

# **NOTES ON THE NEW TESTAMENT**

**The Gospel According to**

***Luke***

**Gene Cunningham**

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*“Endure hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”*  
(2 Timothy 2:3)

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# NOTES ON THE NEW TESTAMENT

## Preface

While I was teaching in Myanmar/Burma in March 2019, some of my long-term, advanced students suggested that I go through the New Testament and provide basic notes, which they could then be able print as a study Bible. They specifically asked that I focus on issues that are a major area of confusion in the churches where they work. Therefore, the following commentary will focus on these five primary areas:

1. What is the nature of God's grace and how is it received?
2. What is God's plan of salvation and the clear message of the Gospel?
3. What is the Bible's teaching on the security and assurance of the believer?
4. How is the believer to live the Christian life and be effective in witness/service?
5. What does prophecy say about the last days and the order of end-times events?

## Practical Suggestions

These notes are purposely brief in nature. This work is not intended to be a complete commentary. All through the work I have kept in mind those who live in remote areas of our world, who labor to both understand and to teach others the Word of God. They do not have access to Bible school or seminary training. Neither are they able to afford the vast array of books available to pastors and teachers who live in more advanced countries.

I encourage all who utilize these notes to study them with an open Bible. Pray for the illumination of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:15–23; 3:14–21) as you study. Read the context of the passage carefully. Look up and compare the references that are provided. Above all, let the Word of God, and not these notes, guide your insight into God's Word. As I always tell my students: "Never take my word for anything; search the Scriptures and prove what is true" (Acts 17:10–12; 1 John 4:1).

Before you begin any study of the Word of God, take a few moments to make sure that you are in fellowship with God, filled by means of the Holy Spirit. Comprehension, like everything else in the Christian life, is a gift that can be appropriated only by faith. The Bible clearly lays out three requirements that must be met before we can expect to understand God's Word. All three require nothing from us but faith.

*We must be believers in Jesus Christ* (John 3:16).

It is impossible for unbelievers to understand the Word of God (1 Cor. 2:14). Jesus declared to the leading religious leader of His day that apart from spiritual birth man is blind to the things of God. *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit ... You must be born again"* (John 3:6).

*We must be filled by means of the Spirit* (1 Corinthians 2:12).

Only the Spirit of God knows the thoughts of God. As believers we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but when we sin, we break fellowship with God and cease to function in the power of the Spirit. When *"we confess our sins,"* God is always *"faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9). The moment we confess, we are restored to fellowship and are again under the control of the Holy Spirit and, therefore, able to learn.

*We must approach in faith* (Hebrews 11:6).

Only when we approach in humility, with child-like faith, will the Word of God make sense to us (Matt. 18:4; Heb. 11:3). Where we find Scripture at odds with our ideas or our desires, we must submit to the authority of the Word. Intimacy, understanding, and power are reserved for those who are willing to do God's will (John 7:17).

## DEDICATION

*“This will be written for the generation to come,  
that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord.”*

Psalm 102:18

While it is my hope and prayer that these notes will be helpful to all current students of the Word of God, I send them forth with a special dedication to the 144,000 Jewish evangelists who are yet to come on the scene of world history (Rev. 7:1–8). They will be the heroes of the faith in the coming time of Tribulation following the soon coming Rapture of the Church (1 Thess. 4:13–18).

To these brothers and sisters of the future, I want you to know you have been thought of, prayed for, and loved—before you even knew your mission. We of the Church Age salute you for the sufferings you will endure and the victories you will win. We bid you to be strong in the Lord, for your victory is sure in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May the labor put into these notes by many hands and through many prayers, be a help to you as you boldly proclaim the name of Jesus Christ in a dark and dangerous time!

## INTRODUCTION

The Gospel of Luke, like Matthew and Mark, is written to a particular audience. Whereas Matthew wrote specifically for a Jewish audience and Mark for the Roman reader, Luke is written to the Greek-speaking world. The original Greek of this Gospel is very skilled and highly polished.

The book of Luke is actually the first of a two-part series—Luke and Acts—which chronicles the coming of the Savior and the beginnings of the early Church. Both were written to a believing, high official named Theophilus, which may be a pseudonym or “nickname” for a high Roman officer. The name translates “lover of God” or “friend of God.” Luke was Paul’s travelling companion in the Acts, as well as Paul’s personal physician (Col. 4:14), and the only Gentile author of a New Testament book.

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

## LUKE CHAPTER 1

Luke dedicates his book; the birth of John the Baptist; announcement of the birth of Christ; Mary's song; prophecy of Zacharias.

### **Dedication to Theophilus**

Luke 1:1–4

**1:1** *“Things which have been fulfilled.”* This Gospel is especially focused on the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy in the coming of Jesus Christ (John 20:30–31; 21:25).

**1:2** *“Those who ... were eyewitnesses.”* Though Luke was not an eyewitness, his account recognizes the authority of other Gospel writers and supports their work (Acts 1:1–3; Heb. 2:3).

**1:3** *“Perfect understanding.”* Luke was a careful researcher and faithful historian, having gained information from other apostles, and from Paul himself.

**1:4** *“That you may know the certainty ... in which you were instructed.”* Theophilus was a new believer, possibly instructed by Paul, and needed further instruction to confirm and strengthen his faith in a world where Christians were being persecuted.

### **The Birth of John Announced to Zacharias**

Luke 1:5–25

**1:5** *“Zacharias, of the division of Abijah.”* The priesthood was divided into 24 groups, who served in their turn (vv.8, 23; 1 Chr. 24:1–19). The division of Abijah is mentioned in Nehemiah 12:17. *“His wife ... was Elizabeth.”* She was descended from Aaron, so both were of the priestly line (Leviticus 8).

**1:6** *“They were both righteous before God.”* This does not mean sinless. It means that they were both believers, that they lived faithful lives and were obedient to the commands of God, which included confession of sin through sacrificial offerings.

**1:7** *“Elizabeth was barren.”* This sets the stage for the miracle of John's birth. The birth of Isaac to Sarah (Gen. 18:9–14; 21:1–7), of Samuel to Hannah (1 Sam. 1:1–23), and of John to Elizabeth, show God's power to bless faithful people and to raise up important figures in history.

**1:8–9** *“His lot fell to burn incense.”* This great privilege fell to a priest only once in a lifetime. This incense represented the prayers of God's people ascending to Him (Exod. 30:1–10; Rev. 5:8; 8:3–4).

**1:11–12** *“An angel of the Lord appeared.”* This was the messenger-angel Gabriel (v. 19; Luke 1:26; Dan. 8:16; 9:21).

**1:13–14** *“Your prayer is heard.”* This could refer both to a prayer for a son, and also his prayer for the Redeemer of Israel to come—the Lord Jesus Christ. *“Many will rejoice.”* This is because John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus Christ (Isa. 40:1–8; John 1:22–23).

**1:15–17** *“For he will be great in the sight of the Lord.”* This was confirmed by Jesus Christ Himself (Matt. 11:10–11; Luke 7:27–28). The command, “[He] shall drink neither wine nor strong drink,” shows us that John was a Nazarite from birth like Samson. See Numbers 6:1–12 and Judges 13:1–5. *“Filled with the Holy Spirit.”* The filling of the

Spirit is seen as the source of three spiritual qualities: his greatness in God's sight, his power to turn the children of Israel to God, and his ministry of introducing the Messiah/Savior. "***In the spirit and power of Elijah***" indicates that he will be a kind of prophetic fulfillment (1 Kings 17–18; Mal. 4:5–6; Matt. 17:10–13; Mark 9:13).

**1:18** "***How shall I know this?***" Zacharias is filled with doubts due to his age and Elizabeth's barrenness.

**1:19–20** "***I am Gabriel.***" In response to Zacharias' doubts, Gabriel identifies himself, and declares that "***you will be mute ... not able to speak.***" Since Zacharias asked for a sign, he is given one that rebuked his unbelief. He was apparently unable to hear or to speak.

**1:21–22** "***They perceived that he had seen a vision.***" In this way, the people are being prepared to recognize the work of God in the events that follow.

**1:25** "***Thus the LORD had dealt with me ... to take away my reproach among people.***" In the ancient world, it was a great source of shame for a woman not to bear children (1 Sam. 1:1–10; Psalm 127:3; 128:3).

### **The Birth of Jesus Announced to Mary**

Luke 1:26–38

**1:26** "***Now in the sixth month.***" This refers to the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy. "***Gabriel was sent by God ... to ... Nazareth.***" Acting on the authority of the Most High God, Gabriel goes to the insignificant mountain city of Nazareth, that Scripture might be fulfilled (Matt. 2:23).

**1:27** "***To a virgin ... the virgin's name was Mary.***" Here, we see the stage being set for the fulfillment of many prophecies (Gen. 3:15; 49:10–11; Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18–25).

**1:28–30** "***Rejoice, highly favored one ... blessed are you among women ... you have found favor with God.***" Mary's blessedness was based on the unmerited grace of God. Though Mary has been deified by the Roman Catholic church, she herself acknowledged her low estate and need of the Savior (Luke 1:46–50). The words "***favor***" (grace) and "***mercy***" (1:50) speak of God's undertakings on behalf of those who, though sinful, come to Him in faith.

**1:31–32** "***You will conceive ... and shall call His name JESUS.***" The Hebrew name is *Yeshua* and means "God's salvation" or "the salvation of Jehovah." The word for "***salvation***" in Genesis 49:18 is *Yeshua*, as it is in Isaiah 25:9 and many other passages. "***The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.***" This anticipates the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:12–13; Psalm 2:7–9; 89).

**1:33** "***Of His kingdom there will be no end.***" Because He is the "***King of kings and Lord of lords***" (Rev. 19:16), His kingdom will be eternal (Dan. 2:44; 4:34–35; 6:25–27).

**1:34–35** "***How can this be?***" Mary's question is born not out of doubt, but from the practical consideration of her virginity. Gabriel explains that her conception will be by the power of "***the Holy Spirit.***" Only in this way could the eternal Son become truly human (Psalm 2:7–12; Dan. 7:13–14).

**1:37** "***For with God nothing will be impossible.***" The miracle of the virgin conception and birth is the greatest of all miracles. What is impossible for men is no hindrance to God (Matt. 17:20; 19:26; Mark 10:27; Luke 18:27).

**1:38** "***Behold the maidservant of the Lord!***" Mary submits herself fully to the plan of God for her life. "***According to your word.***" The word of Gabriel was the Word of the Lord, which to Mary, as we see in vv. 46–55, was of utmost importance.



## Mary Visits Elizabeth

Luke 1:39–45

**1:39–40** *“Now Mary arose ... and greeted Elizabeth.”* In light of Mary’s deep understanding of Scripture (vv. 46–55), she must have concluded that the destiny of Elizabeth’s son and her own were divinely connected. Elizabeth was also able to conclude the meaning of these events.

**1:41** *“The babe leaped in her womb.”* John, the forerunner of Jesus (Isa. 40:1–5) reacts in the womb at Mary’s coming. Thus, he testified to Jesus before he was born. *“Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.”* The filling of God’s Spirit always brings illumination, wisdom, and utterance of truth (Acts 4:8–12; 13:9–12; Eph. 5:18–21).

**1:42–43** *“Blessed is the fruit of your womb ... the mother of my Lord.”* Elizabeth displays keen insight into what is happening. Mary was the mother of the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. His deity has always existed in the presence of the Father and the Spirit (Isa. 9:6–7; Micah 5:2; John 1:1–3; 10:30; 17:5, 21).

**1:45** *“Blessed is she who believed.”* Mary’s faith is contrasted with the doubt of Zacharias. Only faith can receive the power of God (Matt. 15:28; 17:20; Mark 2:5; Luke 7:9; Heb. 11:6).

## Mary Magnifies the Lord by Reciting His Word

Luke 1:46–55

In this section, Mary displays a deep understanding of Old Testament Scripture. Compare also the song of Hannah (1 Sam. 2:1–10).

**1:47** *“My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.”* Contrary to the false teaching of Roman Catholicism, Mary was not sinless. Here, she declares that she also needed the redemption of the Savior.

**1:48** *“He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant.”* This refers not so much to her poverty, as to her sinful condition (see Rom. 3:23). *“All generations will call me blessed.”* She was certainly blessed to be the mother of the Lord Jesus. Again, blessing comes because of God’s grace—never our merit. In Luke 11:27–28, one woman called her blessed, but Jesus said that the greater blessing was faith and obedience to His Word.

**1:49** *“Holy is His name.”* To be holy is to be separate, set apart from all others. God alone is holy in His very nature (Lev. 11:44–45; Psalm 111:9; Isa. 6:3).

**1:50** *“His mercy is on those who fear Him.”* This fear is a humble reverence for His greatness and grace on undeserving men (Psalm 111:10; Prov. 9:9–10).

**1:51–52** *“He has scattered the proud ... He has put down the mighty.”* God’s plan is to lift up the humble and to bring down the proud (Psalm 37:9–20; 98:1–9; Luke 14:11; 18:14; 1 Pet. 5:5–6). The Lord Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of humility leading to exaltation (Phil. 2:5–9).

**1:53** *“He has filled the hungry with good things.”* The focus here is spiritual hunger, which God will always fill with the good things of His Word (Psalm 34:8–10; 37:3–6; 84:11–12; Matt. 5:6).

**1:54–55** *“He has helped His servant Israel ... As He spoke to our fathers.”* Israel is referred to as God’s servant throughout the Old Testament (Isa. 41:8–9; 44:1–2). The word God spoke to Abraham and his seed refers to the covenants (Gen. 17:1–8; Exod. 19:4–6; 34:10, 28). As the servant of God, Israel gave the world His Word—both in written form and in Jesus Christ—the living Word. In this way, Israel is intimately connected to Jesus Christ as God’s chosen servant (Isa. 42:1–4).

## The Birth of John and the Prophecy of Zacharias

Luke 1:57–80

**1:59** *“On the eighth day.”* This day was set aside as the day of circumcision in the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 17:9–13). Paul declares circumcision to be a sign of regeneration or new birth (Rom. 2:28–29; Gal. 5:6; Col. 2:10–12). The eighth day is also significant, since it represents the day after the Sabbath—Resurrection Sunday (Matt. 28:1–6; Mark 16:1–6; Luke 24:1–6; John 20:1–9).

**1:60–63** *“His name is John.”* Normal custom was to call a son by the name of the father or some other male relative. John’s name was given by Gabriel (Luke 1:13). The fact that *“they made signs to his father”* (v. 62) shows that Zacharias was both deaf and dumb.

**1:64** *“Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed.”* This happened just as the angel had foretold (Luke 1:20).

**1:65** *“All these sayings were discussed throughout all the hill country of Judea.”* These amazing events were preparing the people for even greater wonders with the birth of Jesus Christ (Luke 2).

**1:67** *“Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit.”* In Old Testament times, the filling of the Spirit came at various times to accomplish some specific purpose (Psalm 51:11). To some degree, this prophecy is a fulfillment of Joel 2:28. Today, we are commanded to be filled by means of the Spirit daily, to produce the fruit of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:22–23). We are enabled to do this by abiding in Christ (John 15:1–8). When we sin, fellowship is broken, and confession and correction is required to restore fellowship with the Lord (1 John 1:7–9; 2 Tim. 2:20–21).

**1:68–79** This prophecy of Zacharias displays his astounding grasp of what the birth of John foreshadowed—the coming of the Savior and the redemption of Israel.

**1:68** *“He has visited ... His people.”* After 400 years of silence following the book of Malachi, God was again communicating with His people through dreams (Matt. 1:20; 2:13, 22), angels (Matt. 2:13; Luke 1:11–20), and prophecy (Luke 1:67). These were the ways God’s communicated in the Old Testament (Exod. 3:16; Heb. 1:1–2). However, this may be taken more literally, in the sense that God, in the Person of Jesus Christ, will come to visit Israel (Luke 1:78; 7:16; 19:44).

**1:69** *“And has raised up a horn of salvation ... in the house of His servant David.”* This clearly shows that Zacharias identified the mission of John as the forerunner of the Messiah. The *“horn”* is used in the Old Testament to speak of power and authority and was a messianic symbol (Psalm 18:2; 132:17; 1 Sam. 2:10; 2 Sam. 22:3).

**1:70** *“As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets.”* The central theme throughout Old Testament prophecy is the coming of the Redeemer/Messiah (Luke 24:27, 44–45; Rom. 1:2; Acts 3:21; 1 Pet. 1:10–12).

**1:72** *“To remember His holy covenant.”* God had declared through Moses that the day would come, after long judgment, that He would remember His covenant with Israel (Lev. 26:42).

**1:73** *“The oath which He swore to our father Abraham.”* This statement looks back to the call of God to Abraham and His initial promise to him (Gen. 12:1–3; 22:15–18; Heb. 6:13–14).

**1:74** *“To grant us that we ... might serve Him without fear.”* Throughout history, Israel was persecuted for their devotion to the one true God. By God sending His own Son to die for us, our fears are overcome, and we can serve Him joyfully (Heb. 9:14; 1 John 3:16–17; 4:17–19).

**1:76** “*You will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways.*” Zacharias now speaks of John, anticipating his prophetic ministry (Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1; Matt. 3:3).

**1:77** “*To give knowledge of salvation ... by the remission of their sins.*” This salvation would come through John’s call to repentance and his pointing to Jesus as “*the Lamb of God*” (Luke 3:1–17; John 1:29).

**1:78–79** “*The Dayspring from on high.*” This speaks of the early dawn, the sun rising—a picture of Jesus’ arrival (Num. 24:17; Mal. 4:2; 2 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 22:16). “*To give light to those who sit in darkness.*” The Lord Jesus brought the light of God into a world in the darkness of sin (Isa. 9:2; Matt. 4:16; Luke 22:53; John 8:12; 9:5).

**1:80** “*So the child ... was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel.*” John grew strong in body and spirit, hidden from sight, until he bursts onto the scene to announce the coming of the Savior. (Matt. 3:1–3; Mark 1:1–5; John 1:15; 19–23).

## **LUKE CHAPTER 2**

Jesus is born in Bethlehem; the shepherds worship Him; Simeon and Anna praise God; the boy Jesus in the Temple.

### **The Birth of Jesus the Christ**

Luke 2:1–7 (Matt. 1:18–25)

**2:1** “*Caesar Augustus.*” He ruled the Roman empire from approximately 30 B.C. to 14 A.D. This decree played a part in bringing Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, where prophecy declared the Messiah/Christ would be born (Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:4–6).

**2:3** “*So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.*” Every male was to be registered in their ancestral home city.

**2:4** “*Joseph also went up ... to the city of David ... Bethlehem.*” Both Joseph and Mary were of the lineage of King David. Although Joseph was not the physical father of Jesus, it was essential that he be of the Davidic line—both to have Jesus born in Bethlehem and to give Him legal right to the throne of David. Later, Jerusalem, also known as Zion, was called “the City of David,” as the capital of his kingdom (2 Sam. 5:7).

**2:5** “*With Mary, his betrothed wife.*” Luke uses the word “*betrothed*” to remind us that although Mary “*was with child,*” she and Joseph had not consummated their marriage sexually (Matt. 1:18).

**2:7** “*Her firstborn Son.*” This is because, after the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary had other children (Matt. 1:25; 13:55–56; Mark 3:31–35). “*Swaddling cloths.*” These were strips of cloth from old garments. “*Laid Him in a manger.*” This was a feed trough for sheep and cattle. Just as the inn had no room for Christ’s birth, so this world has no room for His life. From birth to His death, Jesus lived on this Earth as a wayfaring stranger (Jer. 14:8–9).

### **An Angel Appears to the Shepherds**

Luke 2:8–20

**2:8** “*Shepherds living out in the fields.*” King David once kept his father’s flock in these fields. The life of a shepherd was very rugged, as they lived with the flock. Jesus came to be our Shepherd and our King. He is the Good Shepherd (John 10:11) who gives His life for the sheep (Psalm 22). He is the Great Shepherd (Heb. 13:20) who rose from the dead to care for the sheep (Psalm 23; John 21:15–17). He is the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:4) who will receive the sheep into His kingdom.

**2:10–11** *“I bring you good tidings of great joy.”* The Good News about Jesus Christ always brings the joy of the Lord to those who believe. *“A Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”* Jesus is described here by the angel as the Savior of sinners, the Christ anointed to sit on David’s throne, and the Lord from Heaven. In Luke 1:47, Mary calls God her Savior (see Psalm 106:21; Isa. 43:3; 60:16), so here the term implies the deity of Jesus Christ.

**2:12** *“This will be the sign to you ... a Babe ... lying in a manger.”* The Lord Jesus would be easy to identify, as the only infant in Bethlehem for whom there was no place but a manger for a bed.

**2:14** *“Glory to God ... goodwill toward men.”* The glory of God speaks both of His holy and perfect nature, made visible by brilliant light (v. 9) and of the praise that is His rightful due. *“Peace”* and *“goodwill”* are offered to all mankind through the coming of the Savior. Only those who receive Jesus Christ by faith will experience these blessings of God.

**2:18–19** *“All those who heard it marveled ... but Mary kept ... and pondered them in her heart.”* While others were amazed, Mary treated these events as a treasure and considered the meaning of them all. In Genesis 37:11, Jacob did the same in considering the revelation given through Joseph’s dreams.

### **The Reception of the Christ-child in the Temple**

Luke 2:21–38

**2:21** *“His name was called Jesus.”* The name *“Jesus”* (*Yeshua*) means “the salvation of Jehovah,” or simply, “Savior” (Matt. 1:21).

**2:22–24** *“Now when the days of her purification ... were completed ... to offer a sacrifice.”* These verses highlight the obedience of Joseph and Mary to the Law of Moses. Every Jewish boy was to be circumcised on the eighth day, in keeping with the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 17:12; Lev. 12:3). The purification ceremony of the mother took place 40 days after the birth, at which time a sacrifice was offered (Lev. 12:1–8). It is interesting that Joseph and Mary could only offer the lesser offering, due to their poverty (Lev. 12:8). See also Exodus 13:2.

**2:25–26** *“Simeon ... was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel.”* That he was *“just”* shows that he was a believer. The word *“devout”* implies spiritual obedience to the Word of God. He was *“waiting for”* Israel’s Messiah (the *“Consolation of Israel ... the Lord’s Christ”*). And he was *“guided by”* the *“Holy Spirit.”* These four things represent what a faithful believer should be like.

**2:29–32** *“Lord ... my eyes have seen Your salvation ... the glory of Your people Israel.”* By the leading of the Holy Spirit, Simeon was able to recognize and praise the Christ-child. See Genesis 46:30; Isaiah 9:2; 42:6; 52:10; and Acts 10:45.

**2:34–35** *“Behold, this Child is ... for a sign.”* Jesus is the greatest sign ever given of God’s love for mankind (Isa. 7:14; 8:14; 9:6; 1 Pet. 2:6–8). The *“sword”* is a *romphaia*, speaking of a great broad-sword, symbolic of the many sorrows Mary would endure in seeing Christ rejected and crucified. Jesus Christ would reveal the *“thoughts of many hearts”* in how men would respond to Him (Heb. 4:12–13).

**2:36–38** *“Anna, a prophetess.”* Here is an example of a godly woman of great faith. She was also guided to come into the Temple in time to see the Christ-child and recognized Him as the Redeemer. Her life of constant devotion to God is a reflection of Miriam (Exod. 15:20), Deborah (Judges 4:4), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), and the daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9).

## Incidents from the Early Life of Jesus

Luke 2:39–52

**2:40** *“The Child grew and became strong in spirit.”* Though the physical growth of Jesus was like any normal child, His spiritual development was unlike any other. He was *“filled with wisdom”* from the study of the Scriptures, and *“the grace of God was upon Him,”* as He had a unique relationship with the Father. As God, Jesus was always perfect. But in His humanity, He had to grow and develop.

**2:41** *“Every year at the Feast of the Passover.”* This was one of three feasts that every male in Israel was commanded to attend in Jerusalem: The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover), the Feast of Weeks or Harvest (Pentecost), and the Feast of Tabernacles or Ingathering (see Exod. 23:14–17; Deuteronomy 16). Again, this shows the devotion of Joseph and Mary to be obedient to God (Luke 2:22–24, 39).

**2:42** *“When He was twelve years old.”* It was the custom in Israel for a boy to become a man at the age of 13, when he became a “son of the law,” or Bar-Mitzvah. This was often anticipated one year in advance, at the age of twelve. It was at this time that the child would choose his life’s work.

**2:43–45** *“The Boy Jesus lingered behind.”* This would be easy to do, as people from Nazareth would travel in a caravan, and many children would travel with friends or relatives.

**2:46** *“After three days they found Him ... in the midst of the teachers.”* This verse amplifies what was said in v. 40. Jesus was able to engage the learned rabbis in theological discussions and had been doing so for three days.

**2:47** *“All who heard Him were astonished.”* These rabbis were amazed at His knowledge of the Scriptures and His understanding, which surpassed their own.

**2:49** *“I must be about My Father’s business.”* In response to Mary’s rebuke, Jesus declares His lifework—to do the will of the Father. This shows that Jesus knew His unique identity and the plan of the Father for Him. In place of Mary’s statement *“your father,”* Jesus declares His purpose was from *“My Father.”* He declares His Father is God.

**2:51–52** *“He ... was subject to them.”* The Lord Jesus was a model son to Joseph and Mary, even though He had declared that His ultimate responsibility was to His heavenly Father. *“Jesus increased in wisdom and stature.”* Again, this speaks of His normal physical and supernatural spiritual development (Gal. 4:4–5; Heb. 4:14–16; 5:8; 7:26–28).

### LUKE CHAPTER 3

The appearance and ministry of John the Baptist; Jesus is baptized by John; the lineage of Jesus.

#### John Prepares the Way of the Christ

Luke 3:1–20 (Matt. 3:1–12; Mark 1:1–8)

**3:1** *“In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate ... Herod ... Philip ... and Lysanias ... while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests.”* Luke’s attention to detail shows why he is considered to be a first-rate historian and accurate witness (Luke 1:1–4). This time would be approximately 28–29 A.D. Both Annas and Caiaphas, his son-in-law, served as high priests during this time.

**3:2** *“The word of God came to John.”* God had prepared John in the wilderness for his ministry (Luke 1:80). Now God called him to enter into his prophetic ministry (Isa. 40:3–8; Amos 3:7; 1 Pet. 1:24–25).

**3:3** *“Preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”* John’s call to Israel to “repent” would have shocked many, who thought they were saved by virtue of Abraham (Matt. 3:9; John 8:33, 39), or because of circumcision (Acts 15:1–5; Rom. 2:25–29; Gal. 5:1–6), or by keeping the Law (Gal. 3:1–14). The forgiveness of sins was not due to the baptism, but to the repentance leading to baptism. This repentance was not only from sin, but from the *“dead works”* of trying to save themselves by good deeds (Heb. 6:1; 9:14).

**3:4–5** *“Every valley shall be filled and every mountain ... brought low.”* This was John’s graphic way of saying that *“the last will be first”* (Matt. 20:16), or *“whoever exalts himself will be humbled [abased], and he who humbles himself will be exalted”* (Matt. 23:12; Luke.14:11). It is the same truth James and Peter write of in James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5–6.

**3:6** *“All flesh shall see the salvation of God.”* This is taken from Isaiah’s prophecy in Isaiah 52:10. The emphasis is on the saving work of Jesus Christ for all mankind. This is stressed in v. 38 by showing Jesus link to Adam, the father of all mankind.

**3:7–8** *“Brood of vipers!”* Here, John rebukes those leaders who came with the multitudes to hear him, but who had no true interest in the call to repent of their self-assumed goodness. See Matthew 3:7; 12:34; 23:33.

**3:9** *“The axe is laid to the root of the trees.”* Unfruitful trees were cut down, and so the nation of Israel would be destroyed. Remember the fig tree (Matt. 21:18–19; 24:32–35).

**3:10–14** *“What shall we do then?”* John’s rebuke of the religious leaders touched the hearts of the humble people. John shows what real repentance looks like. It is not making a show of one’s past sins, nor weeping and crying to look sincere. It is to demonstrate a humble and genuine care and concern for others, to be honest in our dealings with others, and to show mercy (see Micah 6:8). Repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of behavior.

**3:16–17** *“One mightier than I ... He will thoroughly clean out [purge] His threshing floor.”* This is John’s first mention of Jesus (Matt. 3:11–12; Mark 1:7–8; John 1:26–27). He uses familiar language to illustrate the coming harvest of the saved and judgment of the lost. *“He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit”* (for those who believe, 1 Cor. 12:13) *“and [with] fire”* (for those who do not believe, Matt. 25:41). See Revelation 14:17–20 for another example of this harvest.

**3:19–20** *“Herod the tetrarch ... shut John up in prison.”* John jumps ahead to show the end result of John’s righteousness, that he was persecuted, imprisoned, and finally killed by Herod (Matt. 14:3–5; Mark 6:16–20). See 2 Timothy 2:12 and 3:12.

### **Jesus Is Baptized by John**

Luke 3:21–22 (Matt. 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; John 1:29–34)

**3:21** *“Jesus also was baptized.”* Jesus’ baptism was for entirely different reasons than that of the people. They were baptized to identify with the coming Messiah. He was baptized to identify with a sinful people. Jesus told John that His baptism was necessary *“to fulfill all righteousness”* (Matt. 3:15). It was only right that the Savior identify with a sinful people (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 2:9). But also, it was necessary to fulfill God’s Word to John about identifying the true Messiah (John 1:31–34). Further, His baptism by John, in identifying with sinners, looked forward to His ultimate baptism on the cross (Luke 12:49–50).

**3:22** *“The Holy Spirit descended ... upon Him.”* This symbol was a visual picture of His anointing by the Father to bear the sins of the world (Isa. 42:1–4, 6–7; Luke 4:16–19; Acts 10:38).

## The Lineage of Jesus Christ

Luke 3:23–38 (Gen. 5:1–32; 11:10–26; Ruth 4:18–22; Matt. 1:1–16)

**3:23** “*Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age.*” Luke links Jesus’ baptism and the beginning of His public ministry. He traces His lineage back to Adam (v. 38) and links this with His temptations in the wilderness (Luke 4:1–13) to show that where the first Adam failed when tempted by the devil, Jesus—the second or last Adam—was victorious (Rom. 5:12–21; 1 Cor. 15:20–28, 45–49). “*(As was supposed) the son of Joseph, the son of Heli.*” Though people assumed Jesus was Joseph’s son, He was virgin-born and, thus while being “*the son of Adam,*” He was truly “*the Son of God*” (Luke 3:38). In Matthew, Joseph is said to be the son of Jacob (Matt. 1:16). Here he is called “*the son of Heli.*” In fact, he was born of Jacob, but became a “*son of Heli*” (Mary’s father) by marriage (in other words, his son-in-law). Matthew follows Jesus’ lineage through Joseph, his legal father. Luke follows His lineage through Mary, His true physical line.

**3:38** “*The son of Adam, the son of God.*” By linking Jesus to Adam, Luke magnifies the victory of Jesus over the failure of Adam, but also shows that His victory on the cross was for all the descendants of Adam (Rom. 5:12–21; 1 Cor. 15:21–22; 2 Cor. 5:19–21; Heb. 2:9).

## LUKE CHAPTER 4

Jesus is tempted by the devil; His ministry in Galilee; His ministry in Capernaum.

### The Temptation of Jesus by the Devil

Luke 4:1–13 (Matt. 4:1–11; Mark 1:12–13)

**4:1** “*Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit.*” Luke emphasizes the working of the Holy Spirit in the life and ministry of Jesus. There is a progression here that all believers should consider. First, Jesus is anointed by the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:22). Next, He is filled by the Spirit and led by the Spirit (Luke 4:1). Following His victory in the face of temptations, He “*returned in the power of the Spirit*” (Luke 4:14). He then gives credit to the Spirit for the power of His ministry (Luke 4:18–19). Every believer should meditate on the significance of these stages in the Lord’s ministry, as a model for our own.

**4:2** “*Being tempted for forty days.*” The temptations recorded here are only the final temptations of the forty-day trial.

**4:3** “*If You are the Son of God.*” The devil knew that Jesus was indeed the Son of God. But as with Adam in the Garden, he sought to cast doubt on the plan and purpose of God. “*Command this stone to become bread.*” This was something Jesus, as Creator (John 1:1–3) had the power to do. This would not be a temptation for us since we could not do it.

**4:4** “*It is written.*” Here, Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:3 to show that God’s Word is food for our souls, and it is far more important than physical bread. Jesus defeated the devil’s deceptions by referring to the truth of God’s Word.

**4:7** “*If You will worship before me, all will be Yours.*” The devil offers Jesus a crown without the cross. Jesus knew that exaltation from God required submission to His plan (Phil. 2:5–11).

**4:8** “*You shall worship the LORD your God.*” Jesus again quotes Deuteronomy (6:13). By simply citing clear and simple Scriptures and committing to obey them, Jesus defeated the devil.

**4:9–11** “*For it is written.*” Now the devil quotes from Psalm 91:11–12, showing that he knows what the Word of God says, but also that in his deceitful way, he will try to use it even to deceive the Lord Himself.

**4:12** *“You shall not tempt the LORD your God.”* This quote, from Deuteronomy 6:16, reveals two great truths. First, the Lord Jesus would not tempt the Father by casting Himself down from the Temple. Second, it was a rebuke to the devil, who was tempting the Lord God, in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is also a reminder of Israel’s failure to enter into the land due to tempting the Lord God (Exod. 17:1–7; Heb. 3:7–19).

**4:13** *“The devil ... departed ... until an opportune time.”* That time would occur in the Garden of Gethsemane.

### **Jesus’ Galilean Ministry**

Luke 4:14–30 (Matt. 4:12–17; 13:53–58; Mark 1:14–15; 6:1–6)

**4:14** *“Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit.”* The Word of God declares that spiritual power comes from fasting/self-denial, testing, and victory (Luke 9:23; Rom. 5:3–5; 8:37; James 1:2). We build spiritual strength in much the same way we build physical strength. Paul showed that discipline, endurance, and overcoming are the keys to spiritual victory (1 Cor. 9:24–27).

**4:16** *“As His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath.”* Jesus was faithful to gather with others in the synagogue for the reading and exposition of the Word of God. *“Stood up to read.”* It was customary for any male Jew to have the privilege of reading a portion from God’s Word.

**4:18–19** *“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me.”* Jesus opened the scroll of Isaiah to what we know as chapter 61:1–2a. In this prophecy, the Holy Spirit is seen as His power, the preaching of the good news is His mission, and the healing of the brokenhearted, deliverance of captives, and giving sight to the blind are the sure signs of His true identity and power. Jesus ended in the middle of verse two, because He came the first time to proclaim the *“acceptable year of the Lord”* (see 2 Cor. 6:1–2). It would not be *“the day of vengeance of our God”* (Isa. 61:2b) until His Second Coming.

**4:21** *“Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”* Jesus was declaring Himself to be the One about whom Isaiah spoke. At first, this was not clear to His listeners.

**4:23** *“Physician, heal yourself.”* Although the people initially spoke well of Him (v. 22), Jesus anticipated their final rejection of Him. At the cross, the leaders said essentially this very thing (see Matt. 27:40–43; Mark 15:29–32; Luke 23:35–37).

**4:24–27** *“In the days of Elijah ... Elisha.”* By referring to these stories from their past, the people now understood that He was saying that they would reject Him, just as their ancestors had rejected the prophets (Matt. 23:29–33; Acts 7:51–53). In the days of Elijah and Elisha, it was often the Gentiles—not the Jews—who received God’s Word (see 1 Kings 17:8–24; 2 Kings 5:1–19).

**4:28–30** *“They ... were filled with wrath.”* Remember that Simeon had prophesied that Jesus Christ was *“a sign which will be spoken against ... that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed”* (Luke 2:34–35). Here, at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, we see his words being fulfilled. The unbelief of the people led them to a murderous attempt to kill Jesus. Outside the mountain village of Nazareth, there is a steep drop of about two thousand feet. This is where they took Him. But it was not His time, and so *“He went His way.”*

### **Jesus’ Ministry in Capernaum**

Luke 4:31–44 (Matt. 8:14–17; Mark 1:21–39)

**4:32** *“They were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority.”* No one could teach with the authority of Jesus, because He is both the Author of the Bible, and also the Living Word (Matt. 7:29; 21:23–24; Mark 1:21–22; John 1:1–4, 14).



**4:34** *“Let us alone ... Jesus of Nazareth ... the Holy One of God.”* The demon knew who Jesus was and that He had indeed come to destroy them by defeating their king, the devil—thus destroying their kingdom (Psalm 2:1–12; 110:1–7; Rev. 20:7–15).

**4:35** *“Be quiet, and come out of him.”* By speaking His word, Jesus shows that He has power over the kingdom of darkness.

**4:36–37** *“What a word this is! For with authority and power He commands ... and the report about Him went out into every place.”* The emphasis here is on the power and authority of Jesus’ words. Just as He spoke the world into existence (Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 29, Psalm 102:25; John 1:3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2, 10), even so His word has authority over all evil powers, and even nature (Matt. 8:26; Luke 8:24). We have His word in the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 4:12), but do we believe it, and use it to overcome the devil’s attacks against us (Eph. 6:10–18)?

**4:38** *“Simon’s house.”* This was apparently where Jesus and the disciples stayed while in Capernaum. *“Simon’s wife’s mother.”* Simon Peter was one of the disciples who was married. *“He ... rebuked the fever.”* Again, the power is in His word alone.

**4:39** *“Immediately she arose and served them.”* God delivers us and heals us so that we might be useful in His service. Even in our affliction, we are to serve Him (1 Cor. 4:11–13; 2 Cor. 1:3–11; 4:5–15).

**4:40–41** *“He laid His hands on every one of them.”* Jesus showed no partiality to anyone. Instead of merely speaking the word, He touched them—perhaps to show His love and compassion for them. *“You are the Christ, the Son of God!”* Again, the demons showed that they knew His true identity.

**4:42** *“Now when it was day.”* Jesus may have been healing people throughout the night. *“He departed and went into a deserted place.”* This was no doubt to gain strength from prayer and fellowship with the Father (Mark 1:35).

**4:43** *“I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also.”* Jesus’ mission was not to become popular in only one place. He came for all mankind. No one people or place can claim ownership of Jesus. He belongs to all who will receive Him by faith. The *“kingdom”* referred to here is Jesus’ reign over Israel from the throne of David (2 Sam. 7:12–13) and ultimately over all the kingdoms of Earth (Psalm 2:1–12; 110:1–7; Rev. 19:11–16).

## **LUKE CHAPTER 5**

Jesus calls His disciples; heals a leper and a paralytic; calls Matthew; is questioned about fasting.

### **Four Fishermen Called to Be Disciples**

Luke 5:1–11 (Matt. 4:18–22; Mark 1:16–20)

**5:1** *“As the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God.”* Unlike the religious leaders in Jerusalem, these people, who were poor, loved to hear Jesus teach. *“The Lake of Gennesaret.”* This lake is commonly known as the Sea of Galilee.

**5:3** *“Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon’s.”* Jesus used this setting both to teach the people and to call His first four disciples.

**5:4–5** *“Let down your nets for a catch.”* This was a test of Simon Peter’s faith. He and the others had fished all night with no catch. *“Master ... at Your word I will let down the net.”* Peter responds with faith to the word of Jesus. This is the only way to please God (Psalm 33:9; John 21:3–6; Heb. 11:6).

**5:6** *“They caught a great number of fish.”* The Lord was teaching them that success, whether in fishing or in evangelism, demanded obedience to His Word and guidance.

**5:8** *“Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!”* The power and authority of Jesus convinces Peter of His deity and convicts him of his own sinfulness. God’s Word will always have the same effect on those who respond in humility and faith (2 Tim. 3:16–17; Heb. 4:12–13).

**5:10** *“Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.”* Sinners who come to Christ in faith have no need to fear His judgment. God uses sinful men to reach other sinful men (Matt. 4:19). It is not our sinfulness—but lack of faith—that will hinder our ministry (see v. 24).

**5:11** *“They forsook all and followed Him.”* Following Christ is the priority of the disciple. Later, Jesus would clearly define the demands of discipleship (Luke 9:23–26; 14:33).

### **Jesus Displays His Power to Heal**

Luke 5:12–26 (Matt. 8:1–17, 8:28–9:8; Mark 1:40–2:12)

**5:12–13** *“Lord, if You are willing ... I am willing; be cleansed.”* Leprosy was a picture of the effects of sin. Lepers were considered unclean, and whoever touched one was ceremonially unclean. But Jesus, the Creator, touched him and healed him. This shows both the power, but also the compassion of the Lord. He who can cleanse leprosy can also wash away our sins. *“Show yourself to the priest.”* Jesus was obedient to the Law (Lev. 13:1–3; see also Leviticus 14), but also commanded this *“as a testimony to them.”* The religious leaders had no excuse for rejecting Jesus Christ.

**5:16** *“He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.”* The Gospels clearly present Jesus’ prayer life as the secret to His power (Matt. 14:23; Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12; 9:10, 18).

**5:17** *“Pharisees.”* They numbered about 6,000 in Israel and sought to follow the Law diligently, but too often elevated past rabbinical tradition over Moses (Matt. 15:3–9; Mark 7:6–13). The *“teachers of the law.”* Also known as scribes, these were considered to be experts in the Law of Moses and were often called lawyers. The true scribe is pictured by Ezra (Ezra 7:10).

**5:20** *“Man, your sins are forgiven you.”* Jesus proclaimed this man forgiven on the basis of faith alone! There was nothing this man or his friends could do to help him. In the same way, salvation is always by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone (John 3:16, 18, 36; Rom. 11:6; Eph. 2:8).

**5:21** *“Who can forgive sins but God alone?”* The Pharisees were correct in saying this. The problem was that, since Jesus proved His power to forgive sin by healing the man, they should have concluded He was God in the flesh. Instead, they charged Him with speaking *“blasphemies,”* which was to dishonor God (Matt. 9:3; Mark 2:6–7; Luke 22:70–71; John 10:33), and carried a penalty of death (see Lev. 24:10–23).

**5:23–24** *“Which is easier.”* Only God can forgive sin, and only God could heal by His command. Jesus wants these leaders to understand His true identity and power as the Son of God (see Luke 7:14). The term *“Son of Man”* is an Old Testament title for the Messiah, who had to be both God and man (Dan. 7:13–14; Luke 21:27; 22:69).

### **The Call of Matthew/Levi to Discipleship**

Luke 5:27–32 (Matt. 9:9–13; Mark 2:13–17)

**5:27** *“A tax collector named Levi.”* Levi is the disciple Matthew. Tax collectors were despised as collaborators with Rome and were usually lumped together with publicans and sinners (vv. 29–30). *“Follow Me.”* This was, and still is, Jesus’ typical call to discipleship.

**5:29** “*Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house.*” The Gospel of Luke records many feasts that Jesus attended (Luke 7:36–50; 9:10–17; 10:38–42; 11:37–54; 14:1–24; 22:14–38; 24:28–32, 41–43). Luke shows us the joy of the Lord in gathering with believers around the table. The first event in His future kingdom will be the wedding feast (Matt. 26:29).

**5:30** “*Why do You eat and drink ... with sinners?*” By the man-made rules of the Pharisees, if you ate with sinners, you became defiled. The Pharisees did not recognize their own sinfulness. Jesus came “*to seek and to save that which was lost*” (Luke 19:10; see also Luke 15:1–10).

**5:31–32** “*I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.*” Jesus could only reach and forgive those who confessed that they were sinners. Since the Pharisees thought they were pure, He could not reach them with the Gospel (1 Tim. 1:15).

### **Jesus Questioned About Fasting**

Luke 5:33–39 (Matt. 9:14–17; Mark 2:18–22)

**5:33** “*Why do the disciples of John fast ... likewise ... the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?*” The Pharisees usually fasted twice a week (Luke 18:12). By contrast, to them it seemed that Jesus and the disciples were always feasting (see note above in Luke 5:29). Because Jesus was the fulfillment of all the Jewish feasts (see Leviticus 23), it was only right for them to feast in His presence. In another passage, Jesus shows the evil of the Pharisees, who hated John because he fasted and hated Jesus because He feasted (Luke 7:31–35).

**5:34–35** “*Can ... the friends of the bridegroom fast?*” Here, Jesus used a figure which was first introduced by John the Baptist. It pictures the Old Testament saints (before the Church Age) as the friends who accompany the bridegroom to the wedding (John 3:29). The time of the wedding was a joyous occasion—not a time to be fasting. Since Jesus—the Bridegroom—had come, it was only right that they celebrate. The prophets pictured the Messianic Age as a wedding (Isa. 54:5–6; 62:4–5; Jer. 2:2; Ezekiel 16; Hos. 2:14–23).

**5:36–39** “*No one puts new wine into old wineskins.*” Jesus used the figure of repairing an old garment and using old wineskins to show that the Old Covenant was giving way to the New Covenant, but these Pharisees were unable to enter into the new because of their unbelief (Jer. 31:31–34; 2 Cor. 3:4–18; Heb. 8:1–13). “*Both are preserved.*” The coming of the New Covenant was not designed to destroy what had gone before, but to fulfill it in its true purpose—to point men to Christ (Rom. 3:27–31; Gal. 3:19–26).

## **LUKE CHAPTER 6**

Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath; He chooses the twelve; healing the multitude; the Beatitudes and Sermon on the Mount.

### **Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath**

Luke 6:1–11 (Matt. 12:1–14; Mark 2:23–3:6)

**6:1** “*On the second Sabbath.*” The Sabbaths were numbered from the first Sabbath on Passover, so this would be the second Sabbath after Passover. Jesus chose the Sabbath day for many of His miracles to provoke the religious leaders’ opposition.

**6:2** “*Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?*” These Pharisees considered the disciples’ actions to be equal to harvesting, based on the many regulations given by the rabbis for the Sabbath that were not a part of Moses’ Law. The disciples were actually taking advantage of a provision in the Law for the poor (Lev. 19:9–10; Deut. 23:24–25). Jesus declared in another passage that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27).

**6:3–5 “What David did.”** Jesus uses the story found in 1 Samuel 21:1–6. Jesus declares that David was blameless in doing this, and God did not punish him for it. His main point is that their need was more important than rules and regulations. **“The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”** Jesus claims to be the Author of the Sabbath; His second claim is to be equal to God (Luke 5:21–24; see Matt. 12:8).

**6:6 “On another Sabbath.”** Luke especially focuses on Jesus’ good deeds on the Sabbath, in contrast to the legalistic attitude of the religious leaders.

**6:9 “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil?”** Jesus declares that doing good on the Sabbath cannot be condemned, and that to be able to do good and not to do it, is to do evil (see Matt. 12:11; Luke 13:16; James 4:17).

**6:11 “But they were filled with rage.”** The response of the Pharisees is based on Jesus’ blatant violation of their self-assumed authority and petty rules and regulations. We see the same attitudes in many churches today.

### **Jesus Chooses the Twelve Apostles**

Luke 6:12–16 (Matt. 10:1–4; Mark 3:13–19)

**6:12 “He went out to the mountain to pray.”** Again, private prayer and the ministry of the Holy Spirit, were the secrets to Jesus’ power and victory (Mark 1:35; Luke 3:21; 5:16; 9:18; 11:1; 18:1; 22:41–42).

**6:13–16 “He chose twelve whom He also named apostles.”** The word “apostle” is an ancient word, used of one who is “sent forth with authority.” It was originally used of ambassadors and Greek naval commanders. Here, are some highlights on the apostles:

1. They were chosen from among His disciples. A “disciple” is both a learner and a follower. These men had already proven their dedication to Jesus.
2. His disciples were chosen from among common, working men (Matt. 4:18–22; Mark 1:16–20; Luke 5:2–10; John 1:35–51).
3. Jesus chose them to be near Him in all He did (Mark 3:14), and that He might send them out with power (Matt. 10:1–5; Mark 3:15).
4. As apostles, they were to represent Jesus to the world—ambassadors of the kingdom of Heaven (2 Cor. 5:19–21; Phil. 3:20).
5. They were from different walks of life. Matthew was a tax collector and Simon (not Peter) was a zealot (Luke 6:15). Only the love of Christ could hold these men together.

### **The Beatitudes and Sermon on the Mount**

Luke 6:17–49 (Matthew 5–7)

**6:17–19 “A great multitude ... the whole multitude sought to touch Him.”** This was the greatest crowd Jesus had drawn. From the south and from the north, people came **“to hear Him”** and **“the whole multitude sought to touch Him.”** It was at this critical point that Jesus gave what is called “the Sermon on the Mount.” There are differences between Matthew’s and Luke’s versions, which suggest that Jesus may have given this message more than once.

**6:20 “Blessed are you poor.”** In Matthew 5:3, we read *“poor in spirit.”* The word *“poor”* used here speaks of one who is totally impoverished. They have nothing to offer. He is saying that those who come to Him with no good works to commend them, who can only receive His grace by faith, are the ones who are truly blessed. The word *“blessed”* speaks of those who share the happiness of God.

**6:20–22 “Blessed are you poor ... who hunger ... who weep ... when men hate you.”** Jesus’ message here is revolutionary. He is explaining what He means when He says, *“The last shall be first, and the first shall be last”*

(Matt. 19:30). He is showing the contrast between those who seek the comfort of this world and those who seek commitment to Him by faith.

**6:22** *“For the Son of Man’s sake.”* This means that people are not blessed just because they are poor, or hungry, or weeping. But that these afflictions have brought them to Jesus Christ in humble faith. Most people come to Christ in faith because of sufferings (Rom. 8:18; Acts 14:22; 2 Cor. 4:17).

**6:23** *“Indeed your reward is great in heaven.”* There is only one way to lay up treasure in Heaven (Matt. 6:19–20) and that is to live by faith (see James 1:2, 12; 1 Pet. 1:3–5).

**6:24–26** *“But woe to you who are rich ... who are full ... who laugh now.”* Jesus is not saying these things are evil, but that those who have them without faith are cursed. Remember the rich young ruler (Matt. 19:16–22; Mark 10:17–27). All that is in this world is passing away (1 John 2:15–17). To be rich without faith is to have eternal poverty! The word “*woe*” was only used by Jesus for those who rejected Him (Matt. 23:13–29).

**6:27–28** *“Love your enemies ... bless those who curse you.”* This conduct is a reflection of the life that Christ lived. Jesus and Paul both declared that the love of God was the essence of the spiritual life (Matt. 22:36–40; Rom. 13:8–10). This is a love that only the Holy Spirit can produce in us (1 Cor. 13:4–8; Gal. 5:22–23).

**6:29–30** *“Offer the other [cheek] also.”* This verse has been misinterpreted to declare that Christianity is equal to pacifism. Jesus was not a pacifist! He is declaring the need to be patient, enduring, and non-retaliatory to those who persecute us (Deut. 15:7–8; Prov. 3:27; 1 Cor. 6:7).

**6:31** *“As you want men to do to you.”* This is often called the “golden rule.” This is an active and positive expression of the command to love our neighbor (Lev. 19:18).

**6:32–34** *“What credit is that to you?”* The love of Christ that we are to be moved by (2 Cor. 5:14) is totally contrary to natural human love, which is selfish and self-serving.

**6:35** *“You will be sons of the Most High.”* In ancient Israel, to be a “son of” someone meant that you reflected their character and conduct. Jesus is not saying that we are saved by acting in this way, but rather that those who are saved should act in this way.

**6:36–37** *“Be merciful, just as your Father.”* Again, this conduct reflects the character of God Himself. *“Judge not ... forgive.”* The practical expression of mercy is to forgive others and not to judge them (Matt. 6:14–15; 7:1–5).

**6:38** *“With the same measure you use.”* God will deal with us as we deal with others. Those who are gracious and merciful will receive the same treatment by God (James 2:8–13).

**6:39** *“Can the blind lead the blind?”* Just as a blind man cannot lead another blind man, so those who are spiritually blind, like the leaders in Israel, cannot lead others to spiritual truth. Since He uses this to introduce instructions to the disciples, He was warning them against both arrogance and ignorance of His Word.

**6:40** *“Perfectly trained.”* This does not refer to sinlessness, but rather to a mature understanding of God’s Word. We cannot lead others beyond what we know and do (Ezra 7:10).

**6:41–44** *“Why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye?”* In these verses, Jesus is warning the disciples against destructive attitudes and actions that can destroy one’s spiritual life and ministry:

1. In vv. 41–42, He warns against ignoring our own faults while we magnify those of others. **“Let me remove the speck that is in your eye.”** We can never help others with the faults in their lives if we are blind to our own (Matt. 7:3–5).
2. In vv. 43–44, He declares that one’s conduct is a true indicator of the condition of the heart. **“Every tree is known by its own fruit”** (Matt. 7:15–20; James 3:12).
3. In v. 45, He ends by saying **“Out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”** This warning about the tongue is often found in Scripture (Matt. 12:33–37; Rom. 3:13–14; James 3:1–12).

**6:46–49** **“Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say? Whoever ... hears My sayings and does them.”** To call God “Father,” or to call Jesus “Lord,” demands that we obey them (Mal. 1:6; John 14:21). Many call Jesus “Lord,” but they do not really believe in Him (Matt. 7:21–23). Those who have faith in Jesus’ Word and act on it can withstand any storm or trial in life. **“He who heard and did nothing.”** **“Without faith it is impossible to please God”** (Heb. 11:6). The whole book of James is dedicated to teaching us to be **“doers of the word, and not hearers only”** (James 1:22–25). **“And the ruin of that house was great.”** With these words, Jesus anticipates the fall of the house of Israel due to their unbelief (Matt. 23:37–39; Luke 13:34–35; 19:41–44).

## **LUKE CHAPTER 7**

Jesus heals; raises the dead; responds to John’s question; forgives a sinful woman.

### **A Soldier’s Faith Rewarded and a Mother’s Grief Removed**

Luke 7:1–17 (Matt. 8:5–13)

**7:2** **“A certain centurion’s servant.”** The Roman army was essentially run by centurions. The historian, Polybius, said of them, **“They must be steady in action ... ready to hold their ground and die at their posts.”** Every time they are spoken of in the New Testament, they are spoken well of (Luke 23:47; Acts 10:22; 22:26; 23:17–24; 24:23; 27:43). **“Who was dear to him.”** The first unique thing about this soldier is that he loved his Jewish servant.

**7:5** **“He loves our nation.”** This centurion may have been a proselyte or may have simply come to believe in the God of Israel. This is the second unique fact about this man.

**7:6** **“Lord ... I am not worthy.”** The third thing about this soldier is that he was humble. The Jewish leaders said he was worthy; he said that he was not. Humility is the key to coming to faith in Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 5:5–6).

**7:7** **“But say the word.”** The fourth quality of this man is his great faith. He knows that Jesus can simply speak, and the servant will be healed (Psalm 33:9; 107:20).

**7:8** **“For I also am a man placed under authority.”** The fifth thing is his understanding of authority. He knows that he is under the authority of Rome, and he exercises that authority over his soldiers. Jesus was under the authority of God the Father. Therefore, He could speak with the authority of Heaven, and it would be done.

**7:9** **“When Jesus heard these things He marveled.”** Jesus only marveled twice: here at the faith of this centurion (Matt. 8:10), and in Mark 6:6 at the unbelief of His own people. **“I have not found such great faith.”** Though the Jewish nation was to be a light to the Gentiles, here is a Gentile who shows more light and faith than the entire nation. At this time, not even the disciples had faith like this man.

**7:10** **“And those who were sent ... found the servant well.”** Remember that Luke was a physician (Col. 4:14). The word **“well”** here is a medical term for one in good health.

**7:12** *“A dead man ... the only son of his mother.”* It is interesting that Nain was near to Shunem, where Elijah raised the widow’s son (2 Kings 4:18–37).

**7:13** *“He had compassion on her.”* Jesus, who came to take away the curse of sin, always had compassion on those suffering from sin’s effects (Matt. 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34; Mark 1:41; 8:2). *“Do not weep.”* His mission to Earth was not only to bring salvation, but also *“to heal the brokenhearted ... to console [comfort] those who mourn ... to give them beauty for ashes ... the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness”* (Isa. 61:1–3).

**7:14–15** *“Young man ... arise ... he who was dead sat up.”* Jesus is recorded as raising three people from the dead (Mark 5:41; John 11:44). However, there were probably many more (see John 21:25; Matt. 27:52–53).

### **Jesus Responds to the Messengers of John**

Luke 7:18–35 (Matt. 11:1–19)

**7:19** *“Are You the Coming One?”* John, now in prison (Luke 3:19–20), had declared that the Messiah would purge the nation and judge wickedness (Matt. 3:11–12). When this did not happen, John began to doubt. Like the rest of the nation, John did not know about Christ’s two advents—the first, to save, and the second, to judge (Rev. 19:7–21).

**7:21–23** *“And that very hour He cured many.”* Jesus answered John’s question by mighty deeds of healing. John knew the Scriptures, and these works certified that Jesus was the promised Messiah/Savior (Isa. 29:18–19; 35:5–6; 61:1–3).

**7:24** *“What did you go out ... to see?”* Jesus emphasizes the unique character and mission of John by first showing what he was not. He was not just a passing spectacle. Sometimes in the desert, the wind will blow and cause a reed to shake and make a sound like a voice. John also was not one who lived a life of comfort, but rather lived a harsh life in the desert. He was *“more than a prophet.”* No other prophet in all of history had a mission as important and unique as John’s.

**7:27** *“Behold, I send My messenger before Your face.”* Jesus quotes Malachi 3:1 to identify John as His forerunner (see also Isa. 40:1–8). This was also a clear declaration to the crowd that He was Himself the true Messiah.

**7:28** *“He who is least in the kingdom of God.”* John was great (Luke 1:15), but he was the prophet of the end of an age, and Jesus was the beginning of another. Those who believe in Jesus Christ in the Church Age are placed in Christ and seated with Him in Heaven spiritually (Eph. 1:1–14; Col. 3:1–4). Believers of this age will judge angels (1 Cor. 6:3).

**7:29** *“Even the tax collectors justified God.”* The word *“justified”* means that they declared Him to be right, just, and fair. They had repented (Luke 3:3) and been baptized by John (Luke 3:12), but the Pharisees and lawyers (scribes) had rejected John’s message.

**7:31–34** *“The men of this generation ... are like children.”* The children in the marketplace would play games. If one said, “let’s play wedding feast, and I will play the flute,” but the other children will not dance. Then they say, “Then let’s play funeral, and you can mourn,” but the other children will not play along. In the same way, when John came in fasting and hardship (like mourning), the Pharisees said, *“he has a demon.”* Then Jesus came eating and drinking (like a celebration), and they called Him a glutton and drunkard. The religious leaders rejected the truth, no matter who the messenger was.

**7:35** *“Wisdom is justified by all her children.”* Jesus declares that those who respond to the truth with faith, whether they mourn or rejoice, show true wisdom. They are children of wisdom, and their faith proves that it is true.

## A Sinful Woman Forgiven Luke 7:36–50

**7:37** *“A woman ... who was a sinner.”* We know from John 11:2 that this was Mary. *“Brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil.”* Both the flask and the oil were very expensive, showing the love of this woman for the Lord. At times, when a prominent guest was asked to dine, it was customary for many people to enter and sit around the outside of the room or courtyard to listen to the conversation.

**7:38** *“She began to wash His feet ... and wiped them with the hair of her head.”* In Israel, it was considered shameful for a grown woman to appear in public with her hair down. Paul tells us that a woman’s hair is her *“glory”* (1 Cor. 11:15). This woman was showing her repentance, her shame and humiliation, and her love for Jesus—all at the same time.

**7:39** *“This Man, if He were a prophet, would know ... for she is a sinner.”* In the mind of Simon, the fact that Jesus let the woman touch Him proved that He was not a prophet (see Luke 15:2). Jesus surprises Simon by answering his thoughts!

**7:41** *“Five hundred denarii.”* A denarius was one day’s wage. Jesus is comparing sin to a debt that we could never pay.

**7:42** *“He freely forgave them both.”* In the analogy here, it is like God forgiving men, whose sins differ in amount and degree, but all who receive Christ are forgiven alike.

**7:43** *“I suppose the one whom he forgave more.”* The Pharisee answers correctly and, therefore, condemns himself for his self-righteous attitude. *“You have rightly judged.”* Many people who can see the truth in practical daily terms still cannot understand or accept it when it comes in spiritual terms.

**7:44–46** *“You gave Me no water ... you gave Me no kiss ... You did not anoint My head.”* During Jesus’ day, these three practices were the common way to greet a guest. Simon had rudely neglected to do these, possibly as a way of showing his contempt for Jesus.

**7:47** *“Her sins, which are many, are forgiven.”* Jesus now applies His own parable to the situation. Because her sins are many, her debt was a great one, but Jesus forgave it all. And because of this, her love was great. Remember that the Pharisees attacked Jesus for forgiving sins (Mark 2:7; Luke 5:21).

**7:48–50** *“Your sins are forgiven ... Your faith has saved you.”* When Jesus forgives the sins of those who believe in Him, He forgives them all (Psalm 103:3–4; Rom. 4:6–8). The woman was eternally saved by her simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. *“Go in peace.”* If we seek salvation by works, we will never know peace, and we will never be forgiven. Only complete trust in Jesus’ work on the cross and His power to save, can bring peace to our troubled souls (John 14:27; Acts 10:36; Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:8–9; Phil. 4:7; 2 Pet. 1:2).

## **LUKE CHAPTER 8**

Jesus’ supporters; parables and miracles; Jesus’ true family—His disciples.

### A Band of Faithful Women Luke 8:1–3

**8:1** *“He went through every city and village.”* This extended tour continued His mission announced in Luke 4:43. Everywhere, He was *“bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God.”* Jesus had begun by teaching in the synagogues (Luke 4:16, 20, 28, 33, 38; 6:6), but now, due to the opposition of the religious leaders, the synagogues



were closed to Him. The “*glad tidings*” indicate that entrance into His kingdom is always by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8; James 2:5).

**8:2–3** “*Certain women ... and many others who provided for Him.*” This band of women were faithful to travel with Him and support Him from their means. “*Mary*” from the village of Magdala, had been delivered from demon possession. “*Joanna*” as the wife of Herod’s steward, was undoubtedly wealthy. We do not know anything more about “*Susanna.*” What an encouragement this little band must have been to Jesus.

### **Jesus Teaches in Parables**

Luke 8:4–18 (Matt. 13:1–23; Mark 4:1–25)

**8:4–8** “*A sower went out to sow.*” Parables were a way of teaching people spiritual truths using common daily observations. To this large crowd (v. 1), Jesus declares that there are four common responses to His Word. Like the sower, whose seed is falling on various types of soil (souls): some are hardened, some are shallow, and some are entangled in this world. These hearers do not bring forth fruit. But the good soil is the goal of the sower, for it brings forth fruit to various degrees. It is fruit that the sower is seeking (see notes on Mark 4:1–9).

**8:9–10** “*To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God.*” Jesus introduces the idea of “mystery” doctrines, that is, truths that had not been revealed before, but now were made known (Eph. 3:1–6). These new doctrines would primarily relate to the coming Church Age (Rom. 16:25–27; Eph. 1:7–10). These truths were for the disciples to learn, but not for those whose hearts were hardened. Like those who assumed they were righteous and, therefore, did not need to repent (Matt. 9:13; Mark 1:4), those who claimed to see spiritually, in reality, could not comprehend their meaning (John 9:40–41).

**8:11–15** “*Now the parable is this.*” Jesus explains the parable’s meaning to the disciples. Those who hear with hardened hearts make it easy for the devil to snatch away what they heard, Jesus says, “*lest they should believe and be saved.*” This is the only one of the four soils that He indicates fully rejects God’s Word. Those representing the shallow soil “*receive the word with joy.*” They have believed the Gospel but fall away in time of temptation (John 6:60–66). The thorny ground does not “*bring ... fruit to maturity.*” This suggests that there is fruit, but that it is choked out by the “*pleasures of life.*” Finally, the good soil represents those who do three things: First, they “*heard the word with a noble and good heart,*” Next, they “*keep it*” (guard it), and finally “*bear fruit with patience.*” This fruitfulness should be the goal of every believer in Christ.

**8:16–18** “*No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it.*” God’s Word is spiritual light, and believers are like lamps. The light of truth should shine from us out to the world (Matt. 5:14, 16; John 3:21; 1 Cor. 4:5; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 5:8; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 John 1:7). Because of the light of God’s Word, everything hidden in the darkness will be revealed. Therefore, every believer must “*take heed how you hear.*” We are to be “*doers of the word, and not hearers only*” (James 1:22). If by humility and faith we gain insight from God’s Word, “*more will be given.*” But if we fall away from/reject what we hear from God’s Word, it will be “*taken from [us],*” and we will lose precious spiritual treasure and the opportunity to use it for God’s kingdom (see 2 Pet. 2:21).

### **Faithful Disciples are Jesus’ True Family**

Luke 8:19–21 (Matt. 12:46–50; Mark 3:31–35)

**8:19–21** “*My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.*” Jesus’ half-brothers did not yet believe in Him (John 7:1–10). These words are a rebuke to them for their unbelief. Jesus often taught that faith and obedience to His Word brings us into a deeper and more intimate relationship with Him (John 14:15, 21–23; 15:1–11).

**Jesus Displays His Authority over Nature**  
Luke 8:22–25 (Matt. 8:23–27; Mark 4:35–41)

**8:22–25** *“Let us cross over to the other side.”* This declared intention was just as much the Word of God as anything Jesus said. His intention was to go to the other side. In the storm, the disciples doubted His ability to fulfill His word. Jesus, no doubt exhausted by His labors in ministry, is asleep. *“Master, we are perishing”* is the expression of their fear, doubt, and unbelief. *“He arose and rebuked the wind.”* Jesus does what only God can do (Luke 5:20–21; 6:5; 7:11–15, 48–50). *“Where is your faith?”* They failed to trust in Him who is the focus of all true faith. Fear and faith cannot co-exist in the human soul. One or the other will dominate and prevail.

**Jesus Delivers a Demon-Possessed Man**  
Luke 8:26–39 (Matt. 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–20)

**8:26–27** *“There met Him a certain man ... who had demons.”* See the story in Matthew 8:28–34 and Mark 5:1–17. In Matthew, two demon-possessed men are mentioned. Mark and Luke focus on the one who believed.

**8:28** *“Jesus, Son of the Most High God.”* In v. 25, the disciples asked, *“Who can this be?”* Here, the true answer is given. The demon-possessed man in Luke 4:34 also identified Him. See also the angel’s announcement in Luke 1:31–32. *“I beg You, do not torment me!”* These demons knew their ultimate punishment (Matt. 25:41).

**8:29** *“He ... was driven by the demon into the wilderness.”* Compare this with Mark 5:1–17. Demon-possessed people often display super-human strength, have violent tendencies, and self-destructive ways. They display a deep anguish and desire for death.

**8:30** *“What is your name ... Legion.”* A Roman legion was 6,000 soldiers. This poor man was possessed by an army of demons.

**8:31** *“Into the abyss.”* This is where the angels of the Genesis 6 revolt are held. In 2 Pet. 2:4, the word *“hell”* is *Tartarus*—which is the same as *“the abyss.”* Here, Satan will be bound for the one-thousand-year (Millennial) kingdom reign of Christ (Rev. 20:1–3).

**8:33** *“The swine ... ran violently ... into the lake.”* It appears that demons can possess animals, but that possession also drives the animals crazy.

**8:34–38** *“When those who fed them saw ... they fled.”* The reactions to Jesus’ deliverance of this man are amazing. The swine-herders fled and reported the matter. The people of the city go out to see what happened. They are terrified when they see the demon-possessed man *“sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind.”* They then beg Jesus *“to depart from them.”* They are more at home with demon-possessed men than with Jesus! Yet the restored man *“begged Him that he might be with Him.”* Jesus, however, sent him to be a witness to his own home and the surrounding region.

**8:39** *“[Tell] what great things God [has] done for you.”* This is the essence of Christian witness. When we tell what Jesus Christ has done for us, we are giving glory to God the Father for His mercy upon us.

**Healing Jairus’ Daughter; Restores a Suffering Woman**  
Luke 8:40–56 (Matt. 9:18–26; Mark 5:21–43)

**8:41** *“A man named Jairus ... a ruler of the synagogue.”* This man was the chief elder of the synagogue. He would conduct the service, much like a pastor will do today. His daughter was dying, thus *“he ... begged Him to come”* as the matter was urgent.

**8:43** *“A flow of blood ... could not be healed by any.”* Luke, the physician (Col. 4:14), takes special note of the doctor’s inability to heal this woman.

**8:44** *“Touched the border of His garment.”* Consider the many ways people come to Jesus. Some come directly, others indirectly. All who draw near to Him in faith receive healing, salvation (Luke 7:48–50), or both. We should not question how people express their faith, as long as their faith is in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**8:46** *“I perceived power going out from Me.”* Ministry to the needs of people is demanding; it requires the power of the Holy Spirit. All who truly minister know what Jesus is saying here. The true minister will often know the joy of seeing people strengthened and uplifted, while at the same time he is left depleted.

**8:48** *“Your faith has made you well.”* The original Greek says “Your faith has saved you.” Not only was her body healed, but her soul was also delivered for eternity.

**8:49** *“Your daughter is dead.”* How troubling this must have been to Jairus, who was trying to get Jesus to her in time. Yet it was all designed as a test of his faith.

**8:50** *“Do not be afraid; only believe.”* Jesus immediately comforts Jairus. The only cure for fear is faith (Psalm 56:3).

**8:51** *“He permitted ... Peter, James, and John.”* These three were being prepared by Jesus to be leaders among the twelve (Matt. 17:1; 26:37).

**8:52** *“She is not dead, but sleeping.”* Jesus’ resurrection power turns death into sleep, from which she will awaken. Those who believe in Jesus Christ do not die; the body sleeps, while the spirit goes to God (John 11:25; 1 Cor. 15:51; 2 Cor. 5:1–8; 1 Thess. 4:13–15).

**8:54–55** *“Little girl, arise ... then her spirit returned.”* Jesus, by a quiet command, reverses death and restores life. This is what He does every time someone believes in Him. We have *“passed from death into life”* (John 5:24; 1 John 3:14).

## **LUKE CHAPTER 9**

Sending out the twelve; feeding five thousand; Peter’s confession; Jesus twice predicts His death; Jesus transfigured; the demands of discipleship.

### **Jesus Sends out the Twelve**

Luke 9:1–9 (Matt. 10:5–15; 14:1–12; Mark 6:14–29)

**9:1** *“He called His twelve ... and gave them power and authority.”* Paul tells us we are in a spiritual war (2 Cor. 10:4–6; Eph. 6:10–18). Yet we do not ignore the physical needs of people.

**9:2** *“He sent them to preach the kingdom of God ... and to heal.”* The message was not about the death, burial, and resurrection at this time (1 Cor. 15:3–4), as those events were yet future. Now, in the Church Age, the promise of the coming King and His kingdom are offered to those who believe. Though, unlike them, we may not have the ability to heal, we can feed, clothe, and provide medical care for those in need.

**9:3** *“Take nothing for the journey.”* Jesus wants them to travel light and fast. He is also teaching them to rely on the Father to provide. Later, He will give different instructions (Luke 22:35–36).

**9:5** *“Shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them.”* It was customary at this time for a rabbi, on returning from Gentile lands, to shake the defilement of those places from his feet. Jesus takes this custom and gives it spiritual meaning. Those who reject Jesus’ messengers and message have judged themselves unworthy of eternal life (Acts 13:46).

**9:7–8** *“Now Herod ... heard of all that was done by Him.”* This shows both the growing fame of Jesus, and also the effectiveness of the ministry of the twelve. Many assumed that *“John ... Elijah ... [or] one of the old prophets”* (Mal. 4:5–6) had returned. These opinions were all the result of rejection of the clear claims of Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:13–16).

**9:9** *“And Herod ... sought to see Him.”* Like so many, Herod was only seeking to witness some sign or miracle (Luke 23:8). He had no spiritual interest in knowing who Jesus really was.

### **The Disciples Return; Feeding Five Thousand**

Luke 9:10–17 (Matt. 14:13–21; Mark 6:30–44; John 6:1–14)

**9:10** *“The apostles ... returned ... He took them ... privately into a deserted place.”* Jesus’ intention was for them to rest from their labors and to further instruct them (Mark 6:31).

**9:11** *“But ... the multitudes ... followed Him, and He received them.”* Most of us would resent this intrusion on such valuable private time. The Lord Jesus always put the needs of men first. *“[He] spoke to them about the kingdom of God.”* This assurance that the promises of the Old Testament were true and firm was a great comfort to the people. *“And healed.”* Jesus exemplified what He had commanded the apostles to do (v. 2).

**9:13** *“You give them something to eat.”* This is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels (Matt. 14:16; Mark 6:37; John 6:5). It shows Jesus teaching the apostles that if we dedicate what little we have to the service of the Lord, He is able to multiply it—not only to meet their needs, but also to have “leftovers” for the future. *“Five loaves and two fish.”* These were donated by a little boy (John 6:9).

**9:14** *“Make them sit down in groups of fifty.”* Jesus organizes the disciples to make an orderly division of the people. Our God is not a God of confusion, but of order (1 Cor. 14:33, 40).

**9:16** *“He blessed and broke them.”* The Jews believed that to receive good things without thanking God was to rob Him of the praise and glory due to Him (1 Thess. 5:18). Since this great feeding occurred in light of Herod’s murder of John the Baptist, it reminds us of Psalm 23:1, 5, *“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want ... You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.”*

**9:17** *“They all ... were filled ... twelve baskets of the leftover fragments.”* God’s grace is always sufficient, and above and beyond what we expect (2 Cor. 12:9; Eph. 3:20; Phil. 4:19).

### **Peter’s Confession; Jesus’ Prediction of His Death**

Luke 9:18–22 (Matt. 16:13–23; Mark 8:27–33)

**9:18–20** *“Who do the crowds say that I am?”* Luke has already recorded the various rumors among the people (vv. 7–8). *“Who do you say that I am?”* Everyone must choose what they will believe about Jesus (2 Tim. 1:12). We will each be judged by how we answer this question. *“The Christ of God.”* This means the Messiah/Savior who was promised throughout the Old Testament. This is the only correct answer, and to believe this truth alone is the basis of our eternal salvation. Peter’s correct answer prompts Jesus to remind them what this means.

**9:22** *“The Son of Man must suffer ... be rejected ... and be killed, and be raised.”* If they believed Him to be the Christ, they must know that what was foretold must come to pass (Psalm 22:1; Isa. 52:13–53:12; Zech. 13:6).

### **The Demands of Discipleship**

Luke 9:23–27 (Matt. 16:24–28; Mark 8:34–38)

**9:23** *“If anyone desires to come after Me.”* This is a personal decision that each individual must make. *“Let him deny himself ... take up his cross daily ... follow Me.”* These three demands are the key ingredients of discipleship:

1. We must surrender all claim on our own life (Gal. 2:20).
2. We must accept the plan of God for our lives, just as Jesus surrendered His will to the Father (Matt. 26:36–42).
3. We must follow Jesus Christ as we walk by faith (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Eph. 4:1; Col. 2:6; Heb. 10:38).

**Note:** This is the first mention of the cross in Luke. When Jesus was about eleven, a Galilean named Judas led a revolt against Rome just four miles from Nazareth. The Romans captured 2,000 of the rebels and crucified them along the road—a sight that the boy-Jesus no doubt saw. His whole life was aimed at the cross—the Father’s plan for Him.

**9:24–26** *“Whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.”* We can choose to live life for our own desires and lose all eternal reward. Or we can surrender our lives for His service and find rich reward in eternity (John 12:25). Nothing we could gain in this life is worth what we can *“lay up”* as *“treasures in Heaven”* (Matt. 6:19–21). Unfaithful believers who are ashamed to claim Christ in this life, will be ashamed before Him at His coming (1 John 2:28; see 1 Cor. 3:10–15; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim. 2:11–13).

### **The Transfiguration of Jesus**

Luke 9:27–36 (Matt. 17:1–9; Mark 9:1–10; 2 Pet. 1:16–18)

**9:27** *“Some standing here ... shall ... see the kingdom of God.”* This saying not only anticipates the Transfiguration, but also the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

**9:28** *“Peter, John, and James.”* Jesus had trained these three men for leadership roles. They were with Him at the raising of Jairus’ daughter (Luke 8:51), here at the Transfiguration, and in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:37).

**9:30** *“Two men talked with Him ... Moses and Elijah.”* These two were prophesied to appear before Messiah’s coming to Israel (Mal. 4:4–5). Moses and Elijah represent *“the law and the prophets”* (Matt. 22:40; Luke 24:27, 44). They both illustrate what Jesus meant in v. 24, for they both gave their lives to God’s service, and they will be great in His coming kingdom.

**9:31** *“His decease ... at Jerusalem.”* The Greek uses the word *Exodus* for *“decease.”*

**9:33** *“Master ... let us make three tabernacles.”* Peter, *“not knowing what he said,”* puts Jesus on an equal standing with Moses and Elijah. The Father will now intervene to set Jesus entirely apart.

**9:35–36** *“This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!”* The Father spoke earlier in Luke 3:22. Here, Jesus was set apart, *“Jesus ... alone”* (Deut. 18:15–19; John 1:45; 4:25; Acts 3:22). We are not to elevate any human prophet or teacher to the level of Jesus. He is the *“one Mediator between God and men”* (1 Tim. 2:5; see Job 19:25–27).

**The Disciples' Faith Tested by Demonic Possession;  
Jesus' Prediction of His Betrayal; the Dispute about Greatness**

Luke 9:37–50 (Matt. 17:14–23; 18:1–5; Mark 9:14–37)

**9:39–40** *“I implored Your disciples ... but they could not.”* Jesus had empowered them to do this (Matt. 10:1; Luke 9:1). Their failure here was due to lack of faith (v. 41), and failure of daily spiritual disciplines (Matt. 17:21).

**9:41** *“O faithless and perverse generation.”* Our degree of “abiding in Christ” (John 15:1–8) and “walking in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16) will often be tested. Our spiritual failures should be cause for renewed spiritual dedication and discipline (1 Cor. 9:24–27).

**9:43–44** *“They were all amazed at the majesty of God ... the Son of Man ... betrayed into the hands of men.”* Even while the multitudes proclaim Him, Jesus predicts His coming betrayal. That the disciples did not understand (v. 45) was probably due to their hardness of heart, as they were still competing for prominence (v. 46).

**9:46** *“Which of them would be greatest.”* This was a common dispute among the disciples. It is a good thing to desire greatness in the kingdom, but it can only be gained by humility and service (Matt. 18:1–4; Phil. 2:5–11).

**9:48** *“For he who is least ... will be great.”* This explains Jesus' common saying, *“the last [shall be] first”* (Matt. 19:30; 20:16; Mark 10:31; Luke 13:30).

**9:49–50** *“He who is not against us is on our side.”* The same attitude that seeks greatness attempts to control the ministry of others (Matt. 27:18). Jesus forbids such efforts to dominate others (Matt. 12:29–30; Luke 11:21–23). As well, we are not to judge the service of other believers (Rom. 14:4).

**Jesus Determines to Go to Jerusalem; Repeats the Cost of Discipleship**

Luke 9:51–62 (Matt. 8:18–22)

**9:51–53** *“He ... set His face.”* Jesus determines to go to the cross in obedience to the Father's will (Isa. 50:7). *“The Samaritans ... did not receive Him.”* Samaritans were descendants of Jews who married Gentiles after the Northern Kingdom fell in the days of Isaiah (2 Kings 20). They held to their own form of worship (John 4:19–22).

**9:54** *“James and John ... said.”* They were truly *“Sons of Thunder”* (Mark 3:17). They recalled the act of the prophet Elijah (2 Kings 1:9–16).

**9:56** *“The Son of Man did not come to destroy ... but to save them.”* Jesus rebukes them for being motivated by a spirit contrary to His expressed mission, *“to seek and to save that which was lost.”* (Luke 19:10).

**9:57–61** *“Lord, I will follow You ... Follow Me ... let me first go.”* In these verses, we see three examples of those who desired to follow Jesus but were unwilling to count the cost of discipleship. The first was unwilling to give up the comforts of home; the second wanted to wait until his father was buried; and the third wanted to say goodbye to family. While Elisha did first return home, it was only to sacrifice all that belonged to him (1 Kings 19:20–21). The main point here is that discipleship demands unconditional surrender to the Lord Jesus (Mark 1:16–18; 3:34–35).

**9:62** *“No one ... looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”* Jesus is talking about usefulness in the kingdom—not entrance into the kingdom, which comes only by faith in Him. To be useful, a believer must be persistent and effective. See the contrast of this in the man named Demas (Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:10). This is why Paul urged Timothy to be constant and faithful (1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 2:1–4; 4:1–2).

## **LUKE CHAPTER 10**

The sending of the seventy; parable of the Good Samaritan; Martha and Mary.

### **The Sending and Return of the Seventy**

Luke 10:1–24

**10:1** *“The Lord appointed seventy others also.”* Just as the twelve represented the twelve tribes of Israel, so these seventy represent the nations listed in the roster of nations in Genesis 10 (see Exod. 1:5; Deut. 32:7–8). While the twelve were commanded to only go to *“the lost sheep of the house of Israel”* (Matt. 10:6), no such command is given to the seventy. Many of the cities in this region were Gentile cities.

**10:2** *“The harvest truly is great.”* Jesus predicts a fruitful mission for them. *“Pray the Lord of the harvest.”* Jesus urged the twelve to do the same (Matt. 9:37–38). We are not only to labor in the Lord’s service but to pray for more workers to be raised up. It would seem the *“Lord of the harvest,”* is God the Father (John 14:16, 26; 15:16).

**10:3** *“I send you out as lambs among wolves.”* Along with great harvest opportunities would come fierce persecution (Matt. 5:10–12; 2 Tim. 3:10–12).

**10:4** *“Greet no one along the road.”* The time was short, and the ministry was urgent. They were to go to the crowds in the cities, where many could hear—not delay with one or two along the way (2 Kings 4:29).

**10:7–8** *“Do not go from house to house.”* They were to stay in the first home that welcomed them, and not seek to move to better or richer homes. *“Eat such things as are set before you.”* They were not to be scrupulous about what food was offered.

**10:12–16** *“More tolerable in that Day for Sodom ... Tyre and Sidon.”* Jesus declares that if the mighty works He had done in *“Chorazin ... Bethsaida ... Capernaum”* had been done in many of the ancient cities of the Old Testament, *“they would have repented”* (Matt. 11:21–24). God holds men accountable for the light they have been given. Therefore, those who have greater light have greater responsibility and condemnation if they don’t use it (John 3:19; 2 Pet. 2:21).

**10:16** *“He who hears you hears Me.”* The servant of the Lord goes forth with the word of the Master, just as Jesus represented the Father (John 5:23).

**10:18** *“I saw Satan fall ... from heaven.”* The ministry of the seventy was a preview of the ultimate defeat of Satan and the reversal of his dominion on Earth (John 12:31; Rev. 12:9–10; 20:1–3).

**10:19–20** *“Behold, I give you the authority.”* This authority was unique to the apostles (Mark 16:15–18; Acts 28:3–5; 2 Cor. 12:12). Our authority is in (comes from) His Word, which will defeat all the wiles of the devil (Jer. 23:29; 2 Cor. 10:3–6; Eph. 6:10–11; Heb. 4:16; Rev. 12:11). *“Over all the power of the enemy.”* Absolutely nothing can touch the believer apart from God’s permission. If we are faithful, we cannot die until our mission is complete. *“Rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”* The names of all believers were written before the foundation of the world (Dan. 12:1; Rev. 13:8, 17:8).

**10:21** *“You have hidden these things from the wise ... and revealed them to babes.”* Men who are wise in their own understanding stumble over the simplicity of the Gospel (2 Cor. 11:3). Those who are humble understand and receive it through faith (1 Cor. 1:26–31; 2:8–15).

**10:22** *“All things have been delivered to Me by My Father.”* As the Son of God, Jesus has been given all authority in Heaven and on Earth (Matt. 28:18; John 3:35; 5:19–23; 17:2).

**10:23–24** *“Many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see.”* Peter tells us that the prophets studied what they wrote, seeking to understand what these disciples were seeing and experiencing (1 Pet. 1:10–12).

### **The Lawyer’s Question and the Parable of the Good Samaritan**

Luke 10:25–37

**10:25** *“A certain lawyer ... tested Him.”* The lawyer (scribe) was not honest in his question but was hoping to catch Jesus in some error in His answer. *“What shall I do to inherit eternal life?”* This was the same question asked by the rich young ruler (Matt. 19:16). In both passages, the question assumes that eternal life is “inherited” by good works. In both cases, Jesus shows that the righteousness required for eternal life is impossible apart from regeneration by faith (Rom. 4:3–8; Gal. 3:6–14; Phil. 3:9 Heb. 11:6).

**10:26–28** *“What is written in the law?”* The lawyer’s summary of the Law of Moses is accurate (Matt. 22:34–40; Rom. 13:9–10). *“You have answered rightly; do this and you will live”* (Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18). Love for God and for others is possible only to believers, since faith works through love (Gal. 5:6, 22). Again, no one is capable of doing this all of the time (James 4:8–12). Only by the forgiveness that comes by the blood of Christ can we be made righteous (Rom. 5:6–11, 17–19; 1 Pet. 1:18–19).

**10:29** *“Wanting to justify himself.”* It seems that the lawyer was somewhat humbled by Jesus’ gracious answer and wanted to truly be justified. *“And who is my neighbor?”* This response indicated that he still limited demonstrating love to only Jews, not Gentiles. Jesus will quickly show that he stands condemned.

**10:30** *“A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho.”* This was a mountain path that led through a gorge that was often filled with robbers, called *“the valley of the shadow of death”* (Psalm 23:4). *“Fell among thieves who ... wounded him ... leaving him half dead.”* Unless someone had compassion on him and rendered aid, this man would surely die.

**10:31–32** *“A certain priest ... likewise a Levite.”* These men were set apart to minister to the people of Israel, yet they became arrogant and self-serving (Mal. 2:1–9). They show no compassion for the injured man.

**10:33** *“But a certain Samaritan ... had compassion on him.”* To the Jews, especially the religious leaders, Samaritans were even more hated than the Gentiles. Jesus uses this story to show that often those who are most held in contempt are the most humble and faithful. Jesus’ repeated use of the words *“certain”* man suggests that this was a true event.

**10:34–35** *“Went to him ... bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine ... set him on his own animal ... took care of him.”* The many acts of kindness show a genuine concern by the Samaritan for this helpless man. He went far above and beyond what might have been expected. *“When I come again, I will repay you.”* Even after he left, he made provision for the care of the man until he fully recovered. We must see here that, though we do not have the power to heal as Jesus and the apostles did, we do have the power to show the same compassion and care from the love of Christ (2 Cor. 5:14–15; Phil. 2:1–3).

**10:37** *“Go and do likewise.”* Jesus is not suggesting that the lawyer will be saved by these actions. But rather, in the attempt to obey the command, he will be brought to humility and faith (Gal. 3:21–25; James 4:6–10; 1 Pet. 5:5–6).

### **Martha Serving and Mary Worshiping**

Luke 10:38–42

**10:38** *“A certain village ... a certain woman named Martha.”* Again, as in the “parable” of the good Samaritan, the use of the word *“certain”* always suggests a real person or village and a true story or event (see John 11:1–5).



**10:39** *“Mary ... sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word.”* Every time we see Mary in the Gospel story, she is sitting at Jesus’ feet—a posture of submission and learning (Luke 7:38; John 11:1–2; 12:1–3). She alone, of all the disciples, understood that Jesus was going to His cross (John 12:7–8). Jesus said that she had *“kept this for the day of My burial”* (John 12:7). The word *“kept”* in Greek means *“to guard something precious.”*

**10:40** *“Martha was distracted ... Lord, do You not care?”* When we are not walking and serving in fellowship with the Lord, our service becomes a burden, and we tend to judge others who seem to be doing nothing. Like Martha, we tend to think that the Lord is unconcerned with our labor. The problem is not that Martha was busy serving, but that she was doing it with the wrong motives and priorities.

**10:41** *“Martha, Martha.”* The repetition is designed to get attention and show passion (Luke 6:46; 8:24; 13:34; 22:31). *“You are ... troubled about many things.”* The fact that Martha was not serving in love and fellowship is found in her distraction from the Lord’s teaching, her outburst to Him, and her troubled heart.

**10:42** *“One thing is needful.”* That one needful thing is the Word of the Lord Jesus. *“Mary has chosen that good part.”* If we make the Word of God our priority at all times, we will always be feasting—not on a meal that passes away, but on the *“bread of life”* (Matt. 5:6; John 6:27, 35, 51).

## **LUKE CHAPTER 11**

Jesus teaches on persistence in prayer; the kingdom of Satan; the importance of obedience; proclaims woe on the scribes and Pharisees.

### **Jesus Teaches the Disciples How to Pray**

Luke 11:1–13 (Matt. 7:7–11)

**11:1** *“Lord, teach us to pray.”* The disciples were impressed with the prayer life of Jesus (Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16).

**11:2–4** *“Our Father in heaven.”* Perhaps the most revolutionary, new teaching of Jesus was His portrayal of God as the heavenly Father of all who believe. The first concern of the prayer is for the glory of God and that His will be done. The requests for the disciple are fourfold: daily bread, forgiveness of sin, willingness to forgive others, and deliverance from temptation and evil.

**11:5–8** *“Because of his persistence.”* Jesus often stressed that the key to prayer is the refusal to give up in making our requests (Matt. 7:7–11; Luke 18:1–8).

**11:9–10** *“Ask ... seek ... knock.”* This illustrates the persistence displayed by the friend in the parable above. He would not take “no” for an answer (Isa. 55:6; John 15:7).

**11:11–13** *“If you then, being evil ... how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.”* Even in our sinful condition, a father would not give a deceitful or harmful gift in response to the plea of a child. Here, the pre-Pentecost believers had to ask for the Holy Spirit (v. 13), as did the believers in the Old Testament, who sought the Spirit through prayer and purification. Prior to the sending of and the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, believers could only be temporarily enabled by the Spirit (Judges 13:24–25; Psalm 51:11; Zech. 4:6). Now, the Father, whose love and compassion are perfect, not only hears and answers our prayers as He sees best, but beyond all we—Church Age believers—could request or expect, He has given us His own Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4; 10:45; Rom. 8:9–11; 1 Cor. 12:11, 13). The Holy Spirit could not come in the sense of permanent indwelling until Christ had died on the cross and was raised up to the right hand of the Father. As Jesus said to the disciples in the Upper Room, *“greater works than these he will do, because I go to My father”* (John 14:12), and later, *“I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you*

*forever...for He dwells with you [now] and will be in you [then]”* (John 14:16–17). The difference between “now” and “then” was the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, which inaugurated the Church Age.

### **Jesus Falsely Accused; Teaches on Satan’s Kingdom**

Luke 11:14–28 (Matt. 12:22–30, 43–45; Mark 3:22–27)

**11:14–16** *“He casts out demons by Beelzebub.”* This title originally referred to a Philistine god (2 Kings 1:2, 3, 6, 16). It means, “Lord of the Flies,” and later became used as a title for Satan. This accusation showed their determined unbelief and the hardness of their hearts.

**11:20** *“If I cast out demons with the finger of God.”* So great is the power of God that even mighty deeds are done only by His finger (Exod. 8:19; Deut. 9:10; Psalm 8:3; John 8:6). Jesus replies that by their argument, Satan would destroy his own kingdom. The only other option was that *“the kingdom of God has come upon you.”*

**11:21–22** *“A strong man ... stronger than he.”* The strong man represents Satan, who seeks to hold the souls of the lost in his possession. But Jesus, the stronger man, will bind him and plunder his house and his kingdom. *“Divides his spoils”* is a reference to Isaiah 53:12, speaking of Christ’s victory in His resurrection, which He shares with all who believe in Him (Eph. 1:3; 2 Pet. 1:3).

**11:23** *“He who does not gather ... scatters.”* The religious leaders should have gathered the nation to the Lord in faith. By refusing to do this, they would play a part in the scattering of the nation when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

**11:24–26** *“An unclean spirit ... takes with him seven other spirits.”* To be delivered from a demon and then to fail to bring Jesus Christ into that life means that the “house” is open to even worse demonic control than before. To be delivered by God from evil and fail to turn to Him in faith is to ensure even greater condemnation (2 Pet. 2:20–21).

**11:28** *“Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it.”* The woman in v. 27 was declaring Mary to be blessed (Luke 1:28, 48). While this was true, Jesus wants us to understand that we can all be blessed by learning and obeying His Word (Luke 8:21; John 13:17; 14:21).

### **The Sign of Jonah; the Lamp of the Body**

Luke 11:29–36 (Matt. 12:38–42; Mark 8:11–12)

**11:29** *“The sign of Jonah the prophet ... Jonah became a sign.”* The burial and resurrection of Jesus will be the sign of His true identity, and the greatest miracle ever performed (Jonah 1:17–2:10; Matt. 12:39–40).

**11:31–32** *“The queen of the South ... the men of Nineveh.”* Both the queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1–10), and the Ninevites (Jonah 3) repented when they heard the Word of God. At the final judgment (Rev. 20:11–15), they will be witnesses against Jesus’ generation, who had even greater light and signs and still refused to believe.

**11:34** *“The lamp of the body is the eye.”* A good and healthy eye is that which chooses to see the light of truth (Job 19:27; 31:1; Psalm 101:3). An evil or spiritually unhealthy eye likes to focus on the sin and corruption of this world. (1 John 2:15–17). We choose to look at what we love (Col. 3:1–4). The only way to keep our inner life pure is to allow the light of God’s Word to enter into our soul daily (Psalm 119:105, 130).

## Jesus Pronounces “Woe” on Pharisees and Lawyers

Luke 11:37–54 (Matt. 23:1–36; Mark 12:38–40)

**11:38** *“The Pharisee saw ... He had not first washed.”* The Pharisees followed a strict program of washing (Matt. 15:1–2; Mark 7:1–4). They magnified physical cleanness but ignored the filth and corruption in their own souls (Titus 1:15–16).

**11:42** *“You Pharisees ... pass by justice and the love of God.”* These Pharisees were meticulous in their tithing but were slow to give to the poor (v. 41). They were not motivated by the love of God (Micah 6:7–8; Zech. 7:8–10; John 5:42; 2 Cor. 5:14).

**11:43–44** *“Woe to you Pharisees!”* The word “*woe*” is a declaration of severe judgment to come. *“You are like graves which are not seen.”* To step on a grave was cause for defilement (Num. 19:11–19). Though they presented themselves as righteous, the Pharisees only defiled the people with their false teachings. The word “*hypocrite*” was only used by Jesus for Israel’s unbelieving religious leaders (Matt. 23:13–29).

**11:46** *“Woe to you also, you lawyers!”* These were the scribes who were to be the interpreters of Scripture. They were equally as corrupt as the Pharisees.

**11:47–51** *“You build the tombs of the prophets ... the blood of all the prophets ... shall be required of this generation.”* Jesus accuses the religious leaders of His day of finishing the persecution that their fathers began. By their rejection of Jesus Christ and His crucifixion, they would bring the guilt of all the prophets, who foretold of Jesus, upon their own generation. This was confirmed when the crowd yelled to Pilate, “*His blood be on us and on our children*” (Matt. 27:25). The phrase “*this generation*” declared that the judgment would fall on those standing there. It refers to the fall of Jerusalem about 40 years later, in 70 A.D. “*Abel*” was the first recorded martyr (Gen. 4:1–15), and “*Zechariah*” was the last (2 Chr. 24:17–22) in the Old Testament record.

**11:52** *“You have taken away the key of knowledge.”* Jesus Christ Himself is the key to all scriptural knowledge (Prov. 1:7; 9:10; Rev. 19:10). To seek to find God apart from Jesus Christ is impossible (John 14:6).

**11:53–54** *“The scribes and the Pharisees began to assail Him vehemently.”* Jesus had exposed their evil hypocrisy, and their true hatred of Him comes out. By their hate-filled attacks, they confirm everything He has said of them.

## LUKE CHAPTER 12

Jesus teaches the disciples on many topics regarding the life of the disciple.

### Teaching on Hypocrisy and Courage

Luke 12:1–12 (Matt. 16:6–12; 10:28–33)

**12:1** *“Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees ... hypocrisy.”* Leaven is a picture of the evil of false teaching (Matt. 16:12) that gradually permeates the soul. The result of continued reception of false doctrine is hypocrisy—to think you are holy when you are not.

**12:2** *“There is nothing covered that will not be revealed.”* All of the secrets of men will be revealed at the final judgment (Mark 4:22; Rom. 2:15–16; 1 Cor. 4:5; Heb. 4:13).

**12:4–7** *“I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid.”* Those who trust in Christ and walk by faith have no need to fear. It was said of John Knox, the Scottish preacher, that he feared God so much that he had no fear of men

(Psalm 27:1–5; 119:120). ***“The very hairs of your head are all numbered.”*** God knows and cares about every detail of our lives and is with us at all times.

**12:8–9** ***“Whoever confesses Me.”*** Faithfulness in our witness will result in praise from Christ in the presence of the angels. ***“He who denies Me.”*** The unfaithful believer, who denies Christ in time of persecution, will be denied the reward he or she could have won in eternity (2 Tim. 2:11–13; 1 John 2:28; Rev. 3:11).

**12:10** ***“To him who blasphemes ... the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven.”*** Those who saw the mighty works of God in Jesus Christ, and yet accused Him of being an agent of Satan, had hardened their hearts beyond the point of repentance (Matt. 12:31–32; Mark 3:28–29; Acts 7:51; 13:46).

**12:11–12** ***“Do not worry ... for the Holy Spirit will teach you.”*** Rather than fear those who persecute us, we should have faith that the Holy Spirit will guide us in how to respond (John 14:26; Acts 4:5–13)

### Teaching on Possessions and Priorities

Luke 12:13–34 (Matt. 6:19–21, 25–34)

**12:13** ***“Teacher, tell my brother.”*** This man made the same mistake Martha made (Luke 10:40), in trying to command the Lord. He also displays a concern for this life, but not for the kingdom of God (1 Tim. 6:6–12).

**12:15** ***“One’s life does not consist in ... the things he possesses.”*** The concern for things of this life can deaden our hearts to the potential for heavenly riches (Matt. 6:33; James 4:1–6; 1 John 2:15–17).

**12:16–19** ***“A certain rich man ... I will ... I will ... I will ... I will.”*** This man had no thought of God or of eternity in all his planning. His world revolved around only himself. His priorities were all wrong (Eccl. 4:7–8; 5:10–15; 6:1–2; 1 Cor. 15:32; James 4:13–17).

**12:20** ***“Fool! This night your soul will be required of you.”*** This man-made provision for this life but gave no thought to eternity. All wealth is passing away (Matt. 6:19–21; 1 Tim. 6:6–10, 17–19; James 5:1–6; 1 John 2:15–17). There is an old saying, “There are no pockets in a death shroud.”

**12:21** ***“So is he who ... is not rich toward God.”*** Jesus does not condemn wealth or possessions. There were wealthy women who supported Him (Mark 15:40–41). What He condemns is concern for possessions in this life, but no concern for eternal riches (Luke 12:31–34).

**12:22–23** ***“I say to you, do not worry ... Life is more than food ... clothing.”*** True life—abundant life—is found only in a relationship with Jesus Christ (John 10:10; 1 Pet. 3:10–12 Eph. 3:20).

**12:24–28** ***“Consider the ravens ... Consider the lilies.”*** Jesus points to the natural world as an example of the Father’s care. God feeds the birds and clothes the grass; ***“how much more”*** valuable are we in His sight? Worry cannot add the least bit to our height or to our lifespan. But faith can fill our lives with spiritual riches (Eph. 1:3; Col. 3:1–4).

**12:31–34** ***“Seek the kingdom of God.”*** We must learn to have eternal priorities and to live like pilgrims and strangers on the Earth (Matt. 6:33; Heb. 11:9–10, 23–29; 1 Pet. 2:11–12). ***“Where your treasure is.”*** We set our hearts on the things we value most. If we value the things of God, our hearts will be set on our eternal home (Matt. 6:21; Rom. 8:5).

## Teaching on Faithfulness

Luke 12:35–48 (Matt. 24:42–51)

**12:35–40** *“Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning.”* This is a picture of the servant who is ready and waiting for his master to come late in the night. He is ready to serve him at any time. *“Blessed are those servants whom the master ... will find watching.”* Here, Jesus pictures those believers at His Second Coming who are watching and waiting. *“He ... will come and serve them.”* Jesus suggests that He Himself will serve those servants who are found waiting. *“You also be ready.”* This is the sum of the parable: be serving and looking for the Lord’s return (Eph. 5:14–16; 1 Thess. 5:6; Rev. 2:25; 3:3).

**12:42** *“Who then is that faithful and wise steward?”* In response to Peter’s question (v. 41), Jesus turns the parable from the servant to the steward. This is a picture of those in positions of leadership. They are entrusted to *“give them their portion of food,”* that is, to teach the Word of God. Jesus reminded Peter of this after His resurrection (John 21:15–17), and Peter passed this lesson on to his fellow pastors (1 Pet. 5:1–4).

**12:43–44** *“Blessed is that servant ... he will make him ruler over all that he has.”* Those leaders who faithfully teach the people of God can look forward to great eternal reward—in both crowns and authority (2 Tim. 2:12; 4:6–8; 1 Pet. 5:4; Rev. 3:21).

**12:46–48** *“The master of that servant will come ... and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.”* Remember that the entire nation of Israel was called to be the servant of Jehovah (Gen. 26:24; Psalm 105:42–45; Isa. 41:8–10; 44:1–2, 21; 49:3; Jer. 2:14; 46:27–28). Jesus is not talking about believers in the Church Age, which is yet future. He is speaking about unfaithful and unbelieving Jews. *“For ... to whom much is given ... much will be required.”* God’s judgments will be fair and equitable (Lev. 5:17; Deut. 25:1–2; Rom. 2:4–12). Israel was richly blessed above all nations, and thus is much more accountable for rejecting her Messiah (Rom. 9:1–5, 30–33; 10:1–4, 11–13; 16–21).

## End-Time Conditions

Luke 12:49–59 (Matt. 16:1–4)

**12:49–50** *“I came to send fire on the earth.”* This speaks of judgment and is exactly what John the Baptist predicted for those who did not believe and receive the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11; see also Isa. 30:27–28). *“I have a baptism to be baptized with.”* Here, Jesus is referring to His cross, which must come first. See Psalm 18:4–5, 16; 69:1–2.

**12:51–53** *“Do you suppose that I came to give peace? ... rather division.”* The mission of the Lord Jesus was to bring about redemption. To those who receive Him, this brings peace with God (Luke 2:14; 7:50; 8:48; Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:13–17). Those who believe in Him are forever divided from those who do not. *“One house will be divided.”* Some in one household will believe in Him, the others will not, and the house will be divided.

**12:54–56** *“Hypocrites! You can discern ... the sky ... how is it you do not discern this time?”* They could judge the coming change in the weather but were ignorant about the signs of His coming (Matt. 2:3–12; Luke 19:41–44). Simeon and Anna are examples of those faithful believers who knew the time (Luke 2:25–38).

**12:57–59** *“Make every effort ... to settle with him.”* This lesson is in the form of a parable. All men are guilty before God; and if they are wise, they will seek to find peace and reconciliation before the time of judgment. *“You shall not depart ... till you have paid the very last mite.”* The unbeliever will be judged with no chance to escape the full sentence of God.

## **LUKE CHAPTER 13**

Jesus increases His warnings to Israel to choose redemption and life.

### **Repent or Perish**

Luke 13:1–9

**13:1–5** *“Do you suppose that those Galileans were worse sinners?”* The common false teaching during Jesus’ time was that bad things happened to people because of their sins (Job 4:7; John 9:1–3). *“Or those ... on whom the tower in Siloam fell.”* This was another event current at the time, for which we have no historical records. *“Unless you repent you will all likewise perish.”* All mankind are sinners (Rom. 3:23; 6:23) and will ultimately perish unless they turn from sin and man-made religion to faith in Jesus Christ (Matt.7:21–23; Luke 3:7–17; John 1:29–34).

**13:6–9** *“A certain man had a fig tree ... and he came seeking fruit on it and found none.”* This parable relates the actual experience of Jesus Himself—both with the fig tree (Matt. 21:18–19; Mark 11:12–14) and with the nation which the fig tree pictured (Matt. 23:37–39; Luke 13:34–35). *“Cut it down.”* The judgment described here in the cutting down of the fig tree is the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. (Luke 19:41–44; 20:9–19). Every child of God should consider how to be useful in God’s service (John 15:1–8; James 2:14–17).

### **Healing on the Sabbath**

Luke 13:10–17

**13:12** *“Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.”* This miracle again showed Jesus to be the true Messiah (Luke 7:20–23). He healed by the power of His Word (Rom. 10:17).

**13:14** *“But the ruler of the synagogue ... said ... ‘There are six days on which men ought to work.’”* Jesus often healed on the Sabbath—the day dedicated to God—to show God’s compassion and power (Luke 6:6–11; Mark 3:1–4).

**13:15–16** *“Hypocrite! ... So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham ... be loosed ... on the Sabbath.”* The synagogue leader would surely take his ox or donkey to water on the Sabbath (Luke 14:5) but had no compassion for this woman. Jesus declares that each and every person is a very special gift of God.

**13:17** *“His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced.”* Jesus’ constant rebuke to religious leaders, and His popularity with the multitudes, was the reason for the envy and hatred of the religious leaders. This was the division He spoke about earlier (Luke 12:51–53).

### **Parables of the Kingdom and the Narrow Way**

Luke 13:18–35 (Matt. 13:31–33; 23:37–39; Mark 4:30–32)

**13:18–19** *“What is the kingdom of God like? ... a mustard seed.”* The kingdom begins very small, but grows to become a refuge to many (Psalm 104:12; Ezek. 17:22–24; Dan. 4:10–12; Mark 4:30–32).

**13:20–21** *“The kingdom of God ... is like leaven.”* Just as leaven (yeast) permeates the dough and makes the bread rise, so the kingdom of God will permeate the world. The work of leaven is:

1. from the inside out,
2. invisible to the eye, and
3. affects all that it touches. This should be a challenge to every believer to let the Spirit of God have a pervading influence in our lives.

**13:22** *“He went through the cities ... teaching ... journeying toward Jerusalem.”* Luke continues to show Jesus’ resolute movement toward the cross (Isa. 50:7; Luke 9:51–53).

**13:24** *“Strive to enter through the narrow gate.”* The narrow gate is Jesus Christ Himself (John 14:6). The “striving” is to lay aside the “*dead works*” of self-effort (Heb. 12:1) and trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ (John 19:30; Heb. 4:3, 10–11; 6:1; 9:14).

**13:25** *“Lord, Lord, open for us.”* Once life is over, it is too late to call Jesus “*Lord*.” When Jesus says, *“I do not know you,”* He shows that they never believed in Him because, as Jesus said, *“I know My sheep”* (John 10:14), and Paul says, *“the Lord knows those who are His”* (2 Tim. 2:19).

**13:28–29** *“There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”* These are signs of either deep sorrow or of great anger (Matt. 8:12; 13:42). These warnings especially apply to unbelieving Israel, who will be enraged that multitudes of Gentiles will join Jesus for the wedding feast, but the unbelieving Jews, who relied only on their lineage from Abraham, will be cast out. *“They will come from the east and the west.”* Believing Gentiles from around the world, who have believed in Jesus Christ, will feast in the kingdom of God (Matt. 8:11; Rom. 9:30–33; Rev. 7:9–10).

**13:32–33** *“The third day I shall be perfected.”* Jesus predicts His resurrection on the third day (Matt. 12:39–40). The perfection spoken of here is the fulfillment of the Father’s plan of redemption for mankind. *“A prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.”* Jesus indicates that He follows a historical line of prophets killed in Jerusalem (1 Kings 18:4, 13; 19:10, 14; 2 Chr. 24:20–22; Jer. 2:30; 26:20–23; 38:4–6; Amos 7:10–17; Matt. 23:29–35; Acts 7:51–53).

**13:34–35** *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem...How often I wanted to gather your children.”* Here, Jesus speaks as God in His desire throughout history to deliver Israel. *“You were not willing.”* Because of their continued rebellion and unbelief, He declares *“Your house is left to you desolate.”* This refers to the coming destruction of the Temple and the dispersion of the nation. *“Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD.”* This cry, which comes from Psalm 118:26, will be on the lips of believing Jews at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

## **LUKE CHAPTER 14**

Jesus teaches on humility, reward, and preparation for the kingdom.

### **A Healing and a Parable in a Pharisee’s House**

Luke 14:1–14

**14:1** *“He went ... to eat bread on the Sabbath.”* These Sabbath events were intended to challenge the legalism of the Pharisees. The Gospels record seven times how Jesus healed on the Sabbath (Luke 4:31, 38; 6:6; 13:14; John 5:9; 9:14; Mark 1:21). *“They watched Him closely.”* This suggests that the invitation was a trap set by the Pharisees, and that the sick man was invited there for this purpose.

**14:3** *“Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”* Jesus constantly battled against the man-made laws of the Pharisees (see Luke 6:2, 9). To show love and give aid to the needy is always good in God’s plan (Rom. 13:8–10).

**14:5** *“Which of you ... will not ... pull him out on the Sabbath day.”* Jesus reveals their twisted values; they cared more for animals than for people made in the image of God.

**14:7–10** *“He told a parable.”* Jesus challenged their practice of self-promotion. This parable illustrates the value of humility and the danger of pride.

**14:11** *“For whoever exalts himself.”* This proverb sums up the lesson of the parable (Prov. 3:34; Prov. 29:23; James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5–6).

**14:12–14** *“You shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”* To show compassion to the sick and needy is to reflect the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. The word *“just”* refers to those who are justified by faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:23–25; 5:1; John 11:24–25).

### **Rejection and Reception of the Gospel Invitation**

Luke 14:15–24 (Matt. 22:1–14)

**14:15** *“Blessed is he.”* What this man said is not wrong, but Jesus goes to the heart of the matter to answer the question, “Who will enter into the kingdom?”

**14:18** *“Come, for all things are now ready.”* There was nothing remaining to do for those who were invited. It was all done for them, just as Jesus has done all that is necessary for us to enter eternal life (John 19:30). But the invitation must be received by faith (Eph. 2:8–9).

**14:18–20** *“I ask you to have me excused ... I cannot come.”* Here, we see excuses made that show the things we allow to come between us and the grace of God: a purchase of land, new possessions, even the biblical relationship of marriage. And yet the value of our relationship with God far surpasses all these things (1 John 2:15–17).

**14:21** *“Go out quickly ... bring in here the poor ... the maimed ... the lame ... the blind.”* We see a divine application of v. 13. The Jews believed that they had automatic rights to enter into the kingdom. Here, the poor and maimed represent the Gentiles who were hated by the Jews. The Gospel that the Jews rejected, the Gentiles received gladly (Acts 28:25–28; Rom. 9:30–33).

### **Jesus Teaches on the Demands of Discipleship**

Luke 14:25–35 (Matt. 10:34–39)

**14:25** *“Great multitudes went with Him. And He ... said to them.”* From vv. 1–24, Jesus is in the presence of Pharisees, most of whom rejected His teaching. Now, He turns to the *“common people”* who gladly received His teaching (Mark 12:37b).

**14:26–27** *“If anyone ... does not hate.”* Jesus’ use of the word *“hate”* does not mean emotional hatred. It simply means to make Him the priority over all other things (Col. 1:18). Family, friends, and even our life must be rejected as the things of first importance (Matt. 6:33). *“Does not bear his cross.”* Jesus’ three-fold demand in Luke 9:23 is centered in the bearing of the cross. This means to surrender all personal claims to the will of God. It involves a willingness to share in His suffering (2 Cor. 5:14–21; Phil. 3:10; 2 Tim. 2:12; 3:12). We enter eternal life by a simple act of faith (John 3:16, 36; Rom. 4:3–5; Eph. 2:8–9), but we become a disciple by a life of dedicated learning and service (Ezra 7:10).

**14:28** *“Count the cost.”* A wise builder plans not just the beginning of the building, but the completion. So we should do as we enter the life of faith. The greatest eternal rewards are given to those who finish the race (1 Cor. 9:24–27; 2 Tim. 4:6–8; Heb. 12:1–3).

**14:31** *“What king, going to make war.”* The goal of going to war is to win. Failure to consider one’s strength and resources can only lead to shame and defeat.

**14:33** *“Whoever ... does not forsake all.”* This does not mean to sell all. Jesus had disciples who had wealth, but they used it for His purpose (Matt. 19:27; Luke 8:1–3; 23:50–53).

**14:34–35** *“Salt is good.”* Jesus compares the life of a disciple to salt (Matt. 5:13). Salt in the ancient world was very poor quality and could degrade in taste. This useless salt was thrown out of the house. *“Men throw it out.”* This lesson is not saying that God will cast any believer out. He is speaking of discipleship and effectiveness in



being a witness for Christ. Those whose lives do not match their message are generally rejected by men as hypocrites.

## **LUKE CHAPTER 15**

Jesus teaches on the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. This is perhaps one of the most beloved chapters in all of the Bible because it shows the infinite nature of the love and grace of God.

### **The Lost Sheep**

Luke 15:1–7 (Matt. 18:10–14)

**15:1–2** *“This Man receives sinners and eats with them.”* The Pharisees and scribes prove that they had not accepted His earlier teaching (Luke 14:13–14, 21–24). To the Pharisees, the common people were considered accursed sinners (John 9:34).

**15:4** *“What man of you ... go after the one which is lost until he finds it?”* Israel was a nation of shepherds. The shepherd was accountable for each and every sheep. If one wandered, the shepherd was bound to seek for it until he found it. Jesus later declared that His mission was to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10; see Matt. 18:12–14). These Pharisees, who should have cared for the flock, were in fact the false shepherds Ezekiel spoke of (Ezek. 34:1–10), and Jesus was the *“good shepherd”* (Ezek. 34:11–31; John 10:11). The word *“lost”* occurs five times in these three parables. Note also the repetition of the words *“rejoice ... joy.”*

**15:6** *“Rejoice with me.”* Since most flocks in Israel were communal flocks, the whole village would join in the celebration. The Pharisees could not join in celebrating the rescue of lost sinners by Jesus.

**15:7** *“There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents.”* This joy is *“in the presence of the angels”* (v. 10). Heaven celebrates at the salvation of sinners. The word *“repent”* is used here in its most common sense of turning from self-righteousness to faith in Christ. *“Who need no repentance.”* Jesus is speaking sarcastically, because these Pharisees thought that they had no need to repent and trust in Jesus as Savior.

### **The Lost Coin**

Luke 15:8–10

**15:8** *“Or what woman.”* Jesus adapts this parable to the many women who followed Him. *“Having ten silver coins.”* This shows that those who teach that God only chose a few to be saved, and does not care about the rest, are false teachers. In ancient Israel, the mark of a married woman was a head-dress with ten silver coins sewn into it. This was the equivalent of today’s wedding ring. *“Does not light a lamp ... and search carefully until she finds it?”* The continual search of the woman shows that God diligently seeks for each and every lost sinner.

**15:9–10** *“Rejoice with me ... joy in the presence of the angels.”* Jesus’ emphasis in these three parables is in the joy and delight that God in Heaven and the angels have over the salvation of each sinner.

### **The Parable of the Lost Son**

Luke 15:11–32

**15:11** *“A certain man had two sons.”* The focus of this parable is the love of the father and the repentance and restoration of the younger son.

**15:12** *“Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.”* Normally, the inheritance was not given until the father was near death. *“So he divided to them his livelihood.”* This is often overlooked. Both sons received their inheritance, and that of the older son was the *“double-portion”* (Deut. 21:15–17).

**15:13** *“The younger son ... wasted his possessions with prodigal living.”* Like so many people on this Earth, God’s rich blessings are treated with a careless contempt. The *“far country”* represents those who, because of sin, are *“alienated from God”* (Eph. 4:18; Col. 1:21).

**15:14** *“But when he had spent all ... he began to be in want.”* When we squander God’s blessings, He allows us to come into great need, to bring us back to Him. God uses discipline to restore wandering believers (Heb. 12:3–11) and uses judgment to awaken the unbeliever (see Dan. 4:28–34).

**15:15–16** *“He sent him ... to feed swine.”* This was a condition of total defilement to a Jew (Lev. 11:1–8; Deut. 14:3–8). *“No one gave him anything.”* Everyone who strays from God will find this world to be a harsh and unforgiving place.

**15:17–18** *“When he came to himself ... I will arise and go to my father.”* Jesus shows that often it is the sufferings of this life that drive the soul to seek Him. *“Father, I have sinned.”* In the same way, true confession will always restore the wandering believer to a right relationship with God our Father (2 Sam. 12:13; Psalm 51:3–4; 1 John 1:9).

**15:19** *“I am no longer worthy.”* One of the first steps toward receiving the grace of God is the realization that we are unworthy. We deserve nothing, we have nothing to offer, and only the grace of God can meet our needs. This is true humility (1 Pet. 5:5–6; James 4:10).

**15:20** *“His father ... had compassion, and ran ... and kissed him.”* This shows the ready response of God the Father to receive every repentant sinner (unbeliever) or son (believer) when they come to Him in humble faith.

**15:22** *“But the father said ... ‘Bring out the best robe ... put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet.’”* Here, we see the rebellious son fully restored to his rightful place in the family. He is not an outcast, but a beloved son.

**15:24** *“My son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.”* These contrasts illustrate God’s power to restore both lost sinners and straying saints to His favor and grace.

**15:25–28** *“Now his older brother ... was angry and would not go in.”* This older son represents the self-righteous Pharisees, who could not join in the rejoicing of the multitude that followed Jesus, because they thought they were righteous (see Luke 18:9–14).

**15:31** *“Son ... all that I have is yours.”* The older son resented the gracious welcome of the father to the prodigal. His complaint was that he never received so much as a young goat to make merry with his friends, which shows that he had never asked the father for it. The Jewish nation was given the riches of blessings by God (Rom. 9:4–5), and yet they failed to appropriate them by faith in Christ (Rom. 9:30–33).

**15:32** *“It was right that we should make merry and be glad.”* There is no confusion in the counsels of God. Though He will thoroughly judge the unbelieving sinner, He will always receive the humble and broken who believe. The point of the story is to show that no sin is too great for God to forgive and cleanse away. Once this is done, the only right response is a joyful celebration of fellowship.

## **LUKE CHAPTER 16**

Jesus continues with two parables about forgiveness, divided by personal instruction to the Pharisees. From Luke 16:1–18:30, we have Jesus’ teaching to the disciples on various subjects as they are traveling to Jerusalem.

### **The Unjust Steward**

Luke 16:1–13

**16:1** *“A certain rich man ... had a steward.”* The steward was the highest and most trusted servant in the household. He had charge of all the possessions and riches of his master. *“An accusation ... that this man was wasting his goods.”* The word *“wasting”* is the same word used of the son’s prodigal living in Luke 15:13.

**16:2** *“Give an account of your stewardship.”* The main idea of this parable is that we who are believers and disciples will one day have to give an account of how we have used the gifts and resources given to us by God (1 Cor. 3:10–15; 2 Cor. 5:9–11; Eph. 1:3; 2 Pet. 1:3).

**16:3–4** *“What shall I do?”* The steward knows that his time is short, and he devises a plan to use what little time remains to prepare for the future. *“They may receive me into their houses.”* The steward’s plan would benefit others so that they would return the favor and provide for him.

**16:5–7** *“So he called every one of his master’s debtors.”* The plan of this shrewd steward was to forgive part of every bill to reap what he could for the master, and to invite the future gratitude and hospitality of the debtors.

**16:8** *“So the master commended ... because he had dealt shrewdly.”* What is commended here is not his dishonesty, but his ingenuity. Since the steward may have received a commission on these transactions, he may have simply given that up for future gain. *“The sons of this world ... the sons of light.”* Unbelievers are more skilled in using money for their own gain than believers are for eternal reward (Matt. 6:19–21).

**16:9** *“Make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon.”* The point is to use money wisely and for eternity. What we give to ministry, to missions, to the poor and needy, will return to us a hundredfold in eternity (Matt. 19:29).

**16:10** *“He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much.”* Money is the least of our resources to be used for God’s kingdom. If we are careless in using what is least, we will be careless in the greater riches (Matt. 25:21; Luke 19:17; Eph. 1:3).

**16:13** *“No servant can serve two masters.”* We cannot faithfully serve God and serve wealth and possessions at the same time. Money and possessions make good servants for eternity, but they are terrible masters.

### **The Law, the Prophets, and the Kingdom**

Luke 16:14–18

**16:14–15** *“The Pharisees ... were lovers of money.”* Because of their love of money, the Pharisees scoffed at Jesus’ teachings. *“What is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.”* Men love wealth, power, possessions, and high positions. God despises these things, apart from faith and the faithful use of them. The Pharisees believed that God gave riches to those who were worthy.

**16:16–17** *“The law and the prophets were until John.”* Before Jesus came, the Law and prophets were the only revelation of God. But when Jesus—the Living Word—came (John 1:1–4, 14–18), the full and final revelation was made (Heb. 1:1–4). He was the King presenting His kingdom. *“Everyone is pressing into it.”* The publicans, harlots, and sinners flocked to hear Him and believed what the Pharisees rejected. *“One tittle of the law”* is a reference to a small stroke at the top or bottom of a Hebrew letter. Not the least of the words of the prophets would fail to be fulfilled.

**16:18** *“Whoever divorces his wife ... commits adultery.”* The Pharisees defined the term “uncleanness” in Deuteronomy 24:1 to mean anything that caused the man displeasure. To them, divorce was commonplace. Jesus made it clear in Matthew 5:32 that this word meant “sexual immorality”. In Matthew 19:4–6, He declared that marriage was a sacred bond between one man and one woman for life. However, if divorce is likened to adultery, then like adultery it can also be forgiven (John 8:1–12).

## The Rich Man and Lazarus

Luke 16:19–31

**16:19–20** “*A certain rich man ... a certain beggar named Lazarus.*” The rich man’s name is not mentioned because, at physical death, the names of those who refuse to believe are “*blotted out*” of the book of life (Psalm 69:28; 109:13), because they would not allow their sins to be blotted out by faith (Isa. 44:21–22; Psalm 109:14; Acts 3:19). The “*purple and fine linen*” suggests that he was a priest, many of whom were very rich.

**16:21** “*The crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table.*” In those times, people ate with their hands. The rich would wipe their hands and mouth with a piece of bread, then throw it away. These are the crumbs Lazarus was craving (James 5:1–6)!

**16:22** “*The beggar died ... was carried ... to Abraham’s bosom.*” Abraham’s bosom is the same as paradise (Luke 23:43). After the resurrection of Jesus, Paradise, which contained the souls of all Old Testament believers, was moved to Heaven (2 Cor. 12:4; Eph. 4:8–9). That Lazarus was carried to Paradise proves that he was a believer. Note that the angels come to carry Lazarus, but the rich man is simply buried.

**16:23** “*And being in torments in Hades.*” Men do not go to Hell for being rich, they go to Hell for rejecting Jesus Christ (John 3:19 cf. John 8:12). “*He ... saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.*” Before Christ’s resurrection, Paradise and Hades were in close proximity, but separated by a great gulf (v. 26). The rich man is suffering while Lazarus is being embraced and comforted by Father Abraham.

**16:24** “*Have mercy on me ... I am tormented in this flame.*” The rich man now—too late—cries out for mercy. Suddenly, he sees in Lazarus someone who is important to him. This story shows “(1) conscious existence after death; (2) the reality and torment of Hell; (3) no second chance after death; and (4) the impossibility of the dead communicating with the living (v. 26). *Two men ... two different lives ... two different deaths ... two different destinies.*” – Ryrie Study Bible

**16:25** “*Son, remember ... your lifetime.*” This illustrates that “*For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged*” (Matt. 7:2). Eternal judgment will be perfectly just and fair. First, the question is: “Have you received the gift of eternal life through belief in Jesus Christ or not?” See John 3:16; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8–9. Those who do will go to Heaven; those who do not, go to Hell. Next: “How did you live your life?” Believers will be rewarded according to their faithfulness. Unbelievers will be punished to the degree that they abused others (Matt. 11:20–24; Rev. 20:11–15).

**16:27–29** “*I beg you ... send him to my father’s house ... I have five brothers.*” In Hell, the rich man suddenly becomes an evangelist, wanting to save his brothers, but it is too late (see Heb. 9:27). “*They have Moses and the prophets.*” Those who reject the Word of God all their lives cannot be reached by any other means. (John 5:39–40; Luke 24:25–27, 45; Acts 15:21; 17:11).

**16:31** “*If they do not hear Moses and the prophets ... though one rise from the dead.*” Many of those of Jesus’ time rejected the true teachings of the Old Testament, so that their hearts were hardened. Even when Jesus rose from the dead, still they would not believe.

## LUKE CHAPTER 17

Jesus, now on His way to Jerusalem to be crucified, continues to instruct the disciples.

### The Danger of Offenses; the Power of Faith

Luke 17:1–10 (Matt. 17:19–21; 18:6–7; Mark 9:28–29, 42)

**17:1** *“He said to the disciples.”* It is always important to distinguish Jesus’ teaching to the multitudes and His instruction to the disciples. *“Offenses”* refers to putting a stumbling block in the way of someone coming to faith, or that causes them to sin. *“Woe to him”* refers to the one, like the rich man in Luke 16:19, who treats others with contempt or causes them to sin. This refers especially to those who are false teachers.

**17:2** *“It would be better for him.”* A quick death by being cast into the sea would be preferable to eternal judgment.

**17:3** *“Take heed to yourselves.”* In vv. 1–4, Jesus gives the disciples three principles for dealing with others:

1. See that you do not cause others to stumble.
2. Warn those who are a stumbling block to others.
3. Forgive those who fail, yet repent.

**17:4** *“Seven times.”* Peter may have been thinking of the teaching in Matthew 18: 21–22 when he questioned Jesus on the subject (see Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6).

**17:5** *“Increase our faith.”* The disciples rightly understood their inability to carry out Jesus’ demands (Matt. 17:19–20; Mark 11:22–23). By our own effort, we can never satisfy the demands of the Law (James 2:10–11), but by grace and faith we are enabled to keep the demands of Christ’s love (James 4:6; 2 Cor. 5:14–15).

**17:6** *“Faith as a mustard seed.”* The smallest of seeds illustrates the power of faith. Even the least amount of faith has great power, not because of its size but because of its focus—the Lord Jesus Christ. The power of faith is in the Object of the faith. It is not that we have powerful faith, it is that we believe in a powerful Savior.

**17:7–10** *“We have done what was our duty to do.”* In these verses, Jesus teaches His disciples to be faithful servants. We do not serve to be blessed; we serve because we are blessed. We seek always to keep Jesus Christ first in everything (Col. 1:18). Even if we have done everything we are commanded (John 13:17), we have only done our duty as servants of Jesus Christ. Our service does not put God in our debt, nor can we ever repay what He has done for us through Christ (Rom. 11:34–35).

### **The Grateful Leper**

Luke 17:11–19

**17:12** *“There met Him ten men who were lepers.”* According to the Law, lepers were unclean (Lev. 13:45–46), therefore they *“stood afar off.”*

**17:14** *“Go, show yourselves to the priests.”* See Matthew 8:1–4 and Luke 5:12–14. The priest had to certify that they were clean (Lev. 14:1–32).

**17:15–16** *“One of them ... returned, and ... glorified God.”* Out of the ten, only this one returned to give thanks. *“And he was a Samaritan.”* The Samaritans were hated and despised by the Jews, which is why Jesus often used them in His lessons (Luke 10:25–37, see 2 Kings 17:24).

**17:19** *“Your faith has made you well.”* The word used here is the same as in Matthew 9:22, and literally means, “Your faith has saved you.” Ten lepers received healing; only one of them received eternal life.

## The Second Coming of Christ

Luke 17:20–37 (Matt. 24:23–28, 37–41; Mark 13:14–16)

**17:20** *“He was asked ... when the kingdom of God would come.”* The Pharisees were looking for the physical kingdom, which would come with great signs (Joel 2:28–32). Jesus is speaking of the spiritual kingdom, which comes through personal faith (Eph. 2:8–9).

**17:21** *“The kingdom of God is within you.”* This is the kingdom entered by all who have faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 14:17).

**17:22** *“Then He said to the disciples.”* Again, Jesus turns from the Pharisees to give instruction to the disciples. Only those who believe in Christ are capable of receiving spiritual instruction. *“The days will come.”* Here, Jesus refers to the coming days of the Jewish war (66–70 A.D.) that would lead to the destruction of the Temple and the scattering of the Jewish nation.

**17:24** *“For as the lightning that flashes ... so also the Son of Man will be in His day.”* When Jesus Christ returns at His Second Coming, it will be impossible to miss Him (Zech. 12:10; Matt. 24:27, 30; Rev. 1:7).

**17:25** *“But first He must suffer.”* This is a reference to His crucifixion for our redemption (Isa. 53:3–10; Mark 8:31; 9:31; Luke 9:22).

**17:26** *“As it was in the days of Noah.”* Noah warned the world of the coming judgment of the flood, but they went about life as usual (see Genesis 6; Matt. 24:37–39; 2 Pet. 2:5). In many ways, Noah being lifted up in the ark, is a picture of the Rapture of the Church (1 Thess. 4:13–18).

**17:28** *“Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot.”* The same indifference to coming judgment was shown by Lot’s generation (see Genesis 19). After the Rapture, will come times of terrible judgments on the Earth (1 Thess. 5:1–3; 2 Thess. 2:1–12; Revelation 6).

**17:30–31** *“In the day when the Son of Man is revealed.”* Again, this is referring to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ at the end of the Tribulation Period.

**17:32** *“Remember Lot’s wife.”* At the time of judgment on Sodom, Lot’s wife looked back, contrary to the angels’ command. See Genesis 19:26. This world will ultimately be judged, and we ought not to cling to it (1 John 2:15–17). This is illustrated by the command to not turn back (v. 31).

**17:33** *“Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it.”* In times of judgment, people think of saving their lives, which is a selfish desire. Rather, it is those who are willing to die for the sake of serving Christ who will save their lives for eternity (Matt. 5:10–12; 10:39; John 12:25).

**17:34–35** *“One will be taken and the other will be left.”* This passage is not talking about the Rapture. It is speaking of the Second Coming. The one *“taken”* is not a believer and is taken in judgment (see Matt. 24:39, *“and took them all away”*). Just like those *“taken”* at the flood, this is referring to those who were unbelievers. They were taken away in judgment; but believers will live to enter into the Kingdom Age.

**17:37** *“Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered.”* At the Second Coming, there will be multitudes of dead bodies everywhere (Isa. 63:1–6; Joel 3:14–16; Rev. 14:14–20; 19:11–21). The word *“eagles”* actually refers to vultures, who gather to eat the dead.

## **LUKE CHAPTER 18**

Various teachings on prayer, humility, greed and faith; Jesus again predicts His death and resurrection.

### **Teaching on Prayer**

Luke 18:1–8

**18:1** *“Men always ought to pray and not lose heart.”* Luke gives us the point of the parable at the beginning. We can summarize by saying:

1. We need to be people of prayer;
2. we should pray always, for all things; and
3. we should not lose heart if the answers are not immediate.

**18:2–5** *“I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.”* Jesus uses the unjust judge as a contrast to a gracious and loving God. The woman’s persistence in pressing her case does not mean we need to wear God down. Rather, Jesus is teaching that persistent prayer is necessary for us to strengthen our faith.

**18:7** *“Shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him ...?”* God does not always answer us quickly. If He did, we would all be spoiled, spiritual children. He has a perfect time for prayers to be answered. The perfect prayer is always, *“Your will be done.”* (Matt. 26:42; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42).

**18:8** *“He will avenge them speedily.”* When the time is right, there will be no delay. *“When the Son of Man comes.”* This is a reference to His Second Coming, not the Rapture of the Church. The question is not whether there will be believers; the question is, will those believers be faithful to the end?

### **Teaching on Humility**

Luke 18:9–17

**18:9** *“He spoke ... to some who trusted ... that they were righteous.”* In this parable, Jesus combines the previous teaching on prayer with the need for humility. The parable is directed to the self-righteous, who treated others with contempt.

**18:10** *“Two men ... a Pharisee and ... a tax collector.”* The Pharisee personifies the self-righteous man, and the tax collector demonstrates true humility. *“Went up to the temple to pray.”* Prayers were considered especially effective if they were offered in the Temple. Official times of prayer were 9 a.m., 12 noon, and 3 p.m.

**18:11** *“The Pharisee ... prayed thus with himself.”* His prayers were not really to God, but rather were a form of self-congratulation. *“I thank You that I am not like ... this tax collector.”* He was assured of his own righteousness, yet it was the tax collector he despised that he should have imitated.

**18:12** *“I fast ... I give ... I possess.”* This Pharisee is obviously full of himself. This is the essence of pride, when you are the center of your own world. This is a picture of those who think they can be saved by their good deeds.

**18:13** *“The tax collector ... beat his breast ... ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’”* The Pharisee compared himself to other men and felt superior. The tax collector compared himself to the righteousness of God and saw himself condemned. God’s grace provides to us what we do not deserve. God’s mercy withholds the judgment that we do deserve.

**18:14** *“This man went ... justified.”* The Bible makes it clear throughout that we can only be justified, or “declared righteous,” by grace through faith (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 3:22, 28; 4:3; Gal. 3:8, 11). *“He who humbles himself will be exalted.”* Those who humble themselves before God in faith will be lifted up by His grace (James 4:10; 1 Pet. 5:5–6).

**18:15** *“Then they also brought infants to Him.”* These were small babies, not little children. The connection with the tax collector in the previous parable is that neither he nor these babies have anything to offer to God, but can only receive His grace and blessing.

**18:17** *“Whoever does not receive the kingdom ... as a little child.”* Simple, child-like faith is all that is required to enter eternal life. Anything added to this is false teaching!

### **The Rich Young Ruler**

Luke 18:18–23 (Matt. 19:16–22; Mark 10:17–22)

**18:18** *“Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”* This story again shows a contrast to the faith of the tax collector, and the child-like faith Christ desires and accepts. He wants, like the Pharisee, to earn his entrance into the kingdom by good works. There is no record of any rabbi in Israel ever being addressed as “Good Teacher.”

**18:19** *“No one is good but One, that is, God.”* The challenge of Jesus is not that He is not good, but that to rightly come to Him, the young ruler must understand that Jesus is God.

**18:20** *“You know the commandments.”* Jesus now points the young man to the commandments of Moses. If a man wants to earn eternal life, he must keep every one of them all the time. No man but Jesus could ever do this (Matt. 5:17; Gal. 3:10–12; James 2:10–11).

**18:21** *“All these things I have kept.”* This reveals the self-righteous attitude of the young ruler, who was so much like the Pharisee in v. 11. This is remarkably similar to the Apostle Paul’s view of himself before his conversion (Phil. 3:4–6).

**18:22** *“You still lack one thing.”* The *“one thing”* the young ruler lacked was faith in Christ. But to get to it he would have to remove the obstacle to his faith. *“Sell all that you have ... and come, follow Me.”* Jesus now puts His finger on the one commandment the young ruler obviously violated—the tenth commandment (Exod. 20:17). Covetousness is greed. This was the barrier between the young ruler and coming to faith in Jesus Christ. Giving all one has to the poor saves no one. But the young ruler could not follow Jesus as long as he was enslaved to his wealth. (see Matt. 6:19–21; Luke 16:13). Remember in Luke 8:38–39, the man delivered from demons was told to stay home and be a witness. God’s plan differs for each of us.

### **The Lesson Applied**

Luke 18:24–30 (Matt. 19:23–30; Mark 10:23–31)

**18:24–25** *“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”* Jesus’ point here is not that it takes great effort to be saved. Rather, He is saying that, apart from grace and faith, it is impossible. The problem is that rich people learn to trust in their riches (Mark 10:23–24) rather than in God.

**18:26–27** *“Who then can be saved?”* The disciples misunderstood Jesus’ lesson. What is impossible for men is simple with God (Jer. 32:17; Luke 1:37).

**18:29–30** *“Assuredly, I say to you ... in this present time ... in the age to come eternal life.”* In response to Peter, Jesus gives assurance that those who serve Him sacrificially will receive blessings in time and reward in eternity. God’s richest blessings are relational—the family of God—not material (Job 42:10; Matt. 12:48–50; Mark 3:34–35).



**Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection**  
Luke 18:31–34 (Matt. 20:17–19; Mark 10:32–34)

**18:31–33** *“Behold ... all things that are written by the prophets ... will be accomplished.”* This statement is important, because Luke wants to emphasize the prophetic fulfillment in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus (Luke 1:45–55, 68–79; 24:27, 44–45). See Luke 19:11 for explanation of the disciples’ blindness.

**The Blind Man Healed**  
Luke 18:35–43 (Matt. 20:29–34; Mark 10:46–52)

**18:35** *“A certain blind man sat by the road begging.”* In Matthew’s account, there were two men. Luke seems to focus on the one who not only received his sight, but who also believed for eternal life. In Mark 10:46, this man is named as Bartimaeus.

**18:38** *“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”* The term *“Son of David”* is a messianic title (Luke 1:32–33, 68–69; 2:1–5, 11), showing that Bartimaeus believed in Jesus as the Savior. His cry for mercy shows that unlike the Pharisee (v. 11) and the rich, young ruler (v. 18), he claimed no merit before God, but was—both physically and spiritually—a beggar in need of grace.

**18:42–43** *“Your faith has made you well.”* This blind man (Bartimaeus) received both physical and spiritual healing. This was given solely on the basis of simple, child-like faith. This is the only way anyone can ever enter into eternal life. It is worth mentioning that giving sight to the blind was prophesied to be a qualifying sign of the Messiah (Isa. 35:5; 42:5–7).

**LUKE CHAPTER 19**

Zacchaeus the tax collector; the parable of the coins; Jesus’ triumphal entry; He weeps over Jerusalem and cleanses the Temple.

**Jesus Meets Zacchaeus**  
Luke 19:1–10

**19:1–2** *“Jesus entered and passed through Jericho ... there was a man named Zacchaeus.”* The story of Zacchaeus shows a contrast to the Pharisees (Luke 16:14) and the rich young ruler (Luke 18:18). *“A chief tax collector, and he was rich.”* Tax collectors were despised as collaborators with Rome, and often overcharged to make excess profits. Jericho was famous for its fertility and rich produce of palm oil and fruits. This made it a place of rich taxation. As *“chief tax collector,”* Zacchaeus would have many other tax collectors under him.

**19:4** *“A sycamore tree.”* This tree was a kind of fig tree, with a short trunk and wide branches. It would have been easy to climb.

**19:5** *“Zacchaeus ... today I must stay at your house.”* Jesus saw the “mustard seed” of faith in the efforts of Zacchaeus to see Him.

**19:6** *“So he ... received Him joyfully.”* All who receive Jesus in simple faith receive eternal life (John 1:12), regardless of their sin or their social standing.

**19:7** *“But when they saw it, they all complained.”* The multitude believed they were more deserving than Zacchaeus. *“He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.”* Since *“all have sinned”* (Rom. 3:23), none are worthy.

**19:8** *“Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor.”* Zacchaeus, with his new-found faith and love for the Lord, goes beyond the *“fruits worthy of repentance”* required by John the Baptist (Luke 3:8), and even beyond the requirements of the Law (Lev. 5:14–16; Num. 5:6–7). His actions show that he is indeed a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17).

**19:9** *“He also is a son of Abraham.”* This term describes those who have believed in Jesus Christ (Luke 13:10–17; Gal. 3:8–9, 26, 29).

**19:10** *“For the Son of Man has come.”* With these words, Jesus summarizes His purpose for coming into the world. Remember the three parables on *“lost”* things in Luke 15.

### **The Parable of the Minas** Luke 19:11–27 (Matt. 25:14–30)

**19:11** *“Because ... they thought the kingdom ... would appear immediately.”* This likely refers to the disciples. Because of their preconceived ideas about the kingdom, Jesus’ warning of the cross was *“hidden”* from them (Luke 18:34).

**19:12** *“A certain nobleman went into a far country.”* This represents the Lord Jesus, who after the resurrection would receive all power and authority at the Father’s right hand (Psalm 110:1–2; Matt. 25:14; 28:18).

**19:13** *“Ten of his servants ... ten minas.”* The servants represent Jesus’ disciples. The mina was worth one hundred days’ wages. *“Do business till I come.”* The time of his return is not specified, but an accounting of their service is certain (1 Cor. 3:10–15; 2 Cor. 5:9–10).

**19:14** *“We will not have this man to reign over us.”* This does not represent his disciples, but the people of Jerusalem (John 1:11; Matt. 23:37–39; 27:25).

**19:15** *“He then commanded these servants ... to be called to him.”* First, before the nobleman is made king, he entrusted wealth to his servants. Here, he returns as king and now must test the faithfulness of his servants. He will then reward those who were faithful.

**19:17–19** *“Well done, good servant ... have authority over ten cities.”* The reward is in direct proportion to the servant’s use of what was entrusted to him. So it is with the second servant.

**19:21** *“I feared you.”* This servant did not have a right view of the nobleman. Because of his wrong understanding, he never multiplied his gift. This is true of many believers today. This servant did not value his master, or the gift and opportunity that were given to him.

**19:24–26** *“Take the mina from him.”* Because of his unfaithfulness, he loses what he had been given. *“Give it to him who has ten minas.”* The point here is that he who is faithful will be given even greater opportunity; those who are unfaithful will lose eternal reward (1 Cor. 3:10–15; Rev. 3:11).

**19:27** *“Bring here those enemies ... and slay them before me.”* This again is a picture of the coming judgment on Jerusalem for their rejection of the Lord Jesus, as well as the final judgment (Matt. 13:40–42).

### The Triumphal Entry

Luke 19:28–40 (Matt. 21:1–11; Mark 11:1–11; John 12:12–19)

**19:30** *“Go into the village ... as you enter you will find a colt tied.”* Here, Jesus intentionally fulfills prophecy (Zech. 9:9). He had probably arranged in advance to have the colt tied there. If not, this is another evidence of His omniscience.

**19:32** *“Just as He had said to them.”* This same statement is made in Luke 22:13 about making preparations for the Passover.

**19:34–35** *“They threw their own clothes on the colt ... many spread their clothes on the road.”* This was a common practice for the approach of a king (2 Kings 9:13).

**19:38** *“Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!”* These words are from Psalm 118:26 and are prophetic of the coming of the Messiah. Jesus came to bring *“peace”* to those who would receive Him by faith (Psalm 85:5; Luke 1:77–79; John 14:27, 16:33; 1 Cor. 14:33).

**19:39** *“Some of the Pharisees.”* These were the religious leaders of Israel, and they expressed the official rejection of Jesus by the nation.

**19:40** *“If these should keep silent, the stones would ... cry out.”* Just as God could *“raise up children to Abraham from [these] stones”* (Matt. 3:9), so He could cause the stones to cry out in praise of the Lord Jesus.

### Jesus Weeps Over Jerusalem

Luke 19:41–44 (Matt. 23:37–39)

**19:41** *“He saw the city and wept over it.”* This is the second time we see Jesus weeping over the unbelief of men (John 11:35). His grief was due to that unbelief, and to the judgment that would follow (Matt. 24:1–2; Mark 13:1–2; Luke 21:5–6).

**19:42** *“If you had known ... the things that make for ... peace!”* As in v. 38, this peace could only be found through faith in Jesus Christ (Luke 1:68–79; 2:8–14; Rom. 5:1).

**19:43–44** *“For days will come upon you.”* Jesus is describing the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred in 70 A.D. (Jer. 6:4–8; Matt. 23:38; 24:2).

### Jesus Cleanses the Temple

Luke 19:45–48 (Matt. 21:12–17; Mark 11:15–19; John 2:12–25)

**19:45** *“Then He ... began to drive out those who bought and sold in it.”* The cleansing of the Temple recorded in John 2:12–25 occurred at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. This event is at the end. Like the Pharisees (Luke 16:13–14), these Temple vendors loved money more than God.

**19:46** *“My house is a house of prayer.”* This is a quote from Isaiah 56:7. *“You have made it a den of thieves”* is another quote, from Jeremiah 7:11. Like too many churches today, the place of worship had become a place of business, with profit the main goal. The money-changers (Mark 11:15) charged inflated prices for both currency exchange and the animals that were to be sacrificed, which according to the Law, were to be affordable (Lev. 14:21–22).

**19:47** *“The chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders ... sought to destroy Him.”* Again, these were the leaders of the nation. Their rejection of Jesus and desire to kill Him reflected the rejection of Israel as a whole.

## **LUKE CHAPTER 20**

The chief priests, Pharisees, and the Sadducees join forces to attack and discredit Jesus. Twice in this chapter Jesus plainly declares that He is God in human flesh.

### **Jesus' Authority Questioned**

Luke 20:1–8 (Matt. 21:23–27; Mark 11:27–33)

**20:1** *“The chief priests and the scribes, together with the elders, confronted Him.”* Men from these three groups formed the Jewish Council, called the Sanhedrin. This was the highest religious authority in the land.

**20:2** *“By what authority are You doing these things?”* By His cleansing of the temple (Luke 19:45–46), Jesus had challenged the entire structure of the hypocritical religion of His day.

**20:3** *“The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men?”* Jesus often responded to a question by asking another question. The right answer to this question would answer the question they asked of Him. John directly claimed to be the fulfillment of prophecy, the forerunner of the Messiah (Isa. 40:1–8; Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:2–4). He also boldly proclaimed Jesus to be the promised Messiah (John 1:29, 33–34; 36). If John's authority came from heaven, then so did that of Jesus.

**20:5–7** *“So they answered that they did not know.”* Jesus put these religious hypocrites in a dilemma. If they said it was from heaven, then they had to acknowledge Jesus' authority. If they denied John's heavenly commission, then the people would stone them. So they chose the third option—to claim ignorance. This was a shameful thing for these learned men to have to admit. For it showed that they were ignorant of the working of God in their own time (Luke 19:44).

**20:8** *“Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”* Jesus' authority was:

1. Independent of human authorities,
2. Absolute and final (Matt. 28:18), and
3. Given directly by God the Father (John 5:22–24).

### **The Parable of the Vineyard**

Luke 20:9–19 (Matt. 21:33–46; Mark 12:1–12)

**20:9** *“Then He began to tell the people this parable.”* It is very important to make a distinction when Jesus tells a parable to the disciples, and when He is speaking to the religious leaders (note v. 19; Matt. 21:45; Mark 12:12). *“A certain man [landowner] planted a vineyard.”* This is a figure taken out of the Old Testament. God is the landowner and Israel is His vineyard (Isa. 5:1–7). This is similar to the parable told in Luke 13:6–9.

**20:10–14** *“Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers.”* The three servants in this story represent the Old Testament prophets. The response of Israel to the prophets of God showed their unbelief and unwillingness to bear spiritual fruit (Matt. 23:29–36). *“My beloved son.”* This represents Jesus Christ and anticipates the coming crucifixion.

**20:16** *“He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others.”* This anticipates the destruction of Israel in 70 A.D. and the coming of the Church. This theme fits with Matthew 8:11–12; 21:43–44; and Romans 9:30–33.

**20:17** *“The stone which the builders rejected.”* This refers to Jesus Christ—the Cornerstone of God's spiritual temple (Psalm 118:22; Acts 4:10–12; Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:4–8).

**20:18** *“Whoever falls on that stone.”* To fall on Christ in humility and faith breaks our pride but saves our soul. *“but on whomever it falls, it will grind him.”* Those on whom the stone falls are those who reject Him and are crushed in judgment (Isa. 8:14–15; Dan. 2:34–35, 44–45).

#### **Another Trap Set for Jesus**

Luke 20:20–26 (Matt. 22:15–22; Mark 12:13–17)

**20:20–21** *“So they watched Him ... that they might seize on His words.”* We are told in Matthew 22:15–16 that the Pharisees and the Herodians plotted this trap. These two parties were generally enemies, yet they united on the basis of their hatred for Jesus. *“Teacher, we know that You ... teach rightly.”* This flattery was intended to make Him drop His guard. Note that *“They pretended to be righteous”* (v.20).

**20:22** *“Is it lawful ... to pay taxes to Caesar?”* If Jesus says “yes,” then the Pharisees can accuse Him of being a traitor to Rome. If He says “no,” then the Herodians, who loved Rome, could accuse Him of being an enemy of Caesar.

**20:24** *“Show Me a denarius.”* Jesus saw through their scheme. The common coin, a denarius, was used in Israel, showing that they recognized the authority of Rome. Caesar’s image was upon it.

**20:25** *“Render ... to God the things that are God’s.”* Caesar could claim the coin, for it bore his image. But we are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26; James 3:9). Therefore, we owe God our total faith, allegiance, and service.

**20:26** *“They marveled at His answer and kept silent.”* The wisdom of Jesus shut the mouths of His attackers.

#### **The Resurrection Questioned**

Luke 20:27–40 (Matt. 22:23–33; Mark 12:18–27)

**20:27–33** *“Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection ... came ... asked Him.”* This group was made up of the rich priestly order. They accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament and denied a bodily resurrection. *“Teacher, Moses wrote.”* They base their question on Deuteronomy 25:5–10. We have an example of this in Ruth 4:1–12. *“Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become?”* They assume that they have Jesus in a trap, because, if there is a resurrection, which man may claim her? Their ignorance of the resurrection state is enormous.

**20:34–35** *“The sons of this age ... But those who ... attain that age.”* Jesus must show them the different conditions between this earthly life and life in His kingdom.

**20:37–38** *“But even Moses ... called the Lord ‘the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’”* By referring to Moses, Jesus was meeting the Sadducees in the texts they claimed to believe—the five books of Moses. Since *“He is not the God of the dead but of the living,”* then Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were still alive. Therefore, the bodily resurrection was certain.

**20:39** *“Teacher, You have spoken well.”* Even the scribes had to admit the wisdom of Jesus (1 Cor. 1:30)

#### **Jesus Boldly Claims to be God**

Luke 20:41–47 (Matt. 22:41–46; 23:1–7; Mark 12:35–40)

**20:41–44** *“How can they say that the Christ is [David’s Son]?”* Having shut the mouths of His opponents (v. 40), Jesus now poses a most important question. If the Christ is the Son of David, how can David call Him Lord? *“The LORD said to my Lord.”* This quote, from Psalm 110:1, relates to the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. God the Father says to God the Son, *“sit at My right hand.”* Certainly, no mere human could receive this invitation (see

Luke 22:67–69; Acts 2:30; 7:56). ***“Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”*** Here is a warning of future judgment for those who reject and resist the Messiah.

**20:46–47** ***“Beware the scribes ... These will receive greater condemnation.”*** Jesus applies the point of His previous question. All those who hold positions of religious power, and yet reject Him, will be held to greater accountability (Luke 12:48; James 3:1, 2 Pet. 2:21).

## **LUKE CHAPTER 21**

Jesus predicts the destruction of the Temple and the signs of His Second Coming.

### **The Widow’s Offering**

Luke 21:1–4 (Mark 12:41–44)

**21:1–2** ***“A certain poor widow putting in two mites.”*** This offering of the widow is in contrast to the scribes’ love of luxury and praise in Luke 20:45–47 and the offerings of the rich. The two mites were copper coins—the smallest currency used at that time.

**21:3–4** ***“All these out of their abundance ... but she out of her poverty.”*** Jesus contrasts not only the amount given, but the sacrifice of the giver. This made the poor widow’s gift of much greater value in God’s sight. Her sacrifice showed her gratitude for God’s extravagant grace to her.

### **Jesus Predicts the Temple’s Destruction**

Luke 21:5–6 (Matt. 24:1–2; Mark 13:1–2)

**Note:** In all three passages listed in the heading above, Jesus connects the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem with the signs of His Second Coming. This is because, in the history of Israel, these events come close together. But, in between the events of 70 A.D. and the end-time signs, the Church Age takes place from Pentecost to the Rapture (1 Cor. 15:50–58; 1 Thess. 4:13–18). When the Church is removed at the Rapture, the history of Israel will pick up right where it left off.

**21:5–6** ***“The days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another.”*** The destruction by Rome in 70 A.D. was only the beginning. Today, the Western Wall of the Temple shows that this prophecy was not totally fulfilled. The climax of this prophecy will come at the end of the seven-year Tribulation Period.

### **Signs of Israel’s Last Days**

Luke 21:7–19 (Matt. 24:3–14; Mark 13:3–13)

**21:7** ***“Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign will there be ...?”*** Again, Jesus’ answer combines both the events surrounding the destruction of the Temple by Rome in 70 A.D., and the end-time events of the Tribulation.

**21:8–9** ***“Take heed that you not be deceived ... do not be terrified.”*** Turbulent times always give rise to false prophets, false christs, and fearful events. Jesus warns His followers not to give in to the two greatest dangers of such times.

**21:10–11** ***“Nation ... against nation ... earthquakes ... famines and pestilences.”*** Multiplied wars and natural disturbances, with signs from Heaven, will be the signs of Christ’s Second Coming (Matt. 24:6–8; Revelation 6).

**21:12–19** ***“But before all these things.”*** In this section, Jesus turns from end-time events to the things the apostles would face in their lifetimes. These predictions are fulfilled in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 3–5, 7, 21–28). They

include persecution (v. 12), testimony (vv. 13–15), betrayal (v. 16), and divine protection (v. 18). **“By your patience possess your souls.”** Perseverance in faith delivers (saves) the soul from failure and loss of reward (Matt. 24:13; 1 Cor. 3:10–15; 1 John 2:28). Only faith in Jesus Christ saves us for eternal life (John 3:16, 36; 5:24). This end-times perseverance is anticipated in Daniel 11:32–35.

### **The Fall of Jerusalem and the Second Coming of Christ**

Luke 21:20–28 (Matt. 24:15–31; Mark 13:14–27)

**21:20 “When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies.”** The events described in vv. 20–24 all occurred in the Roman invasion of 70 A.D., but they will also be fulfilled to an even greater degree at the end of the Tribulation Period (Joel 2:1–11; Zeph. 1:14–18; Zech. 12:1–14; 14:1–5).

**21:21 “Let those ... in Judea flee to the mountains.”** Believing Jews will flee Jerusalem before her final destruction (Rev. 12:1–17).

**21:23 “For there will be great distress ... and wrath upon this people.”** This refers to God’s final judgment on unbelieving Israel in the last half of the Tribulation (Matt. 24:15–28).

**21:24 “Jerusalem will be trampled ... until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”** Only Luke refers to these times, which are a reference to Daniel 9:27; 11:36–39, Matthew 24:15–21, Romans 11:25, and 2 Thessalonians 2:1–10. These times began with Nebuchadnezzar and will end with the Antichrist.

**21:25 “And there will be signs in the sun ... the moon ... the stars ... the sea and the waves roaring.”** There will be great disturbance in the natural realm before the Second Coming of Christ (Isa. 24:18–23; Ezek. 32:7–8; Joel 2:30–32).

**21:27–28 “Then they will see the Son of Man coming ... with power and great glory.”** All these events are leading up to the return of Jesus Christ as **“KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS”** (Rev. 1:7; 14:14; 19:11–16). **“Your redemption draws near.”** While these events will terrify unbelieving mankind, they should encourage believers that the plan of God is being fulfilled!

### **The Parable of the Fig Tree Taught and Applied**

Luke 21:29–38 (Matt. 24:32–44; Mark 13:28–37)

**21:29 “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees.”** In the accounts of Matthew and Mark, only the fig tree is mentioned. Here, Jesus includes all trees. It may be that, while the fig tree represents Israel, the other trees could represent the nations.

**21:31 “Know that the kingdom of God is near.”** This is the comfort mentioned in v. 28. We must always live our lives not based on current events, but rather focused on eternity.

**21:32 “This generation will by no means pass.”** Jesus is talking about the end-times generation when all these things will occur (Matt. 24:33–34). In Matthew 23:36, He uses the same phrase, but here it refers to His own generation, leading up to the events of 70 A.D.

**21:33 “My words will by no means pass away.”** God’s Word is the only sure foundation on which to build our lives (Matt. 7:24–27; 24:35; Mark 13:31; 1 Pet. 1:24–25; Isa. 40:6–8).

**21:34–36 “But take heed to yourselves ... watch therefore, and pray always.”** These words are very close to what Jesus said to the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:41; Mark 13:35–37; 14:38). The world and its

cares can be a great enemy of our souls (2 Tim 2:3–4; 1 John 2:15–17). **“That you may be counted worthy ... to stand before the Son of Man”**—that is, to stand approved and unashamed (1 John 2:28; 1 Cor. 3:14–15).

**21:37 “At night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet.”** Here, we see Jesus, the Good Shepherd (John 10:11), watching over the flock of Israel. His days were filled with teaching, pleading, and warning the people. At night, under the stars, He drew strength from His Father. Truly, **“The Son of Man [had] nowhere to lay His head”** (Matt. 8:20; Luke 9:58).

## **LUKE CHAPTER 22**

The plot to kill Jesus unfolds; Jesus institutes the Lord’s Supper; Peter’s denial; the prayer in the Garden.

### **The Satanic Plot of the Chief Priests**

Luke 22:1–6 (Matt. 26:1–5, 14–16; Mark 14:1–2, 10–11; John 11:45–53)

**22:1–2 “The feast of Unleavened Bread ... called Passover.”** The Feast of Passover led into the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Exod. 12:1–20; Lev. 23:5–6). **“The chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him.”** They are now fully determined to kill Jesus.

**22:3–5 “Satan entered Judas.”** The chief priests and captains find an unexpected ally in Judas. All are united with the purpose of Satan, who now indwells Judas. This apparently first happened when he took the money, and again when he was at the Last Supper (John 13:2, 27). The **“money”** was thirty pieces of silver (Matt. 26:15), which was a fulfillment of prophecy (Zech. 11:12–13), and the price of a slave (Exod. 21:32). Judas was a lover of money and a thief (John 12:1–8).

### **Jesus Transforms the Passover into the Lord’s Supper**

Luke 22:7–23 (Matt. 26:17–30; Mark 14:12–26; John 13:21–30)

**22:7 “When the Passover must be killed.”** This refers to the Passover lamb (Exod. 12:5–8), which was a picture of Christ (John 1:29, 36).

**22:10–12 “Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover.”** As in the preparations for the Triumphal Entry (Luke 19:28–35), Jesus may have made plans ahead, but kept them secret, so as to finish the Passover before Judas could betray Him. However, that they would meet **“a man ... carrying a pitcher of water”** reveals Jesus’ omniscience—His deity.

**22:15 “I have desired to eat this Passover ... before I suffer.”** There appears to be three reasons for this statement:

1. It foreshadowed the purpose of His death.
2. It looked forward to His kingdom.
3. He transformed Passover into the celebration of the New Covenant fulfillment as it applied to Israel (v. 20; Jer. 31:31–34; Ezek. 36:22–28; Matt. 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25).

**22:17–20 “Then He took the cup ... and He took bread ... He also took the cup.”** Only Luke mentions two cups. In the Passover, there were four cups of wine shared. The cup in v. 20 was the third cup of the Passover meal, called by the Jews, “the cup of redemption.” See 1 Corinthians 11:23–26, which is similar to this passage.

**22:21–22 “Behold, the hand of My betrayer is with Me on the table ... woe to that man.”** Jesus knew from the beginning that Judas never believed in Him and would betray Him (John 6:64, 70–71). Though Jesus’ death was **“as it has been determined”** by God, yet Judas willingly chose to play his part and would be judged accordingly.



### **Jesus Instructs the Disciples and Peter**

Luke 22:24–38 (Matt. 26:31–35; Mark 14:27–31; John 13:36–38)

**22:24** *“There was also a dispute ... which of them should be ... greatest.”* How tragic that, in the very night of His betrayal, the disciples would seek their own greatness, and Peter would deny Him.

**22:27** *“Yet I am among you as the One who serves.”* No greater rebuke could be given than the difference between the Lord of glory—Jesus Christ in His humility—and the self-serving attitude of these disciples (Matt. 20:26–28; Mark 10:43–45; Phil. 2:5–9).

**22:28** *“You are those who have continued with Me in My trials.”* Jesus does not overlook their faithfulness, in spite of their failures. What great hope this gives to each of us, for we all stumble in so many ways (James 3:2)!

**22:29–30** *“I bestow upon you a kingdom.”* The apostles would receive great eternal reward in Christ’s kingdom. This would include *“that you may eat and drink at My table.”* This is reminiscent of David’s gracious care for Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 9:1–8). Also, they would *“sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”* See Matthew 19:28; 24:47.

**22:31** *“Satan has asked ... that he may sift you as wheat.”* Though he is in rebellion against God, Satan cannot touch a believer without God’s permission (Job 1:9–12; 2:3–6). The “sifting” would be a trial of Peter’s faith and that of all of the disciples (Amos 9:9; Matt. 26:31–35; Mark 14:27–28; 1 Pet. 5:5–8).

**22:32** *“But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail.”* As our only true Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5), the Lord Jesus prays for each and every believer (John 17:9–11; Heb. 7:25). *“Strengthen your brethren.”* Jesus essentially restored Peter even before he fell (cf. John 21:15–17). Even though Peter’s faith failed, it did not affect his eternal salvation (John 3:16; 5:24; Rom. 5:1; 1 John 2:2).

**22:35–37** *“Did you lack anything?”* The earlier sending of the disciples was designed to prove the providential care of God (Matt. 10:9–10). Jesus is now warning the disciples that persecution would increase, and that foresight would include the provision of *“money,” “knapsack”* (backpack), and even a *“sword”* for self-defense.

### **Jesus Prays; is Betrayed and Arrested; Denied by Peter; Mocked and Beaten; and Faces the Sanhedrin**

Luke 22: 39–71 (Matt. 26:36–7; Mark 14:32–50, 53–72; John 18:1–26)

**22:39** *“He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed.”* Jesus did not stay in Jerusalem at night but retreated to this place (John 7:53–8:1; 18:1; Luke 21:37).

**22:40** *“Pray that you may not enter into temptation.”* The temptation that night would be to forsake and deny Him. The disciples all failed this test.

**22:42** *“Father ... take this cup away from Me ... not My will, but Yours, be done.”* The cup was the judgment of the sins of all the world (Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2). Jesus drank this cup of God’s wrath (Psalm 111:6; 75:7–8; Jer. 25:15).

**22:43** *“An angel ... strengthening Him.”* God did not remove the cross, but sent an angel to strengthen Jesus for the coming judgment.

**22:44** *“His sweat became like great drops of blood.”* The internal agony of Jesus at the prospect of becoming sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21) caused Him to sweat like a man who was bleeding. He would have begun the ordeal of His crucifixion completely dehydrated.

**22:46** *“Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation.”* Twice Jesus warned the disciples that the lack of prayer led to spiritual failure (Matt. 17:21; see James 1:12–15).

**22:48** *“Are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”* Jesus let Judas know that He was aware of Judas’ betrayal and the hypocrisy of doing it *“with a kiss.”*

**22:49** *“Lord, shall we strike with the sword?”* The disciples misunderstood Jesus’ earlier instruction (v. 36). While we have the right to self-defense against criminal attack, we do not establish His kingdom, nor uphold His cause, using violence.

**22:52–53** *“Have you come out, as against a robber ...?”* Jesus rebukes these religious leaders for their hypocrisy. His total command of the situation shows the effects of His prayers. *“But this is your hour.”* Though these events fulfilled prophecy (v. 37; Isaiah 53), these men were still accountable for their rejection and unbelief.

**22:54** *“Peter followed at a distance.”* Peter’s fall was predictable. His lust for greatness (v. 24), his boastful self-assurance (v. 33), his lack of prayer (vv. 40, 46), and his futile attempt to keep Christ from the cross (v. 50) had all placed him *“at a distance”* from the power of fellowship with Christ (1 John 1:7; Gal. 5:16).

**22:55–62** *“I do not know Him.”* Peter’s three-fold denial happened just as Jesus had warned. *“Peter went out and wept bitterly.”* The convicting look from Jesus broke Peter’s heart and, with it, his pride. He would be a different man in the future. God often allows failure in our lives to teach us humility and to make us more dependent upon Him.

**22:63–65** *“Now the men ... mocked Him and beat Him ... saying, ‘Prophecy!’”* This conduct was forbidden both by Jewish and Roman law. With this abuse, the physical suffering of Jesus begins.

**22:66–69** *“If You are the Christ, tell us ... Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God.”* There had been many before Jesus came who claimed to be the Christ (Acts 5:33–39). What Jesus said here went beyond claiming to be the Christ. He made it clear that He was God in human flesh and would be their judge (Psalm 110:1; Dan. 7:13–14; John 5:19–30; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:1–3; 8:1).

**22:70** *“Are You then the Son of God?”* These leaders realized that Jesus was claiming equality with God (John 5:18). When Jesus answered, *“You rightly say that I am,”* they were enraged, for He convicted them of the crime of killing Him because of who He was, not for what He had done.

## **LUKE CHAPTER 23**

The crucifixion of Jesus for the sins of the world.

### **The Trials of Jesus**

Luke 23:1–25 (Matt. 27:1–2, 11–26; Mark 15:1–15; John 18:28–39, 19:5–16)

**23:2** *“We found this fellow ... saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.”* The religious authorities accused Jesus of three things: the first two are absolute lies, the third is stated in such a way as to make Jesus seem to be a threat to Rome. They do not mention the charge of blasphemy (22:71; Matt. 26:65).

**23:3** *“Are you the King of the Jews?”* Pilate focuses on the only true charge against Him. Jesus answers that what he had asked was true (see 22:68–70). In John 18:36, Jesus told Pilate, *“My kingdom is not of this world.”*

**23:4** *“I find no fault in this Man.”* Pilate was objective in his examination of Jesus, where the religious leaders were totally dishonest. In this chapter, Jesus is declared innocent five times (vv. 4, 14, 15, 22, 41).

**23:5–7** “*Beginning from Galilee ... Herod’s jurisdiction.*” Pilate thought he saw a way out of his dilemma—not wanting to condemn an innocent man—by sending Jesus to Herod for judgment.

**23:9** “*Then he questioned Him ... but He answered him nothing.*” Having heard about Jesus, Herod simply wanted Him to perform some miracle, to satisfy his curiosity. Jesus maintained a dignified silence (Isa. 53:7).

**23:11** “*Then Herod ... treated Him with contempt and mocked Him.*” Angered at Jesus’ silence, Herod makes a joke of His claim to be a king, putting a royal robe on Him.

**23:12** “*That very day Pilate and Herod became friends.*” Throughout history, many former enemies have become friends over their shared hatred and contempt for the Lord Jesus Christ.

**23:14–16** “*You have brought this Man to me ... I have found no fault in this Man.*” Rome was famous for its impartial justice. Pilate makes the right judgment, but due to his own weakness, he will be overruled by the religious leaders.

**23:18** “*Away with this Man, and release to us Barabbas.*” It was customary for Pilate to release one prisoner to the people at the Feast of Passover. Though he tries to release Jesus, both the leaders and the people ask him to release Barabbas, a revolutionary and a murderer. “*Barabbas*” means “son of the father.” The Jews rejected the one and only Son of the heavenly Father and chose instead a son of the father (“*the devil*,” John 8:44). Jesus died in the place of a murderer, a symbol of His death for all sinners.

**23:21** “*Crucify Him, crucify Him!*” Only Pilate had the authority to impose the death penalty. The religious leaders used both blackmail (John 19:12) and flattery (John 19:15) to move Pilate. The blackmail suggests that they would have sent a report to Rome accusing Pilate of supporting treachery against Caesar.

**23:24–25** “*So Pilate gave sentence ... delivered Jesus to their will.*” Jesus was declared innocent both by Pilate and Herod. The frenzy of the crowd and the threats of the religious leaders overcame Pilate’s sense of justice so as to satisfy the crowd.

### **The Crucifixion of Jesus**

Luke 23:26–49 (Matt. 27:32–56; Mark 15:21–42; John 19:17–24, 30)

**23:26** “*A certain man, Simon a Cyrenian.*” This man was from North Africa. He had probably saved all his life to attend one Passover. His sons became known disciples (Mark 15:21). The Rufus mentioned by Paul may be the same man (Rom. 16:13). In his carrying of the cross, Simon demonstrated the disciples sharing of Christ’s sufferings (Luke 9:23).

**23:29** “*Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore.*” In the coming days of the destruction of Jerusalem, women without children would be blessed by not having to watch their children slaughtered.

**23:30** “*‘Fall on us!’ ... ‘Cover us!’*” These words come from Hosea 10:8 where the judgment is so terrible that immediate death is preferable. To sin knowingly is to incur the harshest form of punishment (Heb. 10:26–31; James 4:17; 2 Pet. 2:21).

**23:31** “*The green wood ... the dry.*” The point is, if Jesus, who was innocent, was being crucified, how much more severe would the punishment be of those who are guilty. This anticipates the coming judgment of Jerusalem by the Roman army in 70 AD.

**23:34** “*Father, forgive them.*” Even in the face of rejection and hatred, Jesus pleads for forgiveness for His enemies. This prayer shows the greatness of His compassion (Phil. 2:5–9), and the desire of God the Father that none should

perish (1Tim. 2:1–6). This forgiveness is available to everyone (Rom. 5:6; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2), but can only be received by faith (Eph. 2:8–9).

**23:35** *“He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ.”* This is a fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy to the people of Nazareth (Luke 4:23). The hatred of these rulers of the Jews left no room for compassion on Him who healed so many (Psalm 22:7–8).

**23:38** *“An inscription ... in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew.”* It was common to post a sign listing the criminal’s offences above their head. This placard was the charge for which He was crucified. Jesus’ true identity is proclaimed to the world: **“THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.”** Israel and the world had rejected their Savior.

**23:40–42** *“Do you not even fear God ...?”* This thief first rebukes his fellow criminal, then confesses their guilt as opposed to Jesus’ innocence, and finally pleads with Jesus to remember him when He enters into His kingdom. This thief is a picture of the simplicity of saving faith. Nailed to a cross, he could do nothing but trust in the mercy of the Lord Jesus.

**23:43** *“Today you will be with Me in Paradise.”* In ancient thought, Paradise was “the garden of the King.” To be invited there to meet with the king was the highest honor. Jesus does more than offer this thief eternal life, He assures him of a place of honor in His kingdom.

**23:44–45** *“About the sixth hour.”* Jesus was crucified at the third hour (Mark 15:25), which was 9 a.m. The sixth hour (12 noon) marks the beginning of the worst of Jesus’ agony. The darkening of the sun and the ripping of the veil both show God’s wrath upon Israel, as well as the opening of full and free access into the presence of God (Heb. 4:14–16; 10:19–23), ending the Old Testament system of worship under the Law.

**23:46** *“Father, into Your hands.”* Jesus quotes the words of David’s faith from Psalm 31:5, however, He adds the word, *“Father.”* Jesus entrusts His Spirit into the safekeeping of the Father.

**23:47** *“The centurion ... glorified God.”* This centurion honored God by recognizing Jesus as the Son of God (see Matt. 27:54; Mark 15:39). This was the beginning of the fulfillment of Jesus’ words, *“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself”* (John 12:32).

**23:48–49** *“The whole crowd ... all His acquaintances.”* Some came to watch out of curiosity, but Jesus’ followers, standing at a distance, watched in sorrow and confusion (Luke 24:16–24).

### **The Burial of Jesus in Joseph’s Tomb**

Luke 23:50–56 (Matt. 27:57–61; Mark 15:42–47; John 19:38–42)

**23:50–51** *“Joseph, a council member ... he had not consented to their decision.”* This man was a member of the Jewish council—the Sanhedrin. Both he and Nicodemus had become secret believers (John 7:50–52; 19:38–42).

**23:53** *“A tomb ... where no one had ever lain before.”* Jesus’ body was honorably buried by Joseph and Nicodemus in an undefiled tomb, which would be the place of His resurrection (Isa. 53:8–9).

**23:54–56** *“The women ... observed the tomb ... and prepared spices.”* It was customary to anoint the body with special oils and spices. Because of the late hour and the coming Sabbath, this was not possible. These faithful women prepared to perform this final honor to the body of Jesus after the Sabbath was over. His resurrection would make this task unnecessary.

## **LUKE CHAPTER 24**

The resurrection of Jesus; His appearances and instructions to His disciples.

### **The Resurrection Morning**

Luke 24:1–12 (Matt. 28:1–10; Mark 16:1–8; John 20:1–10)

**24:1** *“Now on the first day of the week.”* This was Sunday morning. It was the beginning of the Feast of Firstfruits, which always began on the day after the Sabbath which followed Passover (Lev. 23:9–11). Both Firstfruits and Pentecost were always on Sunday (Lev. 23:15–17), which is why early Christians, and we today, celebrate Sunday as a memorial to the Lord’s resurrection and the beginning of the Church Age.

**24:2** *“They found the stone rolled away from the tomb.”* We are told in Matthew 28:2 that there was a great earthquake, the second since the crucifixion (Matt. 27:51), and that *“an angel of the Lord”* had rolled away the stone.

**24:5** *“Why do you seek the living among the dead?”* The women came to anoint a dead body, but the Lord was alive! *“He is not here, but is risen!”* This is the greatest proclamation of victory in history (Rom. 1:4; 4:23–25; 1 Cor. 15:1–4)!

**24:11** *“They [the disciples] did not believe them [the women].”* The persistent unbelief of the disciples, after having been told at least three times by Jesus that He would rise from the dead, shows how hard-hearted we can be (Mark 16:11, 13–14). See Jesus’ rebuke to them in Luke 24:25–26.

**24:12** *“Peter arose and ran to the tomb.”* John tells us that he also ran with Peter, and he believed (John 20:3–9)—the first of the disciples to do so without seeing the resurrected Christ. We should not be unsettled by the variations in the Gospel accounts. None of them contradict the others but, as in any record by multiple witnesses, each will remember or will emphasize different aspects of the same story.

### **Christ’s Appearance on the Emmaus Road**

Luke 24:13–35 (Mark 16:12–13)

**24:13** *“Behold, two of them were traveling ... to a village called Emmaus.”* See Mark 16:12–13 for the only other record of this event.

**24:15–16** *“Jesus Himself drew near ... they did not know Him.”* Jesus may have concealed His identity from them, or their unbelief may have blinded them. It is critical to see that one may believe in Jesus Christ for eternal life, and yet sometimes have a hardened heart of unbelief. This was true of all the disciples at this point.

**24:19** *“Jesus of Nazareth ... a Prophet mighty in deed and word.”* This Cleopas (v. 18) may be the same as Clopas in John 19:25. It may be that it was he and his wife Mary who were the two walking this road. Note their faith in Jesus’ deeds and words. Luke begins the book of Acts, *“The former account I made ... of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach”* (Acts 1:1). This also associates Jesus with Moses (Acts 7:22), who was a type of Christ (Deut. 18:15).

**24:21** *“But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel.”* Though they had not lost faith in His role as prophet, they had begun to doubt His role as Redeemer (Job 19:25–26; Luke 1:68–72; 2:38).

**24:22–23** *“Certain women ... said He was alive.”* These two were among those who heard of the Resurrection, but did not believe it (vv. 9–11).

**24:25** *“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!”* Jesus rebukes their unbelief, reminding them that His mission is the central focus of all the prophets.

**24:26** *“Ought not the Christ to have suffered ... to enter into His glory?”* This question demands an affirmative answer from anyone familiar with the prophets (Psalm 22; Isa. 53; Zech. 11:12–13; 12:10; 13:6).

**24:27** *“He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”* What a Bible class this must have been—to have the central figure of all the Bible point out specific references to Himself throughout the Old Testament (John 1:14)!

**24:28** *“He indicated that He would have gone farther.”* Here, Jesus displays the common courtesy of His time. He would not intrude into their habitation without an invitation. In the same way, He will not force Himself into any life, but must be received and welcomed (John 1:10–13; 3:33; 1 John 5:9–13).

**24:29** *“But they constrained Him ... ‘Abide with us.’”* This reminds us of Jesus’ words in the Upper Room, *“Abide in Me, and I in you”* (John 15:4). True fellowship with Christ demands that we desire His presence, and seek it above all else.

**24:31** *“Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him.”* Jesus’ act of breaking and blessing the bread, which they had observed before, made Him known to them.

**24:32** *“He opened the Scriptures to us.”* Like these two disciples, we all must depend upon our Lord—through His Spirit—to open to us the meaning of the Scriptures (Zech. 4:6; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13–14; 1 Cor. 2:10–13).

**24:33–34** *“So they rose up that very hour ... ‘The Lord is risen indeed,’ and has appeared to Simon.”* The long, seven-mile journey seemed as nothing for the joy they had to share. How gracious of our Lord that He would make a special appearance to Peter, in private, to show His compassion and forgiveness to him!

#### **Jesus’ Appearance and Instruction to the Disciples** Luke 24:36–49 (John 20:19–23; Acts 1:3–5; 1 Cor. 15:5–8)

**24:36–37** *“‘Peace to you’ ... they were terrified.”* How often Jesus comes to us to bring us peace, and we instead give in to fear (Matt. 14:25–27).

**24:38–39** *“Why are you troubled ... a spirit does not have flesh and bones.”* The resurrected body of Jesus is physical, and He retains the scars of His crucifixion (see John 20:20, 27). The resurrection body is *“flesh and bones”* but not *“flesh and blood”* (1 Cor. 15:50).

**24:41–43** *“Have you any food here?”* The resurrection body is able to eat but probably does not require food for sustenance. This was done as a final proof to them that He was not a spirit.

**24:44–45** *“All things must be fulfilled which were written.”* Again, Jesus *“opened their understanding,”* concerning Scriptures that related to Himself. Just as He enlightened these disciples, He desires to do for us, by His Spirit, if we are receptive (Eph. 1:15–20; 3:14–21).

**24:46–47** *“Thus it is written.”* This is the third time in His post-resurrection appearances recorded by Luke that Jesus stresses that His crucifixion and resurrection was prophesied in the Old Testament Scriptures (vv. 27, 44). As the Apostles went out, they were to stress this truth (Acts 3:18; 17:2–3; 26:22–23). *“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached.”* Repentance refers to a change of mind. The Jewish nation needed to turn from their reliance on lineage from Abraham as a basis of salvation (Matt. 3:9; John 8:33, 39). The Gentile world needed to turn from their trust in idols. However, repentance alone is not the basis of forgiveness. It is the door that

leads to faith in Jesus Christ, which is the only means of receiving eternal life (Mark 1:15; Luke 8:12; John 1:7; 3:16–18, 36; 5:24; Acts 16:31; 26:18).

**24:49** *“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father.”* Here, Jesus refers to the coming of the Holy Spirit, as promised in the prophecies of the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31–34; Ezek. 36:24–28; Joel 2:28–29). *“Endued with power from on high.”* The coming and personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit is for the purpose of giving to each believer the supernatural power to learn God’s Word, in order to accomplish the plan of God for their life and ministry (John 14:26; 15:26–27; 16:13; Acts 1:5; 2:4; Eph. 1:15–23; 3:14–21; 5:18; 1 Cor. 12:13; 2 Cor. 4:5–7; Gal. 5:16, 22–23).

**24:51** *“While He blessed them ... He was ... carried up into heaven.”* Luke ends his Gospel at the point that He begins the book of Acts (Acts 1:2, 8).

**24:52–53** *“They worshiped Him ... with great joy ... praising and blessing God.”* The doubts and fears of the disciples had been erased by the truth of the Resurrection. The true worship of Jesus Christ, in the power of the Spirit, should cause every believer to overcome the troubles of this world and to live a life of joy and praise to God (Rom. 5:1–5; 8:31–39; 2 Cor. 1:3–11; 2 Tim. 1:7; 1 John 5:5).