? See 1 Corinthians 15:25-28.

3. Did Jesus indicate elsewhere that Jerusalem would be destroyed before very much time had elapsed? See Matthew 23:36 and Luke 11:50-51.
4. Did Jesus indicate elsewhere that His return at the end of the age (world) would not be soon? See Matthew 24:6-8,14; Mark 13:7-8; Luke 21:9.
5. Is it good that we do not know when the Son of Man (Jesus) will come back? What do you think?

23. (140)

WHAT THE END WILL BE LIKE?

Matthew 24:37-44

Jesus continued discussing the future with His disciples. He described what the world would be like at the time when the Son of Man returns.

He repeated His description (Luke 17:26-27) of how people's lives at that time would be going on as usual when He, the Son of Man, returns. He said,

“As it was in the days of Noah,
so it will be
at the coming of the Son of Man.
For in the days before the flood,
people were eating and drinking,
marrying and giving in marriage,

up to the day Noah entered the ark;”

Matthew 24:37-38 NIV

Just as the great flood came as a big surprise to people of Noah’s day, so also Jesus’ return will be a surprise to many. He said,

“And they were unaware
until the flood came and took them all away,
so also will be the coming
of the Son of Man.”

Matthew 24:39

When the Son of Man returns, He will gather (Mark 13:27) His people from the earth. Jesus said,

“Two men will be in the field;
one will be taken and the other left.
Two women will be grinding
with a hand mill;
one will be taken and the other left.”

Matthew 24:40-41 NIV

Concerning this, Jesus admonished His disciples by saying,

“Therefore keep watch,
because you do not know
on what day your Lord will come.”

Matthew 24:42 NIV

Jesus seemed to enjoy comparing His return to the coming of a thief. (See Luke 12:39.) His point was that the Son of Man would come as a surprise. Jesus said to His disciples,

“But understand this:
If the owner of the house had known
at what time of night the thief was coming,
he would have kept watch
and would not have let his house
be broken into.”

Matthew 24:43 NIV

From this Jesus drew a lesson on being prepared. He said,

“So you also must be ready,
because the Son of Man will come
at an hour when you do not expect him.”

Matthew 24:44 NIV

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Why will people be surprised when the Son of Man returns? What do you think?
2. Why will some people “be taken” and others “left” (Matthew 24:40-41)? Who will be taken? Where will Jesus take them? See 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

3. What can a person do to get prepared for when the Lord will return?

24. (141)

THE FAITHFUL AND WISE SERVANT

Matthew 24:45-51; Mark 13:33-37; Luke 21:34-38

Jesus told His disciples that they should get ready for His return. He said to them,

“Be on guard! Be alert!
You do not know
when that time will come.”

Mark 13:33 NIV

He then compared Himself to a householder that was getting ready to go on a journey. He said,

“It’s like a man going away:
He leaves his house
and puts his servants in charge,
each with his assigned task,
and tells the one at the door to keep watch.”

Mark 13:24 NIV

Jesus brought His disciples into His analogy by cautioning them, as though they themselves were the servants of whom He spoke. He said to them,

“Therefore keep watch
because you do not know
when the owner of the house
will come back--
whether in the evening, or at midnight,
or when the rooster crows, or at dawn.
If he comes suddenly,
do not let him find you sleeping.”

Mark 13:35-36 NIV

Then He said,

“What I say to you,
I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’”

Mark

13:37 NIV

Next, Jesus taught His disciples a lesson that was similar to one He had taught them earlier (Luke 12:42-46). He said,

“Who then is the faithful and wise slave,
whom the master has put in charge
of his household
to give them their food at the right time?”

Matthew 24:45

Jesus indicated that a servant that is faithful and wise will be richly rewarded. He said,

“Blessed is that slave
whom his master finds so doing
when he comes.
Truly, I say to you,
he will set him over all his possessions.”
Matthew 24:46-47

It is possible that a slave that is elevated to a responsible position could turn out to be a wicked man. Jesus said,

“But if that wicked slave says to himself,
‘My master is slow in coming’
and begins to beat his fellow servants
and to eat and drink with drunkards,
the master of that slave will come on a day
when he doesn’t expect him
and at an hour he doesn’t know.”
Matthew 24:48-50

Jesus then described some of the terrible things that a master might do to such a wicked slave. He said,

“He will cut him to pieces
and assign him a place with the hypocrites,
where there will be weeping
and gnashing of teeth.”
Matthew 24:51 NIV

Jesus added other warnings for His disciples, saying,

“But take heed to yourselves
lest your hearts be weighed down
with dissipation and drunkenness
and cares of this life,
and that day come upon you
suddenly like a snare.”

Luke 21:34 RSV

Jesus was obviously referring to the end time with the
above words and not to the destruction of Jerusalem, for
He added,

“For it will come upon all those
who live on the face of the whole earth.”

Luke 21:35 NIV

Then He cautioned them, saying,

“Be alert at all times,
praying that you may
have the strength to escape
all the things that are about to happen
and to be able to stand
before the Son of Man.”

Luke 21:36

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Why does it matter whether or not a servant is watching at the time his master returns? Please explain.

2. Should we be always thinking, “Our Lord might return today?” What do you think?
3. Was Jesus talking about Simon Peter when He said that the master would put “the faithful and wise servant” in charge all His possessions (Matthew 24:46-47)? What do you think?
4. Jesus said that a slave that takes care of his master’s household, and does it in a wise manner, will be blessed with even greater responsibility (Matthew 24:46-47). Does that indicate that there will be positions of responsibility in heaven? What to you think?
5. How do dissipation and drunkenness (Luke 21:34) weigh down peoples’ hearts? Please explain.

25. (142)
THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS
Matthew 25:1-13

Jesus continued teaching His disciples about their being prepared for His return. He said to them,

“At that time
the kingdom of heaven
will be like ten virgins
who took their lamps
and went out to meet the bridegroom.”

Matthew 25:1 NIV

The virgins were not all equally wise. Jesus said of them,

“Five of them were foolish
and five were wise.”

Matthew 25:2 NIV

The foolish ones brought their lamps but they did not bring any extra oil with them. The wise ones, however, brought oil in jars along with their lamps (Matthew 25:3-4).

The bridegroom was so long in coming that all of the virgins got drowsy and fell asleep (Matthew 25:5).

Suddenly, in the middle of the night the cry rang out:

“Behold, the bridegroom!

Come out to meet him!”

Matthew 25:6

All ten of them woke up and trimmed their lamps (Matthew 25:7).

The foolish ones said to the wise ones, “Give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out” (Matthew 25:8).

The wise one replied, “There may not be enough for both us and you. So go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves” (Matthew 25:9).

While they were gone the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him into the wedding feast, and the door was shut (Matthew 25:10).

Later, the rest of the virgins came and said, “Lord, Lord, “Open the door for us” (Matthew 25:11)!

He answered,

“I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.”

Matthew 25:12 NIV

Then Jesus cautioned His disciples,

“Therefore keep watch,
because you do not know
the day or the hour.”

Matthew 25:13 NIV

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Who is the bridegroom in the Parable of the Ten Virgins? Who are the five wise virgins?
2. What could the “oil” in this parable represent? What do you think?
3. The foolish virgins did not think ahead. Is it foolish of a person not to get prepared for his or her eternal future? How does a person prepare for his or her eternal future?

4. Jesus cautioned His people to “keep watch.” What does it mean, “to keep watch?” How can a person know whether or not he is keeping watch?

26. (143)

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

Matthew 25: 14-30

Jesus was speaking to His disciples about the future, and He had just told them that the kingdom of heaven would be like ten virgins, five of whom were wise and five were foolish (Matthew 25:1-13).

Next, He told them the Parable of the Talents. In it He compared the kingdom of heaven to a man that went on a journey (Matthew 24:14). Before the man left, He called in his three slaves and turned his possessions over to them.

To one slave he gave five talents. To another he gave two talents, and to the third he gave one talent. In this way, he divided his possessions among his slaves, to each according to his ability. Then he left on his journey (Matthew 25:15).

Now, a “talent” is an ancient unit of weight, which was used for weighing precious metals. It weighs about 30 kilograms (a little over 66 lbs.).

The slave that got five talents went at once and put his master’s money to work and gained five more talents (Matthew 25:16).

Similarly, the slave that got two talents gained two more talents (Matthew 25:17).

The slave, however, that got only one talent went away, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money (Matthew 25:18).

After a long time, the master of those slaves came back and settled accounts with them (Matthew 25:19).

The slave that had received five talents came and brought five additional talents to his master, saying, "Sir, you gave me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents" (Matthew 25:20).

His master 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."

Matthew 25:21 NKJV

The slave that had received two talents came and said,

"Sir, you gave me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents" (Matthew 25:22).

To him His master said,

"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."

Matthew 25:23 NKJV

Then the slave that had received but one talent came and said, “Sir, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. I was afraid so I went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, here you have what is yours” (Matthew 25:24-25).

The master 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.
So you ought to have deposited my money
with the bankers,
and at my coming
I would have received back my own
with interest.”

Matthew 25:26-27 NKJV

Then the master commanded,

“So take the talent from him,
and give it to him who has ten talents.
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.”

Matthew 25:28-29 NKJV

The master also commanded,

“And cast the unprofitable slave
into the outer darkness.
There will be weeping
and gnashing of teeth.”

Matthew 25:30 NKJV

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. What would a talent of gold (about 30 kilograms) be worth today? What would five talents of gold be worth today? What would two talents be worth?
2. Do you get the impression that Jesus thought it might be a long time before He returned? See Matthew 25:19.
3. What does the Parable of the Talents teach? Does it teach that God has given to each person unique abilities and opportunities for service? What do you think?
4. Was the two-talent slave expected to do as well as the five-talent slave? Was he condemned for not doing as well as the five-talent slave?
5. Did Jesus indicate that there would be positions of responsibility in heaven? See Matthew 25:21,23.
6. Jesus said, “For to everyone who has, more will be given...but from him who does not have, even what he

has will be taken away” (Matthew 25:28-29 NKJV). What did Jesus mean by that? Is that fair? Did Jesus mean that God abundantly rewards industry in His service? What do you think?

27. (144)
THE FINAL JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS
Matthew 25:31-46

Jesus closed His discussion of future events with a description of the Judgment scene.

He said that when the Son of Man comes, He will have all the angels with Him and will sit on His glorious throne (Matthew 25:31).

All the nations will be gathered before Him and He will separate the people, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats (Matthew 25:32).

The Son of Man will then put the sheep on His right side and the goats on His left (Matthew 25:33); and He will say to those on His right,

“Come,
you who are blessed by my Father;
take your inheritance,
the kingdom prepared for you
since the creation of the world.”

Matthew 25:34 NIV

Then the Son of Man will explain to them why they are being so nicely treated. He will say,

“For I was hungry
and you gave me something to eat,
I was thirsty
and you gave me something to drink,
I was a stranger and you invited me in,
I needed clothes and you clothed me,
I was sick and you looked after me,
I was in prison and you came to visit me.
Matthew 15:34-36 NIV

The righteous people will ask,

“Lord, when did we see you hungry
and feed you,
or thirsty and give you something to drink?
When did we see you a stranger
and invite you in,
or needing clothes and clothe you?
When did we see you sick or in prison
and go to visit you?”
Matthew 25:37-39 NIV

The King will explain,

“I tell you the truth,
whatever you did for one of the least
of these brothers of mine,
you did for me.”

Matthew 25:40 NIV

After that, the King will say to those on His left,

“Depart from me,
you who are cursed,
into the eternal fire

prepared for the devil and his angels.”

Matthew 25: 41 NIV

He will explain to them why they are being so harshly
treated. He will say,

“For I was hungry
and you gave me nothing to eat,
I was thirsty
and you gave me nothing to drink,
I was a stranger
and you did not invite me in,
I needed clothes and you did not clothe me,
I was sick and in prison
and you did not look after me.”

Matthew 25:42-43 NIV

They will answer,

“Lord, when did we see you hungry
or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes
or sick or in prison, and did not help you?”
Matthew 25:44 NIV

He will reply,

“I tell you the truth,
whatever you did not do
for one of the least of these,
you did not do for me.”

Matthew 25:45 NIV

Concluding his description of the Judgment, Jesus
said,

“Then they will go away
to eternal punishment,
but the righteous to eternal life.”

Matthew 25:46 NIV

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. The Judgment will take place in conjunction with the coming of the Son of Man (Matthew 25:31-32). Will that be at the end of time? See Revelation 20:11-15.
2. For whom has the heavenly kingdom been prepared? See Matthew 25:34.

3. Does Jesus expect His followers to feed people that don't have anything to eat and to give a drink of water to those that don't have anything to drink? Does He expect His followers to find housing for strangers, to put clothes on people that don't have any, to take care of the sick, and to visit people in prison? What do you think? See Matthew 25:34-36, 41-43.
4. If Jesus' followers help people in need, is that the same as helping Jesus? What do you think?
5. If Jesus' followers don't help people in need, is that the same as not helping Jesus? What do you think?
6. For whom is "the eternal fire" prepared? See Matthew 25:41. Will some people be put there? Is the "eternal fire" the same as hell? See Mark 9:43.
7. Will "eternal life" last forever (Matthew 25:46)? If so, how long will "eternal punishment" last? Will it also last forever?

28. (145)

THE FINAL PLOT TO KILL JESUS

Matthew 26:1-5; Mark 14:1-2; Luke 22:1-2

Jesus finished (Matthew 26:1) the rather long discourse, which He gave to His disciples in answer to their questions about (1) the destruction of the temple and about (2) His return at the end of the age (world).

Since He knew that in two days He would be put to death by crucifixion, He said to His disciples,

“You know that in two days

the Passover will take place
and the Son of Man will be handed over
to be crucified.”

Matthew 26:2 NIV

In the meanwhile, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people came together at the house of Caiaphas, the high priest (Matthew 26:3). They met in order to devise a plan to take Jesus by deception. They wanted to arrest Him as secretly as possible (Matthew 26:4), because they were afraid of the people (Luke 22:2).

Caiaphas had already expressed his opinion that it would be better “that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish” (John 11:50 NIV).

Most of the religious leaders present at the meeting at Caiaphas’ house agreed with Him that Jesus should be put to death.

They said, however, “This must not happen during the Feast, lest there be a riot among the people” (Mark 14:2).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Why was Jesus such a threat to the religious leaders?
How did they think they would benefit by His death?
What do you think?

2. Why did the religious leaders want to avoid a riot? Why did the religious leaders think that the people would object to their putting Jesus to death?
3. Are you amazed that Jesus knew exactly how He would die and when it would happen (Matthew 26:2)?
4. Are you impressed that Jesus did not express any regrets for Himself or ask for sympathy?

29. (146)

THE ANOINTING IN THE HOUSE OF SIMON THE LEPER

Matthew 26:6-16; Mark 14:3-11; Luke 22:3-6

After Jesus left off teaching in the temple, He returned to Bethany, where a meal was served for Him in the house of a man known as “Simon the Leper” (Matthew 26:6). The meal was likely served on Wednesday of Jesus’ last week on earth.

While Jesus was reclining at table at Simon’s house, an incident took place, which was similar to what had happened a few days earlier at Lazarus’ house (John 12:1-8).

A woman came, bringing an alabaster jar that contained expensive perfumed oil, which was made with

genuine nard. She broke the jar open and poured oil on Jesus' head (Mark 14:3).

When His disciples saw this, they were indignant (Matthew 26:8). They echoed the complaint that Judas had made when Mary had poured perfumed oil on Jesus' feet (John 12:3-6).

They said, "Why was this perfumed oil wasted? It might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." They also rebuked the woman sharply (Mark 14:5b).

Jesus became aware of the disciples' criticism of the woman and said to them,

"Leave her alone.
Why are you bothering her?
She has done a beautiful thing to me."
Mark 14:6 NIV

Jesus then told them the same that He had told Judas (John 12:8). He said,

"The poor you will have with you always
and you can help them any time you please;
but you will not have me always."
Mark 14:7

Defending the woman, He said,

"She did what she could.

She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial.”

Mark 14:8 NIV

Then He added,

“I tell you the truth,
wherever this gospel is preached
throughout the world,
what she has done will also be told,
in memory of her.”

Matthew 26:13 NIV

Shortly after this, Judas went to the chief priests (Matthew 26:14) and offered to betray Jesus into their hands (Mark 14:10). Judas discussed with them how he could best do this. He also discussed it with officers of the temple guard (Luke 22:4).

Judas asked the chief priests, “What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you” (Matthew 26:15)?

They agreed to give him money (Mark 14:11) and they laid out thirty pieces of silver before him (Matthew 26:15).

Judas agreed to this amount, and from that time on, he watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them, when no crowd was present (Luke 22:6).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Do you think that the woman, who poured perfumed oil on Jesus' head at Simon the Leper's house was the same woman who had poured perfumed oil on His feet at Lazarus' house (John 12:1-11)?
2. Do you think this woman had heard what Mary, Lazarus' sister, had done and was trying to imitate her?
3. Mary poured perfumed oil on Jesus' feet (John 12:3) and dried His feet with her hair. This woman poured perfumed oil on Jesus' head. Why did she pour it on His head instead of on His feet? Do you have any thoughts on this? Please share them if you do?
4. Jesus said that there would always be poor people in the world (Mark 14:7). Has history shown this prediction to be true?
5. Jesus said that this woman's deed would be told everywhere that the gospel would be preached (Matthew 26:13). Is that still happening?

30. (147)

THE PREPARATION FOR THE PASSOVER

Matthew 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-13

On Thursday, the Feast of Unleavened Bread was finally at hand (Luke 22:7). The feast was to begin at sundown. The disciples came to Jesus and asked Him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover Meal" (Mark 14:12b)?

Then Jesus sent Peter and John to Jerusalem with instructions to make preparations for the Passover Meal (Luke 22:8). He told them,

“Just after you go into the city,
a man carrying a jug of water will meet you.
Follow him into the house that he enters.”

Luke 22:10

Jesus told them to say to the man,

“The Teacher says,
‘My time is near.
I will celebrate the Passover
with my disciples at your house.’”

Matthew 26:18b

Jesus told them also to say to the man,

“The teacher asks,
‘Where is my room
where I can eat the Passover meal
with my disciples?’”

Mark 14:14

Jesus continued,

“Then he will show you

a large upstairs room
that is furnished and ready.
Make preparation for us there.”

Mark 14:15

So Peter and John left and went to Jerusalem, and they found everything just as Jesus had said; and they prepared the Passover Meal (Mark 14:16).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. How could Jesus have known that a man carrying a jug of water would meet Peter and John as soon as they went into the city?
2. How could Jesus have known that the house into which the man would go would have a room that was furnished and ready for their use?
3. How could Jesus have known that the owner of the house would let them have the meal in his house? What do you think?

31. (148)

JESUS WASHED HIS DISCIPLES' FEET

John 13:1-17

Jesus was well aware that He would shortly leave this world and return to the Father (John 13:1a). He knew that He had come from God and was returning to God (John 13:3). He also knew for a certainty that the Father had given all things into His hands.

Therefore, His heart was not filled with resentment or fear. Rather, it was filled with love for the people who belonged to Him. The Gospel of John says that Jesus loved His people “to the end” (John 13:1b). This could possibly mean that He loved them completely or it could mean that He loved them to the end of His life. Both statements would be true.

As the sun went down on Thursday, Jesus and the Twelve (Mark 14:17) arrived at the place where they were to eat the Passover Meal, and they went in and took their places at the table (Luke 22:14).

By the time the meal was served, the devil had already put the plan into the heart of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus (John 13:2).

Jesus got up during the meal and removed His outer robe. He took a towel and wrapped it around His waist. Then He poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples’ feet. He also dried their feet with the towel that He had wrapped around His waist (John 13:4-5).

When He came to Simon Peter to wash his feet, Simon asked Him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?”

Jesus replied to him,
“You do not realize now
what I am doing,

but later you will understand.”

John 13:7 NIV

Peter said, “No, you shall never wash my feet” (John 13:8a)!

To which Jesus replied,

“Unless I wash you,
you have no part with me.”

John 13:8b NIV

“Then, Lord,” Simon Peter said, “not just my feet but my hands and my head as well” (John 13:9)!

Whereupon, Jesus said,

*“A person that has been washed
does not need to be washed,
except his feet.
His whole body is clean.”*

John 13:10a

Then Jesus added concerning the Apostles,

“And you are clean,
though not all of you.”

John 13:10b

Jesus knew which one would betray Him. That is why He said “not all of you” are clean (John 13:11).

When He finished washing His disciples’ feet, He put His robe on and returned to His place. Then He asked them,

“Do you understand
what I have done for you?
You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’
and rightly so,
for that is what I am.”

John 13:12b-13 NIV

He said,

“Now if I,
your Lord and Teacher,
have washed your feet,
you also ought to wash one another’s feet.”

John 13:14

Jesus made His point more urgent by adding,

“I have set you an example
that you should do
as I have done for you.”

John 13:15 NIV

Further, He said,

“I tell you the truth,

no servant is greater than his master,
nor is a messenger greater
than the one who sent him.”

John 13:16 NIV

Concluding His remarks about serving one another, Jesus
said,

“If you know these things,
you will be blessed if you do them.”

John 13:17 NIV

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Simon Peter refuse, at first, to let Jesus wash His feet? What do you think?
2. Jesus told Peter that unless he allowed Him to wash his feet, he could have no part with Him (John 13:8). To this Peter replied, “not just my feet but my hands and my head as well” (John 13:9). What did Peter mean when he said that?
3. Why did Jesus wash His disciples’ feet? What do you think? What was He trying to show them? See John 13:14-15.
4. Jesus said to the disciples, “I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you” (John 13:15).

Question: Was He instructing them to have a foot washing ceremony? What do you think?

5. What are some of the ways in which Jesus' followers can serve one another? Please name a few.

32. (149)
JESUS FORETOLD THAT JUDAS WOULD BETRAY HIM
Matthew 26:20-25; Mark 14:18-21; John 13:18-21

Jesus and the Twelve were at table for the Passover Meal.

After He had washed His disciples' feet (John 13:3-10), Jesus said that one of them was not clean (John 13:10c-11), referring, no doubt, to Judas.

Jesus made it very clear, however, that He did not think that all of His Apostles were unclean. He said,

“I am not referring to all of you;
I know those I have chosen.”

John 13:18a NIV

Jesus went on to imply that Judas' betrayal would be in fulfillment (John 13:18b) of Psalm 41:9, which says,

“He who shares my bread
has lifted up his heel against me.”

John 13:18c NIV

Jesus explained why He was telling them that one of them would betray Him. He said,

“I am telling you now before it happens,
so that when it does happen
you will believe

that I am He.”

John 13:19 NIV

Jesus assured His Apostles that their upcoming evangelistic ministry would be very important. He said,

“I tell you the truth,
whoever accepts
anyone I send accepts me;
and whoever accepts me
accepts the one who sent me.”

John 13:20 NIV

While they were eating, Jesus said forthrightly,

“I tell you the truth,
one of you will betray me.”

Matthew 26:21 NIV

They were deeply distressed to hear this; and each one began to ask to Jesus, “Surely, Lord, not I, is it” (Matthew 26:22)?

He told them,

“It is one of the Twelve,
one who dips bread into the bowl with me.”
Mark 14:20 NIV

Right after Jesus said this, Judas dipped in the bowl from which they were eating; and Jesus said,

“The one who has dipped his hand
into the bowl with me will betray me.”
Matthew 26:23

Jesus then pronounced a “woe” over Judas. Saying,

“The Son of man goes
as it is written of him,
but woe to that man
by whom the Son of man is betrayed!
It would have been better for that man
if he had not been born.”
Matthew 26:24 RSV

Judas more than likely overheard Jesus say this; yet he too asked Jesus, “Surely, Teacher, not I, is it?”

Jesus responded,

“Yes, it is you.”

Matthew 26:25

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. The Old Testament Scriptures foretold that the Messiah would suffer (Matthew 26:24). Please look at Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 to see some of what was foretold about His suffering.
2. Judas asked Jesus, “Surely, Teacher, not I, is it” (Matthew 26:25)? Was Judas sincere in asking this? What do you think?
3. Did you notice that Judas did not call Jesus, “Lord” (Matthew 26:25), as the other disciples had done (Matthew 26:22)? Instead, he called Him “Teacher.” Is this significant? If so, in what way is it significant?

33. (150)

THE LORD’S SUPPER INSTITUTED

Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:15-20

Early in the Passover Meal, Jesus said to His disciples,

“I have eagerly desired
to eat this Passover with you
before I suffer.”

Luke 22:15 NIV

He said,

“For I tell you,
I will not eat it again
until it finds fulfillment
in the kingdom of God.”

Luke 22:16 NIV

Jesus accepted a cup, which was likely handed to Him.
Then He gave thanks and said to His disciples,

“Take this,
and divide it among yourselves.”

Luke 22:17 RSV

He explained,

“For I tell you that from now on
I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine
until the kingdom of God comes.”

Luke 22:18 RSV

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and
broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying,

“Take and eat; this is my body.”
Matthew 26:26b NIV

Concerning the bread He remarked,

“This is my body given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.”

Luke 22:19b NIV

After the supper (Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25),
Jesus took the cup, gave thanks (Matthew 26:27) and
gave it to the disciples, saying,

“Drink from it, all of you.”
Matthew 26:27b NIV

Then He added,

“This is my blood of the covenant,
which is poured out for many
for the forgiveness of sins.”
Matthew 26:28 NIV

He also said,

“This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
which is poured out for you.”
Luke 22:20b NIV

The Apostle Paul recorded that Jesus said,

“Do this, whenever you drink it,
in remembrance of me.”

1 Corinthians 11:25b NIV

All disciples drank from it (Mark 14:23).
Then He said,

“I tell you,
I will not drink of this fruit of the vine
from now on until that day
when I drink it anew with you
in my Father’s kingdom.”

Matthew 26:29 NIV

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Jesus look forward to the Passover Meal with eager anticipation (Luke 22:15)? What do you think?
2. Did Jesus intend for His followers to celebrate the Lord’s supper after He had gone? What do you think? See Luke 22:19.
3. Should every member of a congregation drink of the cup, or is it only for the clergy (preachers)? See Matthew 26:27.
4. Jesus said, “This is my body” (Luke 22:19). Did Jesus mean that the bread had been miraculously transformed

into His actual body, or did He mean that the bread represented His body?

5. Jesus said, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matthew 26:28 NIV). Question: Was the fruit of the vine poured out for the forgiveness of sins, or was the blood of Jesus poured out for the forgiveness of sins?
6. Does a member of the congregation partake of the Lord’s Supper in order to get his sins forgiven? Or does he partake of it in order to remember Jesus (Luke 22:19). What do you think?

34. (151)

JUDAS LEFT THE PASSOVER FEAST

Luke 22:21-23; John 13: 22-32

After Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper (Luke 22:19-20), He said,

“But the hand of him
who is going to betray me
is with mine on the table.”

Luke 22:21 NIV

Then Jesus reiterated the “woe” that He had spoken previously in the Passover Meal over Judas (Matthew 26:24). He said,

“The Son of Man will go
as it has been decreed,
but woe to that man who betrays him.”

Luke 22:22 NIV

The disciples were still not sure which of them it would be that would betray Jesus (Luke 22:23).

So Simon Peter signaled to the disciple whom Jesus loved, who was sitting next to Jesus, to ask Jesus whom He meant (John 13:23-24).

The disciple whom Jesus loved leaned back against Jesus’ chest and asked, “Lord, who is it” (John 13:25)?

Jesus responded,

“It is the one
to whom I will give this piece of bread
when I have dipped it in the dish.”

John 13:26a NIV

Then Jesus dipped a piece of bread and gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon (John 13:26b).

As soon as Judas had taken the bread, Satan entered into him (John 13:27a); and Jesus said to Judas,

“What you are about to do,
do quickly.”

John 13:27b

NIV

None of those present understood why Jesus said this to Judas (John 13:28). Some supposed that, since Judas had the money bag, Jesus told him to buy what was needed for the Feast or that Jesus told him to give something to the poor (John 13:29).

As soon as Judas accepted the bread, which Jesus had dipped in the dish, Judas left the Passover Meal; and it was night (John 13:30).

After Judas left, Jesus said,

“Now has the Son of Man been glorified
and God has been glorified in him.”

John 13:31

Jesus also said,

“If God has been glorified in him
God will also glorify the Son,

and he will glorify him immediately.”

John 13:31-32

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Do you think Jesus could have done anything or said anything that would have dissuaded Judas from betraying Him?
2. Satan entered Judas' heart (John 13:27a). Did Satan force His way into Judas' heart, or did Judas welcome him? What do you think?
3. Jesus told Judas, "What you are about to do, do quickly" (John 13:27b NIV). Why did Jesus tell him that? What do you think?
4. How had Jesus been glorifying God (John 13:31)? What do you think?
5. Jesus said that God would glorify the Son "at once" (John 13:32). Did Jesus expect that God would glorify the Son by raising Him from the dead on the third day? What do you think? See Luke 9:22.

35. (152)

A DISPUTE ABOUT WHO WAS THE GREATEST Luke 22:24-30

After Judas left the Passover Meal, a heated dispute arose among the Apostles as to which of them was considered the greatest (Luke 22:24).

This dispute gave Jesus an opportunity to point out, once again, the difference between the kingdom of God and

the kingdoms of the Gentiles. He described the kingdoms of the Gentiles, by saying,

“The kings of the Gentiles
lord it over them;
and those who exercise authority over them
are called Benefactors.”

Luke 22:25 NIV

Things are different from this, however, in the kingdom of God. Jesus explained,

“But you are not like that.
Let the greatest among you
become as the younger;
and let the one that rules
become as one that serves.”

Luke 22:26

In order to demonstrate whom the Gentile world considered to be the greatest, Jesus asked,

“For who is greater,
the one who sits at the table
or the one who serves?”
“Is it not the one who is at the table?”

Luke 22:27 NIV

Using His own example, Jesus illustrated how the kingdom of God differs from the kingdoms of the Gentiles. He said,

“But I am among you
as one who serves.”

Luke 22:27c NIV

Now, concerning the honor due all of His Apostles, He said,

“You are those
who have stood by me
in my trials.”

Luke 22:28 NIV

Therefore, He promised them,

“And I confer on you a kingdom,
just as my Father conferred one on me,
so that you may eat and drink
at my table in my kingdom
and sit on thrones,
judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Luke 22:29-30 NIV

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Do you think Jesus was disappointed to hear His Apostles still squabbling about which of them was the greatest?

2. Who should be considered the greatest among Jesus' followers? See Luke 22:26-27.
3. Jesus was soon to tell Pilate that His (Jesus') kingdom is "not of this world" (John 18:36). Does that imply that the kingdom, which Jesus promised to His Apostles (Luke 22:29-30), is also "not of this world?" What do you think?
4. Did Jesus intend for His Apostles to rule over the church on earth as if they were princes? Did Jesus give them any civil authority at all? What do you think?

36. (153)

SIMON PETER'S DENIAL FORETOLD

Luke 22:31-38; John 13:33-38

Knowing that His time was extremely short, Jesus said to His disciples,

"My children,
I will be with you only a little longer."
John 123:33a NIV

The time would soon come when they would have to get along without His physical presence. He said,

"You will look for me,

and just as I told the Jews,
so I tell you now:
Where I am going,
you cannot come.”

John 13:33b NIV

He told them what kind of a relationship He wanted them to have with each other in His absence. He said,

“A new command I give you:
Love one another.
As I have loved you,
so you must love one another.”

John 13:34 NIV

Jesus knew that His disciples’ love for one another would distinguish them from others. He said,

“By this all men will know
that you are my disciples,
if you love one another.”

John 13:35 NIV

Simon Peter was troubled that Jesus was going to leave them. So he asked Jesus, “Lord, where are you going” (John 13:36a)?

Jesus replied,

“Where I am going,

you cannot follow now,
but you will follow later.”

John 13:36b NIV

Peter asked, “Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you” (John 13:37 NIV).

Whereupon Jesus asked him,

“Will you really
lay down your life for me?”

John 12:38a NIV

Then Jesus told Peter,

“I tell you the truth,
before the rooster crows,

you will disown me three times!”

John 13:38b NIV

Jesus also said,

“Simon, Simon,
Satan has asked to sift you as wheat.
But I have prayed for you, Simon,
that your faith may not fail.
And when you have turned back,
strengthen your brothers.”

Luke 22:31-32 NIV

To this Simon Peter replied, “Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death” (Luke 22:33 NIV).

Jesus then began to speak with them about their worldwide mission. He asked them,

“When I sent you without purse,
bag or sandals,
did you lack anything?”

Luke 22:35a NIV

“Nothing,” they answered.
Then He said to them,

“But now if you have a purse, take it,
and also a bag;
and if you don’t have a sword,
sell your cloak and buy one.”

Luke 22:36 NIV

Jesus, next, began talking about how what would happen to Him would fulfill the Scriptures. He said,

“It is written
‘And he was numbered
with the transgressors;’
and I tell you that
this must be fulfilled in me.
Yes, what is written about me
is reaching its fulfillment.”

Luke 22:37 NIV; Isaiah 53:12

The disciples understood what Jesus said about a sword in a literal fashion. So they declared, “See, Lord, here are two swords.”

He replied,

“That is enough.”

Luke 22:38

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. What is the “new commandment,” which Jesus gave to His disciples? See John 13:34.
2. Jesus said they should love one another as much as He loved them (John 13:34)? How much did He love them? How can I tell if I love my brothers and sisters enough?
3. **When people of the world look at a congregation of Christ’s people, what should they see? Read John 13:35.**
4. Jesus was planning to go where His disciples could not follow (John 13:33). Where was He planning to go?
5. What did Jesus mean when He said (John 13:36) that they would follow Him later?
6. Jesus had told His Apostles not to take anything with them when He sent them out on their short mission-journey (Matthew 10:9-10). Why did He tell them, at this time, to take their purse and bag along with them (Luke 22:36)? What do you think?

- 7. Two swords (Luke 22:38) would not have provided much defense for the disciples. Was Jesus serious about their defending themselves with the sword? What do you think?**

37. (154)

THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

John 14:1-14

Jesus continued to strengthen His Apostles for what lay ahead of them. He said,

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.
Trust in God;
trust also in me.”

John 14:1 NIV

He told them He would prepare a home for them, saying,

“In my Father’s house are many rooms;
If it were not so, I would have told you.
I am going there to prepare a place for you.”

John 14:2 NIV

He told them that, after going away, He would also return. He said,

“And if I go and prepare a place for you,
I will come back
and take you to be with me
that you also may be where I am.”

John 14:3 NIV

He said,

“You know the way
to the place where I am going.”

John 14:4 NIV

At that, Thomas spoke up and said, “Lord, we don’t
know where you are going, so how can we know the way”
(John 14:5 NIV).

To Thomas (and to all of them), Jesus said,

“I am the way and the truth and the life.
No one comes to the Father
except through me.”

John 14:6 NIV

Then Jesus began to talk about His relationship with the
Father. He said,

“If you really knew me,
you would know my Father as well.
From now on,
you do know him

and have seen him.”

John 14:7 NIV

That remark led Philip to say, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us” (John 14:8 NIV).

Jesus appeared to be disappointed that Philip had not yet understood that Jesus had been showing them the Father all along; so Jesus said to him,

“Don’t you know me, Philip,
even after I have been among you
such a long time?
Anyone who has seen me
has seen the Father.
How can you say,
‘Show us the Father?’”

John 14:9 NIV

Then Jesus asked Philip,

“Don’t you believe that I am in the Father,
and that the Father is in me?
The words I say to you are not just my own.
Rather, it is the Father, living in me,
who is doing his work.

John 14:10 NIV

He urged them all,

“Believe me

when I say that I am in the Father
and the Father is in me;
or at least
believe on the evidence
of the miracles themselves.”

John 14:11 NIV

After Jesus had said that, He made an astonishing announcement. He said,

“I tell you the truth,
anyone who believes in me
will do the works that I do.
He will do even greater things than these,
because I am going to the Father.”

John 14:12

He also made an astonishing promise. He said,

“And I will do
whatever you ask in my name,
so that the Son
may bring glory to the Father.”
If you ask for anything in my name,
I will do it.”

John 14:13-14

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Does our believing in God help us not to be afraid? See John 14:1.
2. Where is the “Father’s house,” of which Jesus spoke (John 14:2-3)? Has a place in the Father’s house been prepared for each of Jesus’ faithful followers? What do you think?
3. *Jesus is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). How is He the way? How is He the truth? How is He the life?*
4. *Jesus thought that Philip should have recognized the Father in Him (John 14:9). Can we, after all these years, still see the Father in Jesus? What do you think?*
5. *Are the miracles that Jesus performed evidence (John 14:11) that the Father was in Jesus and that Jesus was in the Father? What do you think?*
6. *Should a believer try to imitate Jesus? What do you think? See John 14:12.*

7. *Should a believer try to perform miracles, as Jesus did? What do you think?*
8. *How can a believer do “greater works” (John 14:12) than Jesus did? Please explain.*
9. Do obedient believers have the privilege of making requests of the Father? See John 14:13-14.
10. In whose name should believers make their requests of God? See John 14:14.
11. Who is it that will carry out what believers ask in prayer? See John 14:14.

38. (155)
OBEDIENCE AND THE HOLY SPIRIT
John 14:15-24

In continuing to teach His Apostles, Jesus said to them,

“If you love me,
you will obey what I command.”

John 14:15 NIV

He then promised that if they would keep what He commanded them, He would ask the Father to send them another Counselor. He said,

**“I will ask the Father
to give you another Counselor,
to be with you always.”**

John 14:16

He identified this “Counselor” by saying,

“He is the Spirit of truth,
whom the world cannot receive,…”

John 14:17a ISV

Then He explained why the world cannot receive the “Spirit of truth.” He said,

“...for it neither sees him
nor recognizes him.”

John 14:17 b ISV

Jesus added,

“But you recognize him,
for he abides with you
and will be in you.”

John 14:17c ISV

Jesus assured His disciples that He would not desert
them. He said,

“I will not leave you as orphans;
I will come to you.”

John 14:18 NIV

Knowing that they would see Him again, Jesus said to
them,

“Before long,
the world will not see me anymore,
but you will see me.
Because I live,
you will also live.”

John 14:19 NIV

He was confident that when they saw Him again, they would know more about Him, for He said,

“On that day you will know
that I am in my Father
and that you are in me

and that I am in you.”

John 14:20 ISV

He identified, yet again, who it is that truly loves Him. He said,

“Whoever has my commands
and obeys them,
he is the one who loves me.”

John 14:21a NIV

Then He described some of the good things that would happen to those who love Him. He said,

“He who loves me
will be loved by my Father,
and I too will love him
and I will show myself plainly to him.”

John 14:21b

Judas, one of the Twelve but not Judas Iscariot, had apparently been under the impression that Jesus was intending to show Himself to the world. So Judas asked Jesus, “Lord, what then has transpired that You are going to show Yourself plainly to us, but not to the world” (John 14:22)?

Jesus explained that both He and the Holy Spirit would show themselves only to those that love Him (Jesus) enough to obey His teaching. He said,

“If anyone loves me,
he will obey my teaching.
My Father will love him,
and we will come to him
and make our home with him.”

John 14:23 NIV

Jesus explained why some people do not obey His teaching. He said,

“He who does not love me
will not obey my teaching.”

John 14:24a NIV

Next, He emphasized that His teaching did not originate with Him. He said,

“These words you hear are not my own;
they belong to the Father who sent me.”

John 14:24b NIV

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it that the world cannot receive the Holy Spirit?
See John 14:17.
2. Does God send His Holy Spirit to convert people, or does He send His Holy Spirit only to people that have already been converted? See John 14:16.
3. How can a person know whether or not He (or she) loves Jesus? See John 14:21. How can a person be assured that the Father and Jesus love him (or her)? See John 14:21.

39. (156)

MY PEACE I GIVE YOU

John 14:25-31

Jesus promised that the Father would send the Holy Spirit, who would counsel the Apostles. Jesus said that the

Holy Spirit would (1) counsel the Apostles, (2) teach them, and (3) remind them of what Jesus had taught them.

Jesus said,

“All this I have spoken
while still with you.

But the Counselor,

the Holy Spirit,

whom the Father will send in my name,

will teach you all things

and will remind you

of everything I have said to you.”

John 14:25-26 NIV

Jesus did not want His Apostles to be frightened by what was about to happen, so He said to them,

“Peace I leave with you;
my peace I give you.
I do not give to you as the world gives.
Do not let your hearts be troubled
and do not be afraid.”

John 14:27 NIV

He wanted them to see the brighter side of what was going to happen. He said,

“You heard me say,
‘I am going away
and I am coming back to you.’
If you loved me,
you would be glad
that I am going to the Father,
for the Father is greater than I.”

John 14:28 NIV

Jesus knew that it pained the Apostles to hear that He was going away, yet He had a special reason for wanting them to hear about it. He said,

“I have told you now
before it happens,
so that when it does happen
you will believe.”

John 14:29 NIV

Jesus said to the Apostles,

“I will not speak with you much longer,
for the prince of this world is coming;
but he has nothing on me.”

John 14:30

The “prince of this world” (Satan) would find nothing with which to incriminate Jesus. Yet, in spite of Jesus’ innocence, He would have to suffer; for Jesus said,

“But the world must learn
that I love the Father
and that I do exactly
as the Father has commanded me.”

John 13:31

At this point, Jesus suggested that He and the Apostles should leave the room where they had eaten the Passover Meal. He said,

“Get up, let us go from here.”

John 14:31 NASU

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. What did Jesus say that the Holy Spirit (Counselor) would do for the Apostles? See John 14:25-26. Does the Holy Spirit do these things for all believers? What do you think?
2. How would you characterize the peace (John 14:27) that Jesus gives?

3. Why is it important for the world to learn that Jesus loved the Father? (John 14:31)?
4. How can the world hear about Jesus' love for the Father?

40. (157)
I AM THE VINE; YOU ARE THE BRANCHES
John 15:1-8

At the close of the Passover Meal Jesus had said to His Apostles, "Get up, let us go from here" (John 14:31 NASU). Jesus continued teaching His Apostles, however; and He said to them,

"I am the true vine,
and my Father is the gardener."
John 15:1 NIV

Pruning the vines is an important part of the work of a vineyard. God Himself does the "pruning" in His vineyard. Jesus said,

“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit,
he taketh it away:
and every (branch) that beareth fruit,
he cleanseth it,
that it may bear more fruit.”

John 15:2 ASV

Jesus does not appear to have thought that His Apostles needed to be further pruned (cleansed), for He said to them,

“You are already made clean
by the word which I have spoken to you.”

John 15:3 RSV

Yet He warned them that they could bear no fruit unless they remained in Him. He cautioned,

“Remain in me,
and I will remain in you.
No branch can bear fruit by itself;
it must remain in the vine.
Neither can you bear fruit
unless you remain in me.”

John 15:4 NIV

Repeating Himself just a bit, He said,

“I am the vine;

you are the branches.
If a man remains in me
and I in him,
he will bear much fruit;
apart from me you can do nothing.”

John 15:5 NIV

**Jesus warned that bad things would happen to a
disciple that does not remain in Him. He said,**

“If anyone does not remain in me,
he is like a branch
that is thrown away and withers;
such branches are picked up,
thrown into the fire and burned.”

John 15:6 NIV

**On the other hand, the disciples that remain in
Jesus will be blessed. Jesus said,**

“If you remain in me
and my words remain in you,
ask whatever you wish,
and it will be given you.”

John 15:7 NIV

If Jesus' disciples remain in His words, His words will teach them to pray in a way that will make their prayers answerable; and, as a consequence, they will bear much fruit to the glory of God. Jesus said,

“In this is my Father glorified,
that you bear much fruit
and become my disciples.”

John 15:8 NIV

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Jesus said that His Father, the Gardener, “prunes” the branches so they can bear more fruit (John 15:2). Does God “prune” the members of the church? What do you think?
2. Jesus said that His Apostles had been “made clean” already (John 15:3). How had they been made “clean?” See John 15:3. Do you think that Jesus' Apostles had been baptized?
3. What happens to branches (members) that do not stay connected to the vine (i.e. Jesus)? See John 15:6.
4. What are the two stipulations that are laid down in John 15:7 for getting prayers answered?

5. Please, identify some of the “fruit” that Jesus’ disciples bear. See Romans 1:13. See also Galatians 5:22-23 and Hebrews 13:15.

41. (158)
REMAIN IN MY LOVE
John 15:9-17

Even though Jesus was facing death, He was confident that God loved Him. As a result of this confidence, His heart was filled with love, and He said to His Apostles,

“As the Father has loved me,
so have I loved you.
Now remain in my love.”

John 15:9 NIV

He explained how it would be possible for His disciples to remain in His love. He said,

“If you keep my commands,
you will remain in my love,
just as I have kept
my Father’s commands
and remain in his love.”

John 15:10

Thus, He shared His secret for remaining in God's love. He shared it so that His disciples might experience the same joy that He (Jesus) experienced. He said,

“I have told you this
so that my joy may be in you
and that your joy may be complete.”

John 15:11NIV

Jesus then described the essence of His command to them, by saying,

“My command is this:
Love each other as I have loved you.”

John 15:12 NIV

Jesus knew that He would soon be called upon to demonstrate the extent of His love. He said,

“Greater love has no one than this,
that he lay down his life for his friends.”
John 15:13 NIV

He then identified who His friends are, by saying,

“You are my friends
if you do what I command you.”

John 15:14 ISV

He explained why He was now calling His Apostles “friends.” He said,

“I do not call you servants anymore,
because a servant does not know
what his master is doing.
But I have called you friends,
because I have made known to you
everything that I have heard
from my Father.”

John 15:15 ISV

Next, Jesus revealed His purpose in choosing the Twelve. It was so that they would produce fruit and their fruit would last. He also revealed how they would produce fruit. He said,

“You have not chosen me,
but I have chosen you.
I have appointed you to go
and produce fruit that will last,
so that whatever you ask the Father
in my name,
he will give it to you.”

John 15:16 ISV

Jesus then revealed His purpose in giving them the commands that He had given. He said,

“These things I command you
in order that you may love each other.”

John 15:17

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. If we do not keep Jesus’ commands, is there a danger that we might not remain in His love? What do you think? See John 15:9-10.
2. If a person keeps Jesus’ commands, does he (or she) experience more joy than if he (or she) did not keep them? See John 15:10-11?
3. How did Jesus demonstrate His love? See John 15:13.
4. Would you like to be considered a “friend” of Jesus? How can a person become Jesus’ “friend?” See John 15:14.

42. (159)

**JESUS TOLD HIS APOSTLES THAT THEY WOULD
BE PERSECUTED**

John 15:18-16:4

Jesus began to prepare His Apostles for the opposition that they would face. He said,

“If the world hates you,
keep in mind
that it hated me first.”

John 15:18 NIV

He explained why the world would hate them, saying,

“If you belonged to the world,
it would love you as its own.
As it is,
you do not belong to the world,
but I have chosen you out of the world.
That is why the world hates you.”

John 15:19 NIV

Jesus told them that people of the world would treat them just as they had treated Him. He said,

“Remember the words I spoke to you:
‘No servant is greater than his master.’
If they persecuted me,
they will persecute you also.
If they obeyed my teaching,
they will obey yours also.”

John 15:20 NIV

It was because of Him and the Father that His Apostles would be persecuted. He said to them,

“They will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know the one who sent me.”

John 15:21 ISV

The fact that the Messiah came into the world made the children of Israel more accountable. If they had accepted Him, great blessings would have been theirs. Since they rejected Him, however, Jesus said,

“If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.”

John 15:22 NAS

Jesus explained why it is that some people hate Him. He said,

“He who hates me
hates my Father as well.”

John 15:23 NIV

Any excuse that the people of His generation might have had for not accepting Him was taken away by the miracles that He did. He said,

“If I had not done works among them
that no other has done,
they would not be guilty of sin.
But now, they have seen
and have hated both me and the Father.”

John 15:24

The hatred that Jesus had encountered was foretold in the Old Testament. He said,

“This happened
in order that the word might be fulfilled,
which is written in their law,
‘They hated me without cause.’”

John 15:25; Psalm 69:4

In spite of His own impending tragedy, Jesus interjected a note of encouragement by telling His Apostles that He would send the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, to them. He said,

“When the Counselor comes,
whom I will send to you from the Father,
the Spirit of truth
who goes out from the Father,
he will testify about me.”

John 15:26 NIV

The Apostles would also be required to testify of Him. He said,

“And you also must testify,
for you have been with me
from the beginning.”

John 15:27 NIV

He told His Apostles why He was warning them of what would happen to them. He said,

“I have told you this
to keep you from falling away.”

John 16:1 ISV

Again He forewarned,

“They will put you out of the synagogue;
in fact, a time is coming when
anyone who kills you
will think
he is offering a service to God.”

John 16:2 NIV

He continued explaining to the Apostles why people
would do bad things to them. He said,

“They will do such things
because they have not known the Father
or me.”

John 16:3 NIV

Again He mentioned why He had told them that they
would be persecuted. He said,

“But I have told you this
so that when their hour comes
you may remember that
I told you about them.
I did not tell you this in the beginning,
because I was with you.”

John 16:4 ISV

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Are we supposed to do what Jesus' Apostles taught? See John 15:20.
2. Are Jesus' works (miracles) unique? Has any other person ever done such works as He did? Why did the people reject Him in spite of His works? See John 15:21,24.
3. Jesus wanted His Apostles to know in advance what would happen to them (John 16:4). Why did He want them to know this? See John 16:1.
4. Did Jesus' description of what would happen to His Apostles turn out to be true? What do you think?

43. (160)

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

John 16:5-15

Jesus had more comments to make about the work of the Holy Spirit. He introduced these comments by reminding the Apostles that He was on the verge of going away from them. He said,

“But now I am going away
to the one who sent me.”

John 16:5a

He seemed surprised that none of His Apostles asked
Him, this time, where He was going. He remarked,

“And none of you asks me,
‘Where are you going?’”

John 16:5b ISV

Jesus acknowledged that His Apostles were sad, saying,

“But because I have told you these things,
sorrow has filled your hearts.”

John 16:6

His leaving them, however, was a blessing in disguise.
He said,

“But I tell you the truth:
It is good for you that I am going away.
For if I do not go,
the Counselor will not come to you;
but if I go,
I will send him to you.”

John 16:7

Jesus outlined for them some of what the Counselor (the Holy Spirit) would do. He said,

“And when he is come,
he will reprove the world of sin,
and of righteousness,
and of judgment:”

John 16:8 KJV

Jesus explained why the Holy Spirit would reprove the (people of the) world: He would reprove them with reference to sin, He said,

“because they do not believe on me.”

John 16:9

Jesus also explained that the Holy Spirit would reprove the (people of the) world with reference to righteousness, as He said,

“because I go to my Father,
and you see me no more.”

John 16:10

Jesus explained, in addition, that the Holy Spirit would reprove the (people of the) world with reference to judgment, because, Jesus said,

“the prince of this world is judged.”

John 16:11

Jesus conceded that the information that He was giving them was not complete, saying,

“I still have many things
to say to you,
but you are not able
to bear them now.”

John 16:12

He assured them, however, that the Holy Spirit would complete their education in spiritual matters. He said,

“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes,
he will guide you into all truth.”

John 16:13a

Jesus was careful to let the Apostles know that what the Holy Spirit would say to them would be coming from Him. He said,

“He will not speak on his own;
he will speak only what he hears,”

John 16:13b

Jesus also told them that the Holy Spirit would reveal facts about the future. Jesus said,

“and he will tell you
what is yet to come.”

John 16:13c

Jesus was confident that Holy Spirit would add to His (Jesus’) glory. Jesus said,

“He will bring glory to me,
because He will take
from what is mine
and tell it to you.”

John 16:14

Jesus added,

“Everything that the Father has
is mine.
That is why I said
that He would take
from what is mine
and tell it to you.”

John 16:15

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

4. Did it turn out for good that Jesus left the Apostles and returned to the Father? See Acts 2:1-4.
5. Does the Holy Spirit reprove the (people of the) world (John 16:8) today? If He does reprove them, how does He do it? Does He do it directly, or does He do it through the Bible and through the teaching that comes from the Bible? What do you think?
6. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would guide the Apostles “into all truth” (John 10:13). Does the Holy Spirit guide people “into all truth” today? What do you think?

44. (161)

JESUS ASSURED HIS APOSTLES THAT THEIR GRIEF WOULD TURN TO JOY

John 16:16-33

As Jesus continued conversing with His Apostles after the Passover meal, He began to bring their conversation to a close; and He said,

“In a little while
you will see me no more,
and then after a little while

you will see me.”

John 16:16 NIV

The Apostles did not understand what He meant by that.

So they kept asking one another, “What does he mean by

saying, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and

then after a little while you will see me,’ and ‘Because I

am going to the Father’” (John 16:17 NIV)?

Jesus perceived that they were confused, and He asked them,

“Are you asking one another
what I meant
when I said,
‘In a little while you will see me no more,
and then after a little while
you will see me?’”

John 16:19 NIV

By way of explanation of what He had meant, Jesus said,

“I tell you the truth,
you will weep and mourn
while the world rejoices.
You will grieve,
but your grief will turn to joy.”

John 16:20 NIV

He told them that the ordeal that a woman goes through in childbirth is similar to what they would experience. He said,

“A woman giving birth to a child
has pain because her time has come;
but when her baby is born
she forgets the anguish because of her joy
that a child is born into the world.”

John 16:21 NIV

Jesus told His Apostles that this is how it would be with them. He said,

“So it is with you:
Now is your time of grief,
but I will see you again
and you will rejoice,
and no one will take away your joy.

In that day

you will no longer ask me anything.”

John 16:22-23a NIV

Jesus knew that His death, resurrection, and ascension would change the relationship that His followers would have with God. The relationship would be changed in that they themselves would be able to make requests of God. Jesus said,

“I tell you the truth,
whatever you request of the Father
in my name,
He will grant it to you.”

John 16:23b

Jesus reminded them that, as yet, they had made no requests of God in His (Jesus’) name. He said,

“Until now you have not
asked for anything in my name.”

John 16:24a NIV

He urged them, however, to ask in His name in order that they might receive what they ask for, so that their joy might be complete. He said,

“Ask and you will receive,
and your joy will be complete.”

John 16:24b NIV

Jesus told them that He would not in the future speak to them in figurative language but that He would openly proclaim to them information about the Father. He said,

“Though I have been speaking figuratively,
a time is coming
when I will no longer use
this kind of language
but will tell you plainly about my Father.”

John 16:25 NIV

He emphasized that also in the future His followers would have the privilege of making requests of God, provided they made them in His (Jesus') name. He said,

“In that day you will ask in my name.
I am not saying that
I will ask the Father on your behalf.”

John 16:26 NIV

Henceforth, Jesus' followers would have no need for Him to ask blessings from the Father upon them. He said,

“No,
the Father himself loves you
because you have loved me
and have believed
that I came from God.”

John 16:27 NIV

Jesus knew that His Apostles had been puzzled by His statement that “in a little while” they would see Him no more. Therefore, He explained,

“I came from the Father
and entered the world;
now I am leaving the world
and going back to the Father.”

John 16:28 NIV

They replied to Him, “See, now You are speaking plainly, and using no figure of speech” (John 16:29 NKJV)!

They also said, “Now we know that You know all things, and have no need for anyone to question You; by this we believe that You came from God” (John 16:30 NASU).

Jesus’ reply was,

“You believe at last?”

John 16:31

Even though they thought that they had reached a new level of understanding and belief, a more severe test still lay before them. Jesus forewarned,

“But a time is coming,
and has come,
when you will be scattered,
each to his own home.”

John 16:32a NIV

He foretold,

“You will leave me all alone.
Yet I am not alone,
for my Father is with me.”

John 16:32b NIV

Jesus was very concerned about the state of their
minds and He said to them,

“I have told you these things,
so that in me
you may have peace.”

John 16:33a NIV

He consoled them by saying,

“In this world you will have trouble.
But take heart!
I have overcome the world.”

John 16:33 NIV

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Does God give us wide latitude with regards to what we may ask for in prayer? See John 16:23.
2. If today's believers have requests to make, can they go directly to the Father with their requests? See John 16:24.
3. In whose name should believers ask for blessings? Should they ask for blessings in the name of some saint? See John 16:26.
4. Have any of your prayers ever been answered? If they have, how did it make you feel? Did it strengthen your faith? Please explain.
5. In what way did Jesus overcome the world (John 16:33)? What do you think?

45. (162)
JESUS' PRAYER
John 17:1-13

Somewhere in Jerusalem, before they crossed the Kidron Valley, Jesus raised His eyes toward heaven and began praying. He said,

“Father,
the time has come.
Glorify your Son,
that your Son may glorify you.”

John 17:1b NIV

Jesus, being aware that He was God’s Son, prayed,

“For you granted him
authority over all humanity
so that everything
that you have given him (eternal life)
He might give to them.”

John 17:2

Jesus extolled God as being the source of eternal life,
by saying,

“Now this is eternal life:
that they may know you,
the only true God,
and Jesus Christ,

whom you have sent.”

John 17:3 NIV

Jesus referred to the way in which He had made the Father appear more glorious. He said,

“I have brought you glory on earth
by completing the work
you gave me to do.”

John 17:4 NIV

It was, no doubt, comforting for Jesus to think about the glory that awaited Him. He said,

“And now, Father,
glorify me in your presence
with the glory I had with you
before the world began.”

John 17:5 NIV

Concerning His Apostles, who may have been listening as He prayed, Jesus said to God,

“I have revealed you
to those whom you gave me
out of the world.
They were yours;
you gave them to me
and they have obeyed your word.”

John 17:6 NIV

Jesus seems to have been delighted at the progress of His Apostles in understanding. He prayed to the Father,

“Now they know that
everything you have given me
comes from you.”

John 17:7 NIV

Jesus alluded to the process by which His Apostles had come to know that everything that Jesus said had come from God. He said,

“For I gave them the words
you gave me
and they accepted them.
They knew with certainty
that I came from you,
and they believed that you sent me.”

John 17:8 NIV

He was deeply concerned about His Apostles, for He said,

“I pray for them.
I am not praying for the world,
but for those you have given me,
for they are yours.”

John 17:9 NIV

Jesus felt that His Apostles had brought glory to Him (Jesus), for He prayed,

“All I have is yours,
and all you have is mine.
And glory has come to me
through them.”

John 17:10 NIV

Now, with regard to what was about to occur, He prayed,

“I will remain in the world no longer,
but they are still in the world,
and I am coming to you.”

John 17:11a NIV

He asked the Father to keep the Apostles united. He said,

“Holy Father,
keep them in Your name,
the name which You have given Me,
that they may be one
even as We are.”

John 17:11b NASU

Then He said,

“While I was with them,
I was keeping them in Your name
which You have given Me;
and I guarded them...”

John 17:12a NASU

He was glad that only one of the Apostles He had chosen had been lost. He said,

“...and not one of them perished
but the son of perdition,
so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.”

John 17:12b NASU

Jesus was fully aware that the time for His departure had come. He prayed to the Father,

“I am coming to you now,
but I say these things
while I am still in the world,
so that they may have my joy
fulfilled within themselves.”

John 17:13

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. How had Jesus brought glory to the Father? See John 17:4.
2. Why did Jesus not pray for the world (John 17:9)? What do you think?

3. Why was Jesus so deeply concerned (John 17:9) about His Apostles? Can you suggest a reason? Please share your thoughts.
4. What do you think about Jesus' prayer? To whom did Jesus address it? Was it a ritualistic prayer, or did Jesus speak from His heart? Is there a lesson here for us about how we should pray?

46. (163)
JESUS' PRAYER, CONTINUED
John 17:14-26

Concerning His Apostles, Jesus also prayed,

“I have given them your word
and the world has hated them,
for they are not of the world
just as I am not of the world.”

John 17:14

Jesus did not ask God to take His followers out of the world. Rather, He said,

“I do not pray that
you take them out of the world
but that you keep them from the evil one.
They are not of the world,
just as I am not of the world.”

John 17:15-16

Jesus knew that His followers would not be able to lead holy lives, unless they live according to the truth; so He prayed,

“Sanctify them in the truth;
your word is truth.”

John 17:17

Concerning them, Jesus said,

“As you sent me into the world,
I have sent them into the world.”

John 17:18 NIV

Jesus had been able to teach His followers to lead holy lives, because He Himself had lived a holy life. He said,

“For them I sanctify myself,
that they too may be sanctified in truth.”

John 17:19

Jesus was not concerned about His Apostles only. He was concerned also about those, whom His Apostles would teach. He said,

“I do not pray for them only,
but also for those
who believe on me through their word,…”

John 17:20

Jesus desired that those, whom His Apostles would teach, would be as united as He and the Father are united. He prayed,

“...that all of them may be one,
Father,
just as you are in me
and I in you,
may they also be in us,
so that the world may believe
that you have sent me.”

John 17:21

Just as the Father had made Jesus glorious, so Jesus had made His Apostles glorious. Jesus said to the Father,

“I have given them the glory
that you gave me,
that they may be one
as we are one:”

John 17:22 NIV

Jesus described the oneness that He desired for His followers and why He wanted them to be united. He said,

“I in them and you in me,
so that they may be completely one,
In order that the world may know
that you sent me

and have loved them
even as you have loved me.”

John 17:23

Jesus also desired to have His followers with Him in heaven. He said,

“Father,
I want those you have given me
to be with me
where I am,
and to see my glory,
the glory you have given me
because you loved me

before the creation of the world.”

John 17:24 NIV

Concerning His Apostles, Jesus prayed in addition,

“Righteous Father,
though the world does not know you,
I know you,
and they know that you have sent me.”

John 17:25 NIV

Jesus concluded His prayer by saying,

“I have made you known to them,

and will continue to make you known
in order that the love you have for me
may be in them
and that I myself may be in them.”

John 17:26 NIV

When Jesus finished praying, He and His disciples
crossed the Kidron Valley and came to a grove on the
Mount of Olives (John 18:1).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. How did Jesus communicate with His Apostles? Did He communicate with them by words? See John 17:14.
2. How does God communicate with us today? Does He communicate with us by the words of Jesus and His Apostles? What do you think? See 1 Corinthians 2:13.
3. Why did Jesus want His disciples to be united? See John 17:21? Is the disunity among believers a hindrance to the spread of the Gospel? If so, how?
4. What kind of unity (John 17:21) did Jesus envision for His followers? Was it a unity enforced by the civil government? Or was it a unity that is based on what the Bible says? What do you think?
5. How would you describe the unity (John 17:21) that exists between Jesus and the Father? Is it a unity of the

Spirit? Does it involve mutual love and respect? Does it imply harmony and cooperation? What do you think?

6. Does God love all of Jesus' followers? Does He love them in the same way that He loves Jesus? See John 17:23.
7. Did Jesus speak respectfully to the Father? Did Jesus speak about things that He was deeply concerned about? Should we pray as He did?

47. (164)

THE FLOCK WILL BE SCATTERED

Matthew 26:30-35; Mark 14:26-31

Jesus and His Apostles crossed the Kidron Valley (John 18:1) and came to the Mount of Olives (Matthew 26:30) to spend the night, as they often did (Luke 22:39),

Jesus warned His Apostles that they would be scattered.

He said,

“This very night you will all fall away
on account of me,
for it is written:

‘I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep of the flock
will be scattered.’”

Matthew 26:31 NIV (Zechariah 13:7)

Jesus knew that their temporary desertion would not end their relationship. He said to them,

“But after I have risen,
I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”

Matthew 26:32 NIV

Peter insisted, however, that he would never fall away. He said, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will” (Matthew 26:33 NIV).

Jesus knew that Peter would fall away, at least temporarily. So Jesus replied to Peter, as He had said to him before (John 13:38),

“Truly I say to you,
that this very night,
before a rooster crows twice,
you yourself will deny Me three times.”

Mark 14:30 NASU

Nonetheless, Peter asserted, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you” (Matthew 26:35 NIV); and all the other disciples said the same.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Do you think Peter really intended to stand by Jesus, and not deny Him.
2. Was Jesus willing to forgive Peter and the rest of the Apostles, if they denied Him? What do you think?
3. Was it a sin to deny Jesus? Was Peter later sorry that He denied Jesus? See Luke 22:62. Did He repent of it? Was Peter forgiven? What do you think?

48. (165)

GETHSEMANE

Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46; John 18:1

Upon reaching the Mount of Olives, Jesus and His Apostles came to an olive grove that was called “Gethsemane” (Matthew 26:36). They went into the olive grove (John 18:1); and Jesus said to them,

“Sit here
while I go over there
and pray.”

Matthew 26:36 NIV

He also said,

“Pray that
you will not fall into temptation.”

Luke 22:40 NIV

Jesus took Peter, James, and John and went a little further and began to be sorrowful and distressed (Matthew 26:37); and He said to them,

“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow
to the point of death.
Stay here and keep watch with me.”

Matthew 26:38 NIV

He went about a stone's throw further (Luke 22: 41), fell with His face to the ground and prayed that the hour might pass from Him (Mark 14:35), saying,

“Abba, Father,
everything is possible for you.
Take this cup from me.
Yet not what I will,
but what you will.”

Mark 14:36 NIV

An angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him (Luke 22:43). Yet, He was still in anguish and prayed more earnestly. Sweat began to roll from Him like drops of blood (Luke 22:44) and fell on the ground.

When Jesus returned to Peter, James, and John, He found them asleep. He asked Peter,

“Could you men not keep watch
with me for one hour?”

Matthew 26:40 NIV

Then He advised them,

“Watch and pray
so that you will not fall into temptation.
The spirit is willing,
but the flesh is weak.”

Matthew 26:41

He went away a second time and prayed, saying,

“My Father,
if it is not possible
for this cup to be taken away
unless I drink it,
may your will be done.”

Matthew 26:42 NIV

When He came back, He again found them sleeping,
and their eyes were so heavy they did not know what to say
(Mark 14:40).

Then He went for a third time and prayed the same
thing (Matthew 26:44).

He returned to the disciples and found them asleep, for
they were exhausted from sorrow (Luke 22:45).

He asked them,

“Are you still sleeping?”

Then He said,

“Get up and pray
so that you will not fall into temptation.”

Luke 22:46 NIV

Just then, as Jesus glanced up, He saw a group of people coming toward Him with torches. He knew what was happening. He said,

“The hour has come.
Look,
the Son of Man is being betrayed
into the hands of sinners.”

Mark 14:41b NIV

Then He exhorted His disciples,

“Rise, let us go!
Here comes my betrayer!”

Matthew 26:46 NIV

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever been so tired you couldn't hold your eyes open? Can a person get worn out from sorrow? What do you think?

2. Why did Jesus not hide or do something to save His life? What do you think?
3. Why did Jesus pray, “Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me” (Mark 14:36)? Do you think He was being tempted?
4. Did Jesus conclude that it was God’s will for Him to “drink the cup?” What do you think?

49. (166)

THE ARREST OF JESUS

Matthew 26:47-56; Mark 14:43-52; Luke 22:47-53; John 18:2-12

Jesus was with His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:47) when a large crowd of people arrived, carrying torches, lanterns, and weapons (John 18:3b). It was a detachment of soldiers and officials, who were armed with swords and clubs. Judas was leading them (John 18:3a). Judas knew the grove, because Jesus had often been there with His disciples (John 18:2).

Judas had arranged with the soldiers, saying, “The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard” (Mark 14:44 NIV).

When Judas arrived with the soldiers, he approached Jesus at once and said, “Greetings, Teacher” (Matthew 26:50)!

Jesus responded,

“Fellow, why have you come?”

Matthew 26:50

Then Judas kissed Jesus.

Jesus said,

“Judas,
are you betraying the Son of Man
with a kiss?”

Luke 22:48 NIV

Jesus knew what was about to happen, so He went out to meet the soldiers and asked them,

“Who is it you want?”

John 18:4 NIV

“Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied.
He said to them,

“I am he.”

John 18:5 NIV

At that, they drew back and fell to the ground (John 18:6).

Again, Jesus asked them,

“Who is it you want?”

John 18:7 NIV

They answered, “Jesus of Nazareth.”

Jesus replied,

“I told you that I am he.”

John 18:8a NIV

Then Jesus showed His concern for the safety of His disciples by saying to the soldiers and officials,

“If you are looking for me,
then let these men go.”

John 18:8b NIV

The Gospel of John says (John 18:9) that Jesus wanted to fulfill the desire that He had expressed when he prayed to the Father, “I have not lost one of those you gave me” (John 17:12a NIV).

The soldiers stepped forward, seized Jesus, and took Him into custody (Matthew 26:50b).

When the disciples saw what was happening, they asked Jesus, “Lord, should we strike with our swords” (Luke 22:49 NIV)?

Simon Peter, who was standing near, did not wait for a word from Jesus. He drew his sword and struck Malchus, a

servant of the high priest, cutting off the servant's right ear (John 18:10).

Jesus' reaction was swift. He said,

“No more of this!”

Luke 22:51a NIV

Then Jesus touched Malchus' ear and healed him (Luke 22:51b).

To Peter, Jesus said,

“Put your sword back in its place,
for all who draw the sword
will die by the sword.”

Matthew 26:52 NIV

Jesus asked Peter,

“Do you think
I cannot call on my Father,
and he will at once put at my disposal
more than twelve legions of angels?”

Matthew 26:53 NIV

Jesus also asked,

“But how then would the Scriptures
be fulfilled

that say
it must happen in this way?"

Matthew 26:54 NIV

In addition Jesus asked,

“Shall I not drink the cup
the Father has given me?”

John 18:11b NIV

Turning to the crowd, He asked,

“Am I leading a rebellion,
that you have come out
with swords and clubs
to capture me?
Every day
I sat in the temple courts teaching,
and you did not arrest me.”

Matthew 26:55 NIV

He also said,

“But this is your hour—
when darkness reigns.”

Luke 22:53b NIV

Then He added,

“But this has all taken place

that the writings of the prophets
might be fulfilled.”

Matthew 26:56a NIV

So the detachment of soldiers and officials took Jesus into custody and bound Him (John 18:12).

All of His disciples left and fled (Matthew 26:56b).

One young man, however, who was following Jesus had nothing on His body but a linen garment. When the soldiers seized him, he fled naked, leaving his garment behind (Mark 14:51-52).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Judas cautioned the soldiers to lead Jesus away “under guard” (Mark 14:44b NIV). Why do you suppose Judas said “under guard?”
2. The soldiers drew back and fell to the ground (John 18:6) after Jesus said, “I am He.” Why did they draw back and fall to the ground? What do you think?
3. Would you say that Peter was a skilled swordsman?
4. ***Why did Jesus not allow His disciples to defend Him with the sword? See John 18:36.***
5. ***Jesus told Peter “Put your sword back in its place” (Matthew 26:52 NIV). Was Jesus also opposed to His***

disciples' defending themselves with the sword? What do you think?

6. Does the Old Testament say that the Christ would suffer? See Genesis 3:15; Psalm 22:16-18; and Isaiah 53:4-7.
7. Did Jesus want His disciples to escape arrest? See John 18:8-9. Was it shameful for them to flee? What do you think?

50. (167)

JESUS BEFORE ANNAS and PETER'S FIRST DENIAL John 18:12-24

A detachment of soldiers and religious officials arrested Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. They bound Him (John 18:12) and led Him away.

They led Him first to the house of Annas, one of the most powerful men among the children of Israel. Annas had been high priest in the past and was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the current high priest (John 18:13).

Simon Peter and "another disciple" followed Jesus and His captors. The "other disciple" went into the courtyard (John 18:15), for he was known to the high priest.

Peter, however, was not allowed to go in. He had to stand outside until the "other disciple" came and spoke to the servant girl on duty at the door (John 18:16). Then she let him in.

She said to Peter, “Are you not also one of his disciples?”

Peter replied, “I am not,” (John 18:17).

It was a cold night and the servants and officials had kindled a fire to keep warm. As they stood around the fire, Peter stood with them, warming himself (John 18:18).

Then Peter, desiring to see what would happen, sat down in the courtyard with some of the servants that were warming themselves by the fire (Mark 14:54).

When one of the servant girls of the high priest came by and saw Peter sitting there in the light of the fire, she looked closely at him and said, “This man was with them” (Luke 22:56).

To Peter, she said, “You also were with Jesus, the Nazarene” (Mark 14:67).

Peter denied it, saying to her, “I neither know nor understand what you’re talking about” (Mark 14:68).

Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus. The context in the Gospel of John suggests that it was Annas who questioned Jesus. Or it may have Caiaphas who questioned Him at Annas’ house. Whoever it was that questioned Him, that person asked Jesus about His disciples and about His teaching (John 18:19).

To which Jesus replied,

“I have spoken openly to the world.

I always taught in synagogues

or at the temple,

where all the Jews come together.

I said nothing in secret.”

John 18:20 NIV

Then Jesus said,

“Why question me?
Ask those who heard me.
Surely they know what I said.”

John 18:21 NIV

One of the officials who stood nearby struck Jesus in the face and asked, “Is this the way you answer the high priest” (John 18:22 NIV)?

Jesus replied,

“If I said something wrong,
testify as to what is wrong.
But if I spoke the truth,
why did you strike me?”

John 18:23 NIV

After Jesus had been questioned at the house of Annas, Annas sent Him away, still bound, to Caiaphas, the ruling high priest (John 18:24).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Peter was ready to fight with a sword to protect Jesus, but he could not bring himself to admit to a servant girl that He was one of Jesus' disciples. Do you have any explanation for that?
2. Jesus did not answer Annas' questions about His teaching and about His disciples? Why did He not? What do you think?
3. Do you suppose Jesus' wrists pained Him from having been bound so long?

51. (168)

PETER CONTINUED TO DENY JESUS

Matthew 26:57-58, 69-75; Mark 14:53-54; 66-72; Luke 22:54-65; John 18:25-27

Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas, in whose palace the Sanhedrin (Matthew 26:59) had already gathered (Luke 22:66). The Sanhedrin was the highest tribunal. It was composed of elders of the people, chief priests, and scribes. They had come together at daybreak to seek (false) evidence against Jesus, so that they could put Him to death (Matthew 26:59).

When Jesus was taken into Caiaphas' house (Luke 22:54) Peter followed at a distance (Matthew 26:57-58). As best I can piece the story together, this that follows is what happened.

Peter, for some reason, went out to the entryway to Caiaphas' courtyard. When a servant girl saw him there, she commented to those that were standing around, "He is one of them " (Mark 14:69). But Peter denied it (Mark 14:70).

A little later Peter was standing (John 18:25) by the fire and a man said to him, "You also are one of them" (Luke 22:58a).

Bluntly, Peter replied, "Man, I am not!" (Luke 22:58)!

After about an hour had passed (Luke 22:59), those that were standing near Peter in the courtyard went up to him and insisted, "Surely you are one of them, a Galilean (Mark 14:70), for your accent gives you away" (Matthew 26:73).

Then one of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged Peter, saying, "Didn't I see you with him in the olive grove" (John 18:26 NIV)?

Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about" (Luke 22:60a NIV)!

Peter even called down divine curses on himself if his denials were not true. He swore to them and said, "I

don't know this man you're talking about" (Mark 14:71 NIV).

At that moment (John 18:27), while Peter was still speaking (Luke 22:60), the rooster crowed for the second time (Mark 14:72); and Jesus turned and looked straight at Peter (Luke 22:61a).

Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said,

“Before the rooster crows today,
you will deny me three times.”

Luke 22:61b

Following that, Peter went out of the courtyard and wept bitterly (Luke 22:62).

In the meanwhile, even though no sentence had yet been passed, the guards began to mock and beat Jesus (Luke 22:63). They blindfolded Him and said to Him, “Prophecy! Who hit you” (Luke 22:64). They also said many other insulting things to Him (Luke 22:65).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Did Peter demonstrate more courage than most of the disciples by following Jesus to Annas' and Caiaphas' houses? Do you give Peter any credit for this?
2. Peter not only denied being one of Jesus' disciples, but he also swore with an oath that He did not know Jesus (Mark 14:71). Does his having taken an oath make his sin any worse? What do you think?
3. What do you suppose Jesus thought when He looked across the courtyard at Peter and made eye contact with him?
4. Why did Peter go out and weep (Luke 22:62)?
5. Do Jesus' followers today sometimes deny Him? What do you think?
6. Did Jesus continue to love Peter even after Peter had denied Him? What do you think?

52. (169)

JESUS BEFORE CAIPHAS AND THE SANHEDRIN

Matthew 26:57-68; Mark 14:53-65; Luke 22:54, 66-71;

John 18:24

Here is a shortened description of what transpired at that tumultuous and illegal trial at Caiaphas' house, where the leaders of the people were gathered:

Many witnesses came forward (Matthew 26:60b) and testified falsely against Jesus, but no evidence was found that would justify putting Him to death, because their statements did not agree (Mark 14:56).

Finally, two men came forward, stood up, and said, "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this man-made temple and in three days will build another, not made by man'"

(Mark 14:58 NIV). Also the testimony of these two men was not true (Mark 14:59 NIV).

Nonetheless, the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you" (Mark 14:60 NIV)?

Jesus, however, remained silent (Mark 14:61).

Then the high priest said to Him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God" (Matthew 26:63).

Jesus knew that they would not believe on Him, no matter what He said. He also knew that they could give no satisfactory explanation for their unbelief, even if He asked them. So He said,

“If I tell you,
you will not believe;
and if I ask you,
you will not answer.”

Luke 22:67-68 RSV

Jesus continued, by saying,

“But from now on,
the Son of Man will be seated
at the right hand of the mighty God.”

Luke 22:69 NIV

The men of the Sanhedrin had no problem with Jesus' statement, as such, for it agreed with Daniel 7:13-14. They wanted to know, however, whether or not Jesus identified Himself with the messianic person that is described in Daniel 7:13-14.

So they asked Him, “Are you then the Son of God”

(Luke 22:70a NIV)?

To which Jesus replied,

“Yes, it is as you say.”

Matthew 26:64a NIV

Or, as Luke puts it,

“You are right in saying I am.”

Luke 22:70b NIV

Then Jesus added,

“But I say to all of you:

In the future

you will see the Son of Man

sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One
and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

Matthew 26:64b NIV

When the high priest heard this, he tore at his clothes and said to the assembly, “He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy” (Matthew 26:65 NIV)!

So the high priest asked the assembled elders, priests, and teachers, “What do you think?”

They answered, “He is worthy of death” (Matthew 26:66 NIV).

They began to spit in Jesus’ face. They blindfolded Him. Others struck Him with their fists (Matthew 26:67), and said, “Prophecy, Christ, who hit you” (Matthew 26:68)!

After that, the guards took Him and beat Him (Mark 14:65).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Did Jesus say that He would destroy the temple in Jerusalem? What did He say? See John 2:19-22.
2. Do you think the religious officials cared whether the evidence against Jesus was true or false, as long as it was sufficient to justify their putting Him to death?
3. Did Jesus confess to His being the Messiah? What do you think?
4. To what was Jesus referring when He said, “In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven” (Matthew 26:64 NIV)? See Matthew 24:30-31.

JESUS BEFORE PILATE

Matthew 27:1-2, 11-14; Mark 15:1-5; Luke 23:1-7; John 18:28-38

After the Sanhedrin had sentenced Jesus to death (Matthew 27:1), they bound Him again (Matthew 27:2). Then all the members of the Sanhedrin rose and led Him off to Pilate, the Roman governor (Luke 23:1).

When they got to the governors' palace (John 18:28), they handed Jesus over to Pilate (Matthew 27:2).

The religious leaders, however, declined to go into the governor's palace. This was so that they would not become ceremonially unclean; for, otherwise, they would not have been able to eat the Passover meal (John 18:28) that day.

So in deference to them, Pilate came outside and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man" (John 18:29 NIV)?

They answered, "If he were not an evil doer, we would not have handed him over to you" (John 18:30).

From that, Pilate concluded that the charge they were bringing against Jesus was not very significant. So he said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law" (John 18:31a NIV).

“But we have no right to execute anyone,” the Jews complained (John 18:31b NIV).

The apostle John wrote that this happened to fulfill Jesus’ prophecy that He would die by execution (John 18:32).

Then the religious leaders brought three charges that they thought Pilate would consider serious. They said, “We have found this man [1] subverting our nation. [2] He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and [3] claims to be Christ, a king” (Luke 23:2 NIV).

So Pilate asked Jesus, who stood before him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

Jesus answered,

“Yes, it is as you say.”

Matthew 27:11b NIV

The chief priests also accused Jesus of many additional things (Mark 15:3); but Jesus made no reply to their charges (Matthew 27:12).

Finally, Pilate asked him, “Don’t you hear the testimony they are bringing against you” (Matthew 27:13 NIV)? “Aren’t you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of” (Mark 15:3 NIV).

Still, Jesus made no reply (Matthew 27:14), and Pilate was amazed (Mark 15:5).

Then Pilate went back inside the palace and summoned

Jesus to him and asked Him again, “Are you the king of the Jews” (John 18:33)?

Jesus responded by asking Pilate,

“Is that your own idea,
or did others talk to you about me?”

John 18:34 NIV

“Am I a Jew?” Pilate retorted. “It was your people
and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What
is it you have done” (John 18:35 NIV)?

Jesus replied,

“My kingdom is not of this world.
If my kingdom were of this world,
my servants would fight
to prevent my being turned over to the Jews.
But now my kingdom is not from here.”

John 18:36

Pilate retorted, “You are a king, then!” (John 18:37).

Jesus replied,

“You are right in saying
I am a king.
To this I was born,
and for this I came into the world,
in order to testify to the truth.
Everyone who is of the truth
listens to my voice.”

John 18:37

Pilate answered, “What is truth” (John 18:38a)?
After this Pilate went out again to the Jews and said, “I
find no guilt in him” (John 18:38b).

Still they insisted, “He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. Starting in Galilee, he has come all the way here” (Luke 23:5 NIV).

On hearing that Jesus came from Galilee, Pilate asked if Jesus were a Galilean (Luke 23:6 NIV). When he learned that Jesus was from Galilee, he sent Him to King Herod; for Herod was in Jerusalem at that time (Luke 23:7 NIV), and Galilee was under Herod’s jurisdiction.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Were Pilate and the children of Israel on good terms with each other? What do you think?
2. Were the accusations, which the religious leaders made before Pilate (Luke 23:2 NIV), the same ones that they had made before the Sanhedrin? See Mark 14:58-65. If they are different, how are they different?
3. The religious leaders accused Jesus of being opposed to paying taxes to Caesar (Luke 23:2). Was Jesus opposed to paying taxes to Caesar? See Matthew 22:17-21.

4. They also said that Jesus claimed to be Christ, a king (Luke 23:2). Is it true that Jesus claimed to be the Christ (one anointed to be king)? See Matthew 26:63-64.
5. Why did Jesus' disciples not fight to keep Him from falling into His enemies' hands? What do you think? See John 18:36.
6. Do you think Pilate tried to make a fair decision regarding Jesus? See John 18:38.

54. (171)

JESUS BEFORE KING HEROD

Luke 23:8-12

When Pilate learned (Luke 23:5-6) that Jesus was under the jurisdiction of King Herod, He sent Him to Herod, who was in Jerusalem at that time (Luke 23:7).

This was Herod Antipas, a son of Herod the Great. He was the man who had put John the Baptist to death and whom Jesus had described as "that fox" (Luke 13:32).

When King Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, for he had heard about Him and wanted to see Him perform a miracle (Luke 23:8).

Herod questioned Jesus with many words, but Jesus gave him no reply (Luke 23:9).

The chief priests and the scribes, who were standing before Pilate, accused Jesus vehemently (Luke 23:10).

After a while, Herod grew tired of questioning Jesus. Then Herod and his soldiers began to ridicule and mock Jesus.

Finally, they threw an elegant robe around Him and sent Him back to Pilate (Luke 23:11).

King Herod and Pilate had previously been enemies of each other, but they became friends that very day (Luke 23:12).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. King Herod wanted to see Jesus (Luke 23:8). He wanted to see Jesus perform a miracle. What does that tell you about Herod's interests?
2. Jesus did not answer Herod's questions (Luke 23:9). Why did Jesus not answer him? What do you think?
3. Herod and Pilate became friends with each other (Luke 23:12). Why did they become friends? What do you think?

55. (172)

JESUS AGAIN BEFORE PILATE and THE CHOOSING OF BARABBAS

Matthew 27:15-26; Mark 15:6-15; Luke 23:13-25

After Jesus was brought back to Pilate, Pilate called the chief priests, the rulers, and the people together (Luke 23:13).

Pilate said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him” (Luke 23:14 NIV).

Pilate continued, “Neither has Herod found any thing against him, for he sent him back to us. As you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death” (Luke 23:15 NIV).

“Therefore,” Pilate said, “I will punish him and then release him” (Luke 23:16 NIV).

Now, the governor made a practice of releasing a prisoner at Passover (Matthew 27:15), so the crowd came to Pilate and asked him to keep his custom (Mark 15:8).

One of the prisoners in Pilate’s custody was a notorious robber. His name was Barabbas (John 18:40). He was in prison with others for murder and for causing an uprising in the city (Mark 15:7).

The elders and the priests had persuaded the crowd to ask that Barabbas be released and Jesus be executed (Matthew 27:20).

So when Pilate said that he would release Jesus, the crowd cried out with one voice, “Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us” (Luke 23:18)!

Pilate was aware that it was only out of envy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him (Mark 15:10).

While Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent him a message, saying, “Don’t have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him” (Matthew 27:19 NIV).

For various reasons then, Pilate wanted to release Jesus, and he asked the crowd (Luke 23:20), “Which one

do you want me to release to you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?” (Matthew 27:17).

They answered, “Barabbas” (Matthew 27:21)!

Pilate asked, “What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ (Matthew 27:22), King of the Jews” (Mark 15:12)?

They shouted, “Crucify him!” (Mark 15:13). They kept on shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him” (Luke 23:21)!

Then Pilate tried for the third time to release Jesus. He asked them, “Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no cause for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him” (Luke 23:22).

They shouted all the louder, “Crucify him” (Mark 15:14)!

Pilate finally saw that he was getting nowhere (Matthew 27:24), and he decided to grant their demand (Luke 23:24).

So he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd and said, “I am innocent of this man’s blood. It is your responsibility” (Matthew 27:24)!

All the people answered, “Let his blood be on us and on our children” (Matthew 27:25)!

So Pilate released Barabbas (Mark 15:15), a man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, but he had Jesus flogged.

Then he handed Jesus over to be crucified (Matthew 27:26 NIV).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Do you suppose that Pilate thought that Jesus was a serious threat to the Roman government?
2. Do you think Pilate was sincere in wanting to avoid putting Jesus to death? Please state your reasons.
3. Did the crowd that clamored for Jesus' death represent the views of all of the people of Galilee and of Judea? What do you think?
4. Pilate washed his hands. Did that make him free of guilt? What do you think?
5. The crowd said, "Let his blood be on us and on our children" (Matthew 27:25)! Is there a sense in which this request has been fulfilled? What do you think?
6. Pilate had Jesus flogged (Matthew 27:26). What is "flogging?" What kind of whip was used?

56. (173)

THE SOLDIERS MOCKED JESUS and PILATE'S LAST EFFORT TO SET JESUS FREE

Matthew 27:27-31; Mark 15:16-20; John 19:1-16

After the governor's soldiers had flogged Jesus (John 19:1), they took Him into the Praetorium (Roman fortress), where the whole company of soldiers gathered around Him (Matthew 27:27).

They put a purple robe on Him and twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on His head (Mark 15:17). Then they put a staff in His right hand (Matthew 27:29). They went up to Him again and again; and falling on their knees, they paid (mock) homage to Him (Mark 15:18), saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" They also struck Him in the face (John 19:3) and spit on Him (Matthew 27:30).

Pilate came out again to the Jews and said, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him" (John 19:4 NIV).

When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Behold, the man" (John 19:5)!

As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw Him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" (John 19:6 NIV)

Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him" (John 19:6 NIV).

They insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God" (John 19:7 NIV).

When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid (John 19:8). So he took Jesus once more inside the palace, and asked Him, "Where did you come from?" But Jesus gave no answer to him (John 19:9).

Pilate asked, “Do you refuse to speak to me? Don’t you realize that I have the power either to set you free or to crucify you” (John 19:10)?

Jesus answered,

“You would have no power over me
if it were not given to you from above.
Therefore the one
who handed me over to you
is guilty of a greater sin.”

John 19:11 NIV

Pilate continued trying to set Jesus free until the people shouted, “If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Everyone who makes himself king opposes Caesar” (John 19:12).

When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus outside and sat down on the judge’s seat, which was at the place known as the “Stone Pavement” (John 19:13). He then said to them, “Behold your king” (John 19:14)!

They shouted, “Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!”

“Shall I crucify your king?” Pilate asked.

“We have no king but Caesar,” the chief priests

answered (John 19:15 NIV).

Finally, at about 6 a.m. on Friday of the Passover week (John 19:14), Pilate handed Jesus over to be crucified (John 19:16).

Then the soldiers took the purple robe off of Jesus and put His own clothes on Him and led Him away to be crucified (Matthew 27:31).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. The Jews claimed (John 19:7) that Jesus had broken their Law by saying He was the Son of God (Matthew 26:63-64). Was it against their Law for Jesus to confess that He is the Son of God? What do you think? See John 10:34-37.
2. To whom was Jesus referring when He said that Pilate had received his power (authority) “from above” (John 19:11)? Was Jesus referring to Rome or to God? What do you think?
3. Was Pilate sincere in wanting to set Jesus free? Was Pilate driven by fear? What do you think? Did Pilate

commit a sin by allowing Jesus to be crucified? See John 19:11.

4. If a rumor had reached Rome that Pilate was no friend of Caesar, would that have gotten Pilate into trouble with his superiors in Rome? What do you think?
5. Do you get the impression that the trial and condemnation of Jesus happened orderly and unhurriedly?

57. (174)

JUDAS HANGED HIMSELF Matthew 27:3-10; Acts 1:18-19

When Judas saw that Jesus had been condemned to die, He went to the chief priests and elders to return the thirty silver coins (Matthew 27:3).

Judas said to them, “I have sinned, for I have betrayed innocent blood.”

They replied, “What is that to us? That’s your responsibility” (Matthew 27:4).

As a response, Judas threw the money into the temple. Then he went away and hanged himself (Matthew 27:5). As a result of which, his body fell headlong in such a way that it burst open and all his intestines spilled out (Acts 1:18).

The chief priests took the coins and said, “It is against the law to put this into the temple treasury, since it is blood money” (Matthew 27:6 NIV). So they took counsel and decided to use the money to buy the Potter’s Field as a place to bury foreigners (Matthew 27:7)

Matthew explained (Matthew 27:9) that when the potter’s field was purchased for 30 silver coins, a prophecy was fulfilled. The prophecy that Matthew was referring to is found in that section of the Old Testament, which begins with the Book of Jeremiah. Matthew paraphrased the prophecy, as follows:

“They took the thirty silver coins,
the price set on him by the people of Israel,
and they used them
to buy the potter’s field,
as the Lord commanded me.”

Matthew 27:9-10 NIV; Zecharia 11:12-13

Everyone in Jerusalem heard what had happened to Judas; and for that reason, they called the field “Akeldama,” which means in their language “Field of Blood” (Acts 1:19 NIV).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Did the religious leaders think that Judas had committed a sin? Did they appear to be concerned about Judas’ spiritual welfare? See Matthew 27:4.

2. Why did they not put the 30 silver coins into the temple treasury?
3. The religious leaders were willing to condemn an innocent man to death, yet they were not willing to put unclean money in the temple treasury? What do you say about that?

58. (175)

THE CRUCIFIXION

Matthew 27:32-43; Mark 15:21-32; Luke 23:26-38; John 19:16-24

When the soldiers took charge of Jesus (John 19:16), they led Him away with two criminals to be crucified.

As they were leaving the city, they came upon a man coming into the city from the countryside; and the soldiers put Jesus' cross on him to carry (Luke 23:26). The man was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufas (Mark 15:21).

A large number of people followed behind Jesus, including women who mourned and wailed for Him (Luke 23:27).

Jesus turned and said to them,

“Daughters of Jerusalem,
do not weep for me;
weep for yourselves and for your children.”

Luke 23:28 NIV

He continued,

“For the time will come
when you will say,
‘Blessed are the barren women,
the wombs that never bore
and the breasts that never nursed!’”

Luke 23:29 NIV

Then, quoting from Hosea 10:8, Jesus said,

“Then ‘they will say to the mountains,
‘Fall on us!’
and to the hills, ‘Cover us!’”

Luke 23:30 NIV

Jesus also said,

“For if men do these things
when the tree is green,
what will happen when it is dry?”

Luke 23:31 NIV

They arrived at the place called “Golgotha,” which is Aramaic for “Place of the Skull” (John 19:17). There they offered Jesus wine mixed with myrrh (Mark 15:23).

After He tasted it, He refused to drink it (Matthew 27:34).

Then they crucified Him between two criminals, one on each side of Him (John 19:18).

But Jesus said,

“Father, forgive them,
for they do not know
what they are doing.”

Luke 23:34 a NIV

It was about the third hour of the day, according to the Jewish method of counting hours (Mark 15:25). That would be about nine o'clock in the morning.

Then the soldiers sat down and kept watch over Jesus (Matthew 27:36).

Pilate had prepared a notice and had it fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS (John 19:19 NIV). The notice was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek; and many of the Jews read it, for it was near the city (John 19:20).

The chief priests, however, protested to Pilate, “Do not write ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews” (John 19:21 NIV).

Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written”
(John 19:22).

The soldiers then took Jesus' clothes and divided them into four shares, one for each of them. The undergarment, which was seamlessly woven from top to bottom, was left over (John 19:23). So they said to one another, “Let's not tear it. Let's decide by lot who will get it.” (John 19:24a NIV)

This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled, which says,

“They divided my garments among them
and cast lots for my clothing.”

John 19:24b NIV; Psalm 22:18

People passing by hurled insults at Jesus, shaking their heads and saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!” (Matthew 27:40 NIV).

Some people who stood watching said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One” (Luke 23:35 NIV)

The soldiers joined in mocking Jesus (Luke 23:36). They said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself” (Luke 23:37).

The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders also mocked Him among themselves (Mark 15:31). “He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself! He’s the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him” (Matthew 27:42 NIV). They also said, “He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” (Matthew 27:43 NIV).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. The soldiers placed Jesus’ cross on someone else to carry. Why did they do that? What do you think?

2. Mark mentioned in his Gospel that Simon, who carried the cross for Jesus, was the father of Alexander and Rufus (Mark 15:21). Why do you suppose Mark mentioned that? Does this give you some idea about when the Gospel of Mark was written?
3. Jesus told the “daughters of Jerusalem” to weep for themselves and their children (Luke 23:28). What did Jesus foresee that was going to come over the “daughters of Jerusalem?” See Luke 19:41-44.
4. The soldiers offered Jesus wine mixed with myrrh (gall) (Mark 15:23). Myrrh was an anodyne against pain. After Jesus tasted it, He refused to drink it (Matthew 27:34). Why did He not drink it? What do you think?
5. Jesus had taught His disciples to pray for those that mistreat them (Luke 6:28). Did Jesus follow His own teaching? See Luke 23:34.
6. Pilate refused to change the sign that he had put on Jesus’ cross (John 19:21-22). Why would he not change it? What do you think?
7. Jesus did not come down from the cross, as His accusers suggested (Matthew 27:42). Why did He not come down? What do you think?

59. (176)

THE DEATH OF JESUS

**Matthew 27:44-56; Mark 15:33-41; Luke 23:39-49;
John 19:25-30**

Even the two robbers that were crucified with Jesus heaped insults on Him (Matthew 27:44). One of them said to Jesus, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us” (Luke 23:39b)!

The other robber, however, rebuked the first robber, saying to him, “Don’t you fear God, since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong” (Luke 23:40-41 NIV).

Then to Jesus he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom” (Luke 23:42 NIV).

Jesus replied,

“I tell you the truth,
today you will be with me in paradise.”

Luke 23:43 NIV

Now, Jesus’ mother was standing near the cross with her sister (Mary the wife of Clopas) and Mary Magdalene (John 19:25). When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple whom Jesus loved standing near her, He said to her,

“Woman, behold, your son.”

John 19:26

To His disciple He said,

“Behold, your mother.”

John 19:27a

From that time forward this disciple took Jesus’ mother into his own home (John 19:27b).

About the sixth hour (12 noon) darkness came over the land (Luke 23:44). It lasted until the ninth hour (3 p.m.), for the sun had stopped shining (Luke 23:45 NIV).

About the ninth hour (3 p.m.) Jesus cried out in a loud voice,

“Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”

Which means,

“My God, my God,
why have you forsaken me?”

Matthew 27:46 NIV

Some of those standing near heard this and said, “He’s calling Elijah” (Matthew 27:47NIV).

When Jesus saw that all had been fulfilled, He said,

“I am thirsty”

John 19:28

Immediately, one of the men ran and got a sponge (Matthew 27:48). They soaked it in wine vinegar and put it on a hyssop stalk, and lifted it to Jesus' lips (John 19:29). They said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him" (Matthew 27:49 NIV).

When Jesus had received the drink, He said,
"It is finished."

John 19:30 NIV

He then cried out in a loud voice (Matthew 27:50), bowed His head, breathed His last (Mark 15:37), and gave up His spirit (John 19:30).

At that moment, the curtain in the temple tore in two. It tore from the top to the bottom. The earth shook and rocks split (Matthew 27:51). Some of the tombs were broken open and bodies of many holy people were raised to life (Matthew 27:52). They came out of their tombs; and went into the holy city and appeared to many people after Jesus' resurrection (Matthew 27:53).

When the centurion, who was standing in front of Jesus, and the other guards heard Him cry out and saw the earthquake, they were terrified at seeing how He had died. They said, "Truly, this was a righteous man (Luke 23:47)! Surely this man was God's Son" (Mark 15:39)!

When all the people who had gathered to witness the crucifixion saw what had happened, they beat their breasts and went away (Luke 23:48).

All the while, those who knew Jesus stood at a distance, watching these things (Luke 23:49).

Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and Joses, and Salome (Mark 15:40). The mother of Zebedee's sons was also there (Matthew 27:56). In addition, many other women that had come to Jerusalem with Jesus were standing there (Mark 15:41).

Since it was Friday (the day for getting ready for the Sabbath), and since the next day was a special Sabbath, the Jews did not want to leave bodies on a cross. For that reason, they asked Pilate to have the legs of the men broken and their bodies taken down (John 19:31).

So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man and then those of the other man (John 19:32). But when they came to Jesus, they found Him already dead. Therefore, they did not break His legs (John 19:33). Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear and out flowed blood and water (John 19:34).

The Gospel of John says, "The one who saw this has testified, and his testimony is true. He knows he is telling the truth so that you, too, may believe" (John 19:35 ISV).

The Gospel of John also says (John 19:36) that these things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled, which says, "Not one of his bones will be broken" (Psalm 34:20).

Another scripture (Zecharia 12:10) says, "They will look on the one they have pierced" (John 19:37).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Jesus' cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me" (Matthew 27:46). Was Jesus merely quoting an appropriate Psalm (Psalm 22:1). Or did He truly feel that God had forsaken Him? What do you think?

2. What is the significance of the fact that the curtain, which separated the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place in the temple, tore (Matthew 27:51)? See Hebrews 10:19-20. Is it significant that the curtain tore from the top to the bottom?

3. What is the significance of the fact that blood and water flowed from Jesus' side after His body was pierced (John 19:34)? What did that indicate?

4. Who is the man that testified (John 19:35) that the story of Jesus' death is true? Was it John the Apostle? What do you think?

5. What impact did Jesus' death have on His disciples?

6. What impact did Jesus' death have on the city of Jerusalem?

7. What impact has Jesus' death had on the world?

8. How does Jesus death affect you? See Ephesians 1:7

60. (177)

JESUS' BODY WAS LAID IN A TOMB

Matthew 27:57-61; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42

Jesus was crucified on a Friday, the day on which preparations were made for the Sabbath (Mark 15:42).

Toward evening of that Friday, a man named Joseph, who was from Arimathea in Judea (Luke 23:51), came boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus (Mark 15:43).

Now, Joseph of Arimathea was a prominent and rich member of the Council (Luke 23:50), who had not consented to Jesus' death (Luke 23:51). He was also a good and upright man (Luke 23:50), who believed in the coming of the kingdom of God (Mark 15:43). He was a disciple of Jesus, but he was one secretly for fear of the Jews (John 19:38).

Pilate was amazed when he heard that Jesus was already dead, and he summoned the centurion (Mark 15:44) and confirmed that it was so. Then he granted Joseph of Arimathea permission to take the body of Jesus (Mark 15:45).

Joseph of Arimathea purchased pure linen in which to wrap the body (Mark 15:46). Then he came and lifted the body down from the cross (Mark 19:46).

Nicodemus also came to help. He brought with him about 75 pounds of aloes mixed with myrrh (John 19:39). You will recall that Nicodemus was the prominent Pharisee that had visited Jesus by night (John 3:1-2).

In accordance with Jewish burial customs, they wrapped Jesus' body in sheets of linen and sprinkled the spices in between (John 19:40).

Then Joseph of Arimathea placed Jesus' body in his own new tomb, which had been cut out of the rock (Matthew 27:60) that was a garden near where Jesus had been crucified (John 19:41). No one had been laid in that tomb before (Luke 23:53).

Some of the women from Galilee followed Joseph of Arimathea and watched how he placed the body of Jesus in the tomb (Luke 23:55).

Since it was late in the day and the Sabbath was beginning (Luke 23:54), Joseph of Arimathea rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away (Matthew 27:60).

Mary Magdalene, a woman out of whom Jesus had driven seven demons (Mark 16:9) and Mary the mother of Joses (Mark 15:47) remained sitting opposite the tomb for a while (Matthew 27:61). Finally, they too went away and prepared spices and perfumes, but they rested on the Sabbath. They did this in obedience to the commandment concerning the Sabbath (Luke 23:56).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Was Jesus' body laid to rest with great ceremony? Did very many people attend His funeral? Did anyone make a speech? What do you think?
2. Did Jesus' friends treat His body with due respect and honor? What do you think?
3. Is there any doubt about whether or not Jesus' body was actually placed in the tomb before the tomb was closed?
4. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses prepared spices and perfumes (Luke 23:56). Does that make you

think that they expected Jesus to be raised from the dead in three days, or not? See John 20:9.

61. (178)
GUARDS WERE POSTED AT THE TOMB
Matthew 27:62-66

Early in the morning of the Sabbath, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate (Matthew 27:62) and said to him, “Sir, we recalled that while this deceiver was still alive, He said, ‘After three days I will rise again’” (Matthew 27:63).

They requested of Pilate, “So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples come and steal the body and tell the people that he had been raised from the dead. This last deception would be worse than the first” (Matthew 27:64).

Pilate granted their request. He told them, “You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can” (Matthew 27:65 RSV).

So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting soldiers as guards (Matthew 27:66).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Was it proper for the chief priests and Pharisees to be walking around on the Sabbath? What do you think?

2. Were Jesus' disciples the kind of people who would steal Jesus' body and falsely claim that He had been raised from the dead? What do you think?

62. (179)

PETER AND THE "OTHER DISCIPLE" RAN TO THE TOMB

John 20:1-10

Mary Magdalene appears to have been the first of Jesus' followers to discover that the tomb was empty.

She arrived at the tomb so early on Sunday morning that it was still dark (John 20:1). One or two of the other women may have been with her (Luke 24:22).

When Mary Magdalene discovered that the stone had been removed from the tomb (John 20:1), she ran and told Simon Peter and another disciple (John 20:2). She said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him" (John 20:2 NIV)!

When Simon Peter and the other disciple heard that Jesus' body had been taken away, they started for the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple got to the tomb first (John 20:4). When he arrived at the tomb, he bent over and looked inside and saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go inside the tomb (John 20:5).

Simon Peter, however, when he got to the tomb, entered it. He also saw the linen wrappings. He saw, in

addition, that the facecloth was folded and lay separately by itself (John 20:6-7).

After Peter went in, the other disciple entered the tomb. He began to believe when he saw everything (John 20:8). Peter, however, does not appear to have been convinced, as yet, that Jesus had been raised from the dead.

The Gospel of John explains that the disciples had not yet understood from the Old Testament that Jesus would arise from the dead (John 20:9).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Who do you suppose the “other disciple” was? Do you think it was the Apostle John?
2. The “other disciple” got to the tomb first. How would you explain that?
3. What did the “other disciple” see (John 20:8) that caused him to believe? Would grave robbers have bothered to take the facecloth, fold it, and lay it by itself? What do you think?
4. Was Peter quick to believe in Jesus’ resurrection? Do you think the Apostles invented the story of Jesus’ resurrection?

5. Where does the Old Testament speak of the resurrection of Jesus? See Psalm 16:10-11. Has anyone other than Jesus ever fulfilled Psalm 16:10-11?

63. (180)

JESUS APPEARED TO MARY MAGDALENE

Mark 16:9-11; John 20:10-18

It seems that Mary Magdalene followed Simon Peter and the other disciple back to the tomb and stayed there after the two of them had left (John 20:10).

While she was there, she bent over and looked inside the tomb (John 20:11) and saw two angels in white. They were seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and one at the foot (John 20:12).

The angels asked her, "Woman, why are you weeping" (John 20:13a)?

She answered, "They have taken my Lord away, and I don't know where they have laid Him" (John 20:13b).

Then, for some reason, she turned and saw that someone was standing behind her, but she did not realize that it was Jesus (John 20:14).

So Jesus asked her,

"Woman, why are you weeping?"

Who are you are looking for?"

John 20:15a

Mary Magdalene, thinking that it was the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him" (John 20:15b).

Then Jesus said to her,

"Mary."

John 20:16

Whereupon, she turned toward Him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni" (which means Teacher)!

Mary Magdalene started to touch Jesus; and He said to her,

"Don't touch me,
for I have not yet returned to the Father."

John 20:17a

Then He instructed her,

"Go instead to my brothers and tell them,
'I am ascending to my Father
and your Father,
to my God and your God.'"

John 20:17b

In accordance with Jesus' instruction, Mary Magdalene went to those who had been with Jesus (Mark 16:10). She found them mourning and weeping over Jesus' death (Mark 16:10).

She said to them, “I have seen the Lord” (John 20:18); but they did not believe her (Mark 16:11). Nonetheless, she told them what Jesus had told her to say (John 20:18).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene (John 20:14-17). Why did Jesus appear first to her (Mark 16:9)? What do you think?
2. Mary Magdalene did not immediately recognize Jesus (John 20:14). Why did she not recognize Him? Was it still very early in the morning? What to you think?
3. Jesus did not permit Mary Magdalene to touch Him (John 20:17). Why did He not permit her to touch Him? What do you think?
4. Jesus had not yet returned to His Father (John 20:17). What did that have to do with whether or not Mary Magdalene should touch Him? What do you think?

64. (181)

OTHER WOMEN AT THE TOMB

Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12

As the first day of the week was dawning, other women were approaching the tomb (Luke 24:1).

The fact that day was only then just dawning suggests that Mary Magdalene's discovery of the empty tomb and that Simon Peter's and the other disciple's race to the tomb had happened very quickly and that it all happened very early in the morning.

Among the women who were coming to the tomb at daybreak were Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and others (Luke 24:10). They came bringing spices (Luke 24:1) to anoint the body of Jesus, as Mary Magdalene had done (Mark 16:1).

While the women were on their way to the tomb, they were asking each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb" (Mark 16:2b-3 NIV)?

There was no need for the women to have worried about the stone, however, for it had already been rolled away (Mark 16:4).

Earlier in the morning, there had been a violet earthquake and an angel of the Lord had come down from heaven. He had gone to the tomb, rolled away the stone, and sat on it (Matthew 28:2). His appearance was like lightning and His clothes were as white as snow (Matthew 28:3). When the guards saw him, they became so frightened that they shook and became like dead men (Matthew 28:4).

While the women were still wondering what they would find at the tomb, two men (angels) suddenly appeared beside them. The clothing of the men shone like lightning (Luke 24:4).

[One of the angels said to the women,](#)

“Do not be afraid,
for I know that you are looking for Jesus,
who was crucified.
He is not here;
he has risen,
just as he said.”

Matthew 28:5-6a NIV

In their fright, the women bowed their faces to the
ground; and the angel said to them,

“Why do you look for the living
among the dead?”
He is not here;
he has risen!
Remember how he told you,
while he was still with you in Galilee:
‘The Son of Man must be delivered
into the hands of sinful men,
be crucified
and on the third day be raised again.’”

Luke 24:5-7 NIV

It was then that the women remembered that Jesus had foretold (Luke 24:8) that He would be raised from the dead on the third day.

The angels also said to them,

“Come and see the place
where he lay.”

Matthew 28:6b NIV

As the women entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and the women were alarmed (Mark 16:5 NIV).

The angel said to them,

“Don’t be alarmed.
You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene,
who was crucified.
He has risen!
He is not here.
See the place where they laid him.”

Mark 16:6 NIV

Then the angel said,

“Go quickly and tell his disciples

‘He has risen from the dead
and is going ahead of you into Galilee.
There you will see him,
just as he told you.’”

Matthew 28:7

The angel made a point of specifically mentioning Peter in their instructions to the women. The angel said to them, “Go, tell his disciples and Peter” (Mark 16:7).

The angel ended his words to the women by saying,

“Now I have told you.”

Matthew 28:7c

So the women hurried away, trembling and bewildered. At first, they dared not say anything to anyone, because they were so afraid (Mark 16:8). After a while, however, they set out running to tell Jesus’ disciples (Matthew 28:8).

Mary Magdalene had likely not been with the other women as they were approaching the tomb; for if she had

been with them, she would surely have told them that the stone had already been rolled away.

Mary Magdalene was definitely among the women, however, (Luke 24:10) as they ran to tell the disciples. While the women were running, Jesus suddenly appeared to them and said,

“Greetings!”

Matthew 28:9

When the women saw Him, they came up to Him, took hold of His feet, and worshiped Him (Matthew 28:9). To them He said,

“Do not be afraid.
Go and tell my brothers
to go to Galilee;
there they will see me.”

Matthew 28:10 NIV

Then, continuing on their way, the women came to the Eleven and the other disciples and told them everything that had happened (Luke 24:9).

The Apostles, however, did not believe what the women said, for it seemed like nonsense to them (Luke 24:11).

Peter, nonetheless, got up and ran to the tomb again,

thinking perhaps that He might see Jesus for Himself;

but when he got to the tomb, he found nothing there but the linen wrappings lying by themselves, as before. He saw neither Jesus nor the angels.

Then Peter went away marveling at what had happened (Luke 24:12 NIV).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. On which day of the week did the women go to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body? See Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1. On which day of the week did Jesus arise from the dead? Which is the first day of the week? Is it Sunday or Monday?
2. Did the women expect to find Jesus' body in the tomb, or did they not (Luke 24:1)? Did they invent the story of Jesus' resurrection? What do you think?
3. The angel said to the women, "Go, tell his disciples and Peter" (Mark 16:7). Why did the angel specifically mention Peter? What do you think?

4. Why did Jesus appear to Mary Magdalene and the other women before He appeared to Peter or any of the Apostles? What do you think?
5. Jesus allowed the women to take hold of His feet and to worship Him (Matthew 28:9). Why do you suppose Jesus permitted them to do that, after He had not permitted Mary Magdalene to touch Him (John 20:17)?
6. Would you like to read some of the passages, where Jesus foretold that He would be raised from the dead? If so, please look at the following: Matthew 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:18-19; Mark 10:33-34; and Luke 18:32-33.

65. (182)

THE REPORT OF THE GUARDS

Matthew 28:11-15

While the women were on their way to the disciples, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests what had happened (Matthew 28:11).

After the chief priests had heard the guards' report, they met with the elders and devised a plan.

They decided to give the soldiers a large sum of money (Matthew 28:12) and tell them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep'" (Matthew 28:13 NIV).

They also said to the soldiers. “If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble” (Matthew 28:14 NIV).

The soldiers took the money and did as they were told.

So the story was widely circulated among the Jews that the disciples had stolen Jesus’ body. That story was still circulating at the time that Matthew wrote His Gospel (Matthew 28:15).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. The chief priests told the guards to say that Jesus’ disciples came during the night while they were asleep and stole His body (Matthew 28:13 NIV). Does that story make any sense? What do you think?
2. Was this the first time that the religious leaders had tried to hide evidence that attested to Jesus? See John 12:9-11.
3. The chief priests told the guards that they would “satisfy” the governor (Matthew 28:14). How do you suppose they were going to satisfy him? What does that tell you about the character of Pilate?

66. (183)

THE WALK TO EMMAUS

Mark 16:12-13; Luke 24:13-35

On the day that Jesus arose from the dead, two of His disciples were walking in the country (Mark 16:12). They were going to a village called Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem (Luke 24:13).

As they walked along, they were discussing with each other all the things that had happened (Luke 24:14).

While they were talking about these things, Jesus Himself came up to them and walked along with them; yet their eyes were kept from recognizing Him (Luke 24:15-16).

Jesus asked them, “What are you discussing as you walk along?”

At that, they stood still and were sad (Luke 24:17).

One of them, a man named Cleopas, looking downcast, answered Jesus, “Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know what things have happened there in these days” (Luke 24:18 NIV)?

“What things?” He asked.

“About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place” (Luke 24:19-21 NIV).

The two men continued speaking: “In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive.

Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see” (Luke 24:22-24 NIV).

At this point, Jesus broke into their dialogue and said to them,

“How foolish you are,
and how slow of heart to believe
all that the prophets have spoken!

Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?”

Luke 24:25-26 NIV

So, beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, Jesus explained to them the things concerning Himself, which are in all the Scriptures (Luke 24:27).

As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus pretended to be going farther (Luke 24:28).

Whereupon, they urged Jesus to stay with them, saying, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over” (Luke 24:29 NIV). So He went in to stay with them (Luke 24:29).

Now, when He sat at table with them, He took bread, blessed it and broke it, and gave it to them (Luke 24:30).

Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him, and He disappeared from their sight (Luke 24:31).

They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us” (Luke 24:32 NIV)?

Although it was late in the day, the two men got up at once and returned to Jerusalem (Luke 24:33), where they found the Eleven assembled in a house and the doors were

locked for fear of the Jews. The two men reported what had happened on the road and how they had recognized Jesus when He broke the bread (Luke 24:35), but the Eleven and others did not believe them (Mark 16:13).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Jesus appeared to many people after His resurrection. Was it a good thing that Jesus appeared to a lot of different people? Please explain.
2. If the disciples had been more familiar with the Scriptures, would they have more readily accepted the fact that Jesus had been raised from the dead? What do you think?
3. Would more people believe today if they were more familiar with the Bible? What do you think?
4. What are some of the passages that Jesus may have referred to (Luke 24:27), when He said that Moses and all the Prophets spoke of Him? Do you suppose that any of the following passages may have been among the ones to which Jesus referred? See Genesis 3:15; 22:18; 26:4; 49:10; Numbers 21:9; Deuteronomy 18:15; Psalm 16:9-10; 22:13,16-18; 110:1-7; 132:11; Isaiah 7:14; 9:2,6-7; 40:10-11; 53:1-12; Jeremiah 23:5-6; 33:14-16; Ezekiel 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Daniel 7:13-14; Malachi 3:1; 4:2.

67. (184)
JESUS APPEARED TO THE ELEVEN AND OTHER
DISCIPLES

Mark 16:12-14; Luke 24:33-43; John 20:19-20

Cleopas and his companion hurried back to Jerusalem. They went to the Eleven and others, who were assembled (Luke 24:33) in a house where the doors were locked for fear of the Jews (John 20:19).

Cleopas and his companion found the Eleven and the others confused by the reports that the Lord had appeared to various ones. Some were saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon" (Luke 24:34)!

Then Cleopas and his companion reported what had happened to them on the road and how they recognized Jesus when He had broken the bread (Luke 24:35).

The Eleven, however, and the other disciples did not believe what Cleopas and his companion said (Mark 16:13) any more than they believed what Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:11) and the other women had said.

Later that evening, however, while they were eating (Mark 16:14) and discussing what had happened, Jesus Himself came and stood among them. He said to them,

"Peace be with you."

Luke 24:36

He rebuked them for their lack of faith and for their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen Him after He had risen (Mark 16:14)

The disciples were startled and frightened, for they thought they saw a ghost (Luke 24:37).

So Jesus said to them,

“Why are you troubled,
and why do doubts rise in your minds?”

Luke 24:38 NIV

He also said to them,

“Look at my hands and my feet.
It is I myself!
Touch me and see;
a ghost does not have flesh and bones,
as you see I have.”

Luke 24:39 NIV

Then He showed them His hands and feet (Luke 24:40) and His side (John 20:20).

So great was their joy and amazement that they could hardly believe that it was He (Luke 24:41a).

So Jesus asked them,

“Do you have here anything to eat?”

Luke 24:41b NIV

They gave Him a piece of broiled fish, which He took and ate in their presence (Luke 24:42-43).

After that, the disciples realized that it was Jesus, and they were overjoyed (John 20:20).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Were the Apostles and disciples slow to believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead? What do you think?
2. Were the Apostles highly emotional and unstable men, or were they practical men with good common sense? What do you think?
3. Jesus showed His hands and His feet to the disciples (Luke 24:40). Why did He do that?
4. Jesus asked for food and ate a little broiled fish (Luke 24:42-43) in their presence? Why did He ask for food and eat it? What do you think?
5. Was Jesus' body raised from the dead? Or was He alive only in His spirit? What do you think?

68. (185)
JESUS OPENED HIS DISCIPLES' MINDS TO
UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURES
Luke 24:44-49

Jesus continued conversing with His Apostles and others, who were gathered in a house in Jerusalem, in the evening of the day that He was raised from the dead. After he had eaten the piece of broiled fish, which they had given to Him, He said to them,

“This is what I told you
while I was still with you:
Everything must be fulfilled
that is written about me
in the Law of Moses,
the Prophets and the Psalms.”

Luke 24:44 NIV

The Gospel of Luke says that Jesus then opened their minds so they could understand the Old Testament Scriptures (Luke 24:45).

Jesus told them,

“This is what is written:
The Christ will suffer
and rise from the dead on the third day,”

Luke 24:46 NIV

He continued,

“and repentance and forgiveness of sins
will be preached in his name to all nations,
beginning at Jerusalem.”

Luke 24:47 NIV

Jesus reminded the Apostles that they were uniquely
prepared for their mission. He said,

“You are witnesses of these things.”

Luke 24:48

Jesus knew that the Apostles would need help in
accomplishing their mission. They needed to be clothed
with the power that God had promised, and which Jesus
would send to them after He had ascended to heaven.

Jesus said,

“Behold,
I will send the promise of My Father
upon you;
but tarry in the city of Jerusalem
until you are clothed
with power from on high.”

Luke 24:49

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Jesus opened His disciples' minds so they could understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:45). Now, earlier in the day, when Jesus met two men on the road to Emmaus, He explained to them the meaning of Old Testament passages about Himself (Luke 24:27). Is this how Jesus opened His Apostles' minds in Luke 24:45? What do you think?
2. Was Simon Peter the only one of the Apostles to whom the power to forgive sins was given, or were all of the Apostles able to forgive sins? See John 20:22-23.
3. How did the Apostles go about forgiving people's sins? Did they do it by absolving them by pronouncement, or did they do it by teaching them the good news about Jesus and by baptizing them? See Acts 2:1-39.
4. Jesus told His Apostles to tarry in Jerusalem until they were "clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Did Jesus mean that Peter and others should ignore Jesus' prior instruction (Matthew 26:32; 28:10) to meet Him in Galilee? Do you think this confused the Apostles?

69. (186)

THE WORLD-WIDE MISSION OF THE APOSTLES

Mark 16:15-18; John 20:19-23

After Jesus had opened the minds of His Apostles to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:44-49), He charged them with a great commission, saying,

“Go into all the world
and proclaim the gospel to every creature.”

Mark 16:15

Thus we see that Jesus wanted all people everywhere to hear the Gospel. In addition, He wanted them also to believe the Gospel.

Jesus wanted people not only to hear and believe the Gospel, but He wanted them also to submit to baptism. The reason why He wanted people to hear and believe the Gospel and to submit to baptism is because, then, they would not be condemned on the Day of Judgment but would be saved. Jesus said,

“He who has believed
and has been baptized
will be saved;
but he who has not believed
will be condemned.”

Mark 16:16 NKJV

Jesus then began to speak to His disciples of the remarkable things that they would be doing in the not too distant future. He said,

“And these signs will follow
those who believe:
In My name
they will cast out demons;
they will speak with new tongues;”

Mark 16:17 NKJV

Continuing to talk about the remarkable things that His immediate disciples, who believed on Him, would be doing, Jesus said,

“they will take up serpents;
and if they drink anything deadly,
it will by no means hurt them;
they will lay hands on the sick,
and they will recover.”

Mark 16:18

Then He said,

“As the Father has sent me,
I am sending you.”

John 20:21b NIV

His Apostles, whom He was sending, would need special guidance in order to be successful in their mission. So He breathed on them and said,

“Receive the Holy Spirit.”

John 20:22

Describing the type of work that His Apostles would be doing, Jesus said to them,

“If you forgive anyone his sins,
they are forgiven;
if you do not forgive them,
they are not forgiven.”

John 20:23 NIV

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. The word “gospel” means “good news.” In what way is the Gospel of Jesus Christ good news?
2. Will people be saved on the Day of Judgment if they do not believe the Gospel? See Mark 16:16.

3. Does baptism precede salvation? See Mark 16:16. Should a person assume that he or she is saved before he or she is baptized?
4. How many things did Jesus mention in Mark 16:16 that a person must do in order to be saved?
5. How many things did Jesus mention in Mark 16:16 that it takes for a person to be condemned? Is it easier for a person to be condemned than it is for him or her to be saved? What do you think?
6. Is there a Biblical record of any of Jesus' Apostles ever casting out demons? See Acts 16:16-18. Did Jesus say (Mark 16:17) that all of His followers would cast out demons?
7. Is there a record of any of Jesus' Apostles ever speaking in new tongues (languages)? See 1 Corinthians 14:18? Did Jesus say (Mark 16:17) that all of His followers would be able to speak in new tongues (languages)?
8. Is there a record of a snake ever biting an Apostle without it harming the Apostle? See Acts 28:3-6. Did Jesus say (Mark 16:18) that all of His followers would be able to pick up snakes without harm?
9. How were the Apostles and others supposed to forgive people's sins? Were they supposed to do it by pronouncing people free of their guilt, or were they to do

it by teaching people the Gospel so they could obey the Gospel and be saved? See Romans 1:16.

70. (187)
JESUS APPEARED TO THOMAS AND OTHERS
John 20:24-31

For some reason, Thomas (called Didymus), who was one of the Twelve, was not present when Jesus came to the disciples on the day of His resurrection (John 20:24). So the disciples later said to Thomas, “We have seen the Lord!”

To which Thomas retorted, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it” (John 20:25 NIV).

One week later, when the disciples were again assembled in a house, Thomas was present with them.

Although the doors were locked, Jesus came in and stood among them. He said to them,

“Peace be with you!”

John 20:26

To Thomas He said,

“Put your finger here;
see my hands.

Reach out your hand
and put it into my side.
Stop doubting
and believe.”

John 20:27 NIV

Thomas responded by saying, “My Lord and my God”
(John 20:28)!

Then Jesus said to him,

“Because you have seen me,
you have believed;
blessed are those
who have not seen
and yet have believed.”

John 20:29 NIV

At this point in the narrative, the Gospel of John
contains the following passage:

“Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence
of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.

“But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is
the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you
may have life in his name” (John 20:30-31 NIV).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Did Thomas acknowledge the divinity of Jesus? See John 20:28. What do you think?
2. Has Thomas done us a service by doubting, for a time, that Jesus arose from the dead? What do you think?
3. Did Jesus perform more miracles than are recorded in the Gospel of John? See John 20:30. Do you think He performed more miracles than are recorded in all four of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John)?
4. Why was the Gospel of John written? What was its purpose? See John 20:31.
5. The author of the Gospel of John wanted his readers to believe that Jesus Christ is God's Son. Why did he want His readers to believe that? See John 20:31.

71. (188)
THE FISH CATCH IN GALILEE
John 21:1-14

After Jesus had appeared to His disciples at Jerusalem,

He appeared to them also by the Sea of Tiberias (Galilee)

(John 21:1).

Jesus disciples had gone to Galilee just as He had told them to do (Matthew 26:32; 28:10).

Among them were Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, two sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples (John 21:2).

Peter said to them, "I'm going fishing."
The others said, "We are going with you." So they got into the boat, but they did not catch anything (John 21:3).

Jesus stood on the shore early in the morning, but the disciples did not know that it was He (John 21:4).

He called out to them,

"Friends,
haven't you caught anything
to eat?"

John 21:5

They answered, "No."
Then Jesus said to them,

“Cast your net on the right side of the boat
and you will find something.”

John 21:6

After they had cast their net on the right side, they caught so many fish that they were not able to haul the net into the boat.

The disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!”

As soon as Simon Peter heard the disciple say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around himself (for he had taken it off) and threw himself into the water (John 21:7).

The other disciples came to shore in the boat. They had been only about a hundred yards from the shore. They came towing the net full of fish behind them (John 21:8).

As they were getting out on the shore, they saw burning coals with fish lying on them; and they saw also some bread (John 21:9).

Jesus said to them,

“Bring some of the fish
that you have just now caught.”

John 21:10 NIV

Then Simon Peter got back in the boat and dragged the net, full of large fish (153 of them), on to the shore.

Remarkably, the net did not break, in spite of their having caught so many fish (John 21:11).

Jesus said to them,

“Come and eat breakfast.”

John 21:12 NIV

The disciples knew that it was the Lord. Therefore, none of them dared ask him, “Are you He?”

Then Jesus took the bread, gave it to them. He did the same with the fish (John 21:13 NIV).

This was the third time that Jesus had appeared to His disciples as a group after He had been raised from the dead (John 21:14).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Jesus told Peter and the other Apostles to go to Galilee and meet Him there? Why did He want them to meet Him in Galilee? What reason could He have had?
2. What do you suppose went through Peter's mind when he saw that they had caught so many fish? See Luke 5:4-11.
3. Is it helpful that Jesus made several appearances after His resurrection, instead of only one? See Acts 1:3. What do you think?

72. (189)

JESUS' CONVERSATION WITH SIMON PETER IN GALILEE John 21:15-25

After the disciples had eaten bread and fish beside the Sea of Galilee, Jesus said to Simon Peter,

“Simon, son of John,
do you love me
more than these?”

John 21:15a

“Yes, Lord,” Simon answered, “you know I love you.”
Whereupon, Jesus said to him,

[Comment: on](#)

“Feed my lambs.”

John 21:15b

Jesus asked him again,

“Simon, son of John,
do you love me?”

John 21:16a

Simon answered, “Yes, Lord, you know I love you.”

Jesus said,

“Tend my sheep.”

John 21:16b

A third time Jesus asked him,

“Simon, son of John,
do you love me?”

John 21:17a NIV

Peter was hurt that Jesus asked him for the third time,
“Do you love me?” So He said to Jesus, “Lord, you
know all things; you know I love you.”

Jesus responded,

“Feed my sheep.”

John 21:17b

After Jesus had said these things to Peter, Jesus said to him,

“I tell you the truth,
when you were younger
you dressed yourself
and went where you wanted;
but when you are old
you will stretch out your hands,
and someone else will dress you
and lead you
where you do not want to go.”

John 21:18 NIV

With these words Jesus indicated by what death Peter would glorify God.

Jesus then said to Peter,

“Follow me!”

John 21:19

Glancing back, Peter saw that “the disciple whom Jesus loved” was following them. This was the one that had leaned against Jesus at the Passover Meal (John 13:25) and that had asked Jesus who was going to betray Him (John 21:20)?

Concerning that disciple, Peter asked,

“Lord, what about him?”

John 21:21 NIV

Jesus answered,

“If I want him to remain
until I return,
what is that to you?
You must follow me.”

John 21:22

The rumor spread among the brothers that Jesus said that the other disciple would not die, but Jesus did not say that he would not die. What He said was, “If I want him to remain until I return, what is that to you” (John 21:23 NIV)?

Next, the Gospel of John says, “This is the disciple who vouches for to these things and who wrote them down, and we know his testimony is true” (John 21:24).

The Gospel of John comes to an end with the words: “Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written” (John 21:25 NIV).

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Jesus told Peter “Feed my lambs,” “Tend my sheep,” and “Feed my sheep?” What was Jesus instructing Peter to do?

2. Did Jesus intend for Peter to become a Pope? What do you think?
3. Who was the disciple “whom Jesus loved?” Was it John, one of Zebedee’s sons and brother to James? What do you think?
4. Was the Gospel of John written by a person that was an eyewitness to the things that He described? See John 21:24.
5. Who wrote the Gospel of John? Was it John the Apostle? What do you think?

73. (190)

THE GREAT COMMISSION, SPOKEN IN GALILEE

Matthew 28:16-20

The Eleven went to the particular mountain in Galilee to which Jesus had told them to go (Matthew 28:16).

There, they saw Jesus and they worshiped Him.

Yet, inexplicably, some of them still wavered in their

faith (Matthew 28:17).

Nonetheless, Jesus said to them,

“All authority has been given to Me
in heaven and on earth.”

Matthew 28:18 NASU

Then He commanded,

“Go therefore and make disciples
of all the nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father
and the Son and the Holy Spirit,…”

Matthew 28:19 NASU

He continued, saying,

“...teaching them to observe
all that I commanded you;
and lo, I am with you always,
even to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:20 NASU

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

- 1. Jesus told His Apostles to go and make disciples of all the nations. Does Jesus want His followers today to continue to make disciples of all the nations? What do you think?*

2. *Were the Apostles supposed to teach people before they baptized them? See Matthew 28:19.*
3. *Were the Apostles supposed to continue teaching people after they baptized them? See Matthew 28:20.*
4. *Were the Apostles supposed to teach people to observe everything that Jesus taught? See Matthew 28:20.*
5. *Were the Apostles faithful to the charge that Jesus gave them? What do you think?*

74. (191)

JESUS' ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN

Mark 16:19-20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:1-13

On the day that Jesus arose from the dead (Luke 24:30-49), He told His Apostles that He was going to send them power from on high. He said,

“I am going to send you
what my Father has promised;
but stay in the city until
you have been clothed

with power from on high.”

Luke 24:49 NIV

Jesus explained that the Holy Spirit would be the one who would clothe them with power. Indeed, they would be baptized (immersed) in the Holy Spirit. Jesus said,

“Do not leave Jerusalem,
but wait for the gift my Father promised,
which you have heard me speak about.
For John baptized in water,
but in a few days
you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit.”

Acts 1:4-5

Jesus showed Himself to His Apostles at various times and in different places for 40 days (1 Corinthians 15:1-8), and He gave them many convincing proofs that He was alive (Acts 1:3).

Jesus, you will recall, appeared to His Apostles in Galilee. After they had seen Him in Galilee, they returned to Jerusalem, and He met them in Jerusalem on the day that He ascended to heaven (Acts 1:6).

When the Apostles saw Him, they asked, “Lord, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel at this time” (Acts 1:6)? Their question showed that they were thinking of an earthly kingdom. However, Jesus did not correct their thinking about that. Instead, He commented on their having inquired about God’s timetable. He said,

“It is not for you to know the times or dates
the Father has set by his own authority.”

Acts 1:7 NIV

Jesus then explained that the Holy Spirit would give them the power that was promised in order to prepare them to be His witnesses. He said,

“But you will receive power
when the Holy Spirit comes on you;
and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem,
and in all Judea and Samaria,
and to the ends of the earth.”

Acts 1:8 NIV

After that, Jesus led them out to the vicinity of Bethany (Luke 24:50), which was about a Sabbath day’s journey (3 km) from Jerusalem (Acts 1:12).

There, He raised His hands and blessed them (Luke 24:50). After He had blessed them, He was taken up into heaven; and the disciples watched intently until a cloud finally hid Him from their sight (Acts 1:9).

The Gospel of Mark tells us that Jesus “was taken up into heaven” and that He “sat down at the right hand of God” (Mark 16:19).

As the Apostles were staring into the sky, suddenly, two men dressed in white stood beside them (Acts 1:10); and they asked,

“Men of Galilee,
why are you standing here
looking into the sky?”

Acts 1:11a

The men dressed in white said,

“This same Jesus,
who has been taken from you into heaven,
will come back in the same way
you have seen him go into heaven.”

Acts 1:11b NIV

Then, after the disciples had worshiped Jesus, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy (Luke 24:52). They went to the upstairs room where they had been staying (Acts 1:13).

Among those that witnessed Jesus’ ascension were Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James (Acts 1:13).

Jesus had instructed His Apostles to bear witness to Him in Jerusalem before they started out to other places (Acts 1:8). For that reason, they did not leave Jerusalem immediately; but they “stayed continually at the temple, praising God” (Luke 24:53 NIV).

Ten days later, on the Day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter stood up and preached a sermon that showed that Jesus is Lord (Acts 2:14-36). In his sermon, Peter commanded His listeners to repent. He also commended them to be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38).

Following his sermon, Peter continued warning the people and pleading with them, saying, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation” (Acts 2:40).

The people who accepted Peter’s message were baptized; and, as a result, about three thousand people were added to the fellowship of the Apostles that day (Acts 2:41). They constituted the first congregation of Jesus’ church on earth.

With regards to this congregation of Jesus’ church, the book of Acts says, “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42 NIV).

The Gospel of Mark comes to a close with the words: “Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it” (Mark 16:20 NIV).

Dear Reader, if you would like to learn more about how some of the Apostles fared on their mission to all the world, read the book of Acts.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. The Apostles asked Jesus, “Lord, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel at this time” (Acts 1:6)? What were the Apostles asking? Were they asking whether or not Jesus would, at that time, become a mighty king and reign over Israel like David? What do you think?
2. Do you think that Jesus intended ever to restore an earthly kingdom to fleshly Israel? See Matthew 8:11-12; Matthew 21:41-43; Luke 17:20-21; John 3:3; and John 18:36.
3. Jesus told His Apostles that they would receive “power” when the Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts 1:8). When did the Holy Spirit come upon them? See Acts 2:1-4.
4. Jesus told His Apostles that they would be “baptized in the Holy Spirit” in a few days (Acts 1:5). When were they “baptized in the Holy Spirit?” Did it happen when the Holy Spirit came upon them? What do you think?
5. Does the baptism in the Holy Spirit come upon all believers, or did it come upon the Apostles to empower them to do their special work?
6. Mark 16:20 says that the Lord “worked with” His Apostles. Does He work with His followers today? If He does, how does He do it? Does He work with them today in the same way that He worked with His Twelve Apostles?

7. Mark 16:20 also says that the Lord “confirmed His word” by the signs that accompanied it. Has the word of the Lord been confirmed? See Hebrews 2:3-4. Does the Lord “confirm His word” by signs today, as He did in the days of the Apostles? What do you think?
8. What affect did Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension have on the Eleven?
9. What affect did Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension have on the people of Jerusalem?
10. What affect has Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension had on the Jewish people as a whole?
11. What affect has Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascension had on the world?
12. What do you think about the Christ? What should your response to Him be?