

WAKE UP CALL: A STUDY THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

The goal of **Wake Up Call** is to try and help us all get to know Jesus better.

One of the best ways to get to know Jesus better is by reading about His life, knowing what He *really* said, and living a life like He's asked us to live. The best and easiest way of doing this is by reading and studying the Bible. Jesus' ministry on earth lasted 3 years and each of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark Luke and John) give us great insight into what Jesus said, how He lived, and what He taught us about God; how much God loves us and how He wants us to live...and treat others.

But let's be honest, it's hard to read the Bible sometimes. It's hard to carve out the time and some of the stuff we read in the Bible is hard to understand. And that's why we created **Wake Up Call**--to help in studying and understanding some of what we read. **Wake Up Call** has been set up to fit just about anyone's schedule. We've broken up each day of **Wake Up Call** into 2 parts: *The 10 Minute Plan* and *The 20 Minute Plan*--giving you two options, depending on your ability to spend 10 minutes in study each day or 20 minutes (or more).

Here's a quick look at the 2 plans:

THE 10 MINUTE PLAN

STEP 1) Read the daily Bible passage from Luke.

STEP 2) Answer the two questions included--one related to the daily reading, the other, an application question.

STEP 3) Take a moment and pray. We've included some things to pray about each day--mostly related to the reading.

This should help with busy schedules, but if you have a little more time, move on to the 20 Minute Plan...

THE 20 MINUTE PLAN

STEP 1) Complete the 10 Minute Plan--reading through the daily Bible passage from Luke and answering the two 10 Minute questions.

STEP 2) Move on to the 20 Minute Plan and answer the additional questions.

STEP 3) Read through the additional pages which include all kinds of facts and information related to that day's reading. Going through the additional pages will help to put some of the daily reading into context--historically, culturally and biblically.

STEP 4) Take a moment and pray using the pray time from the 10 Minute Plan as a template.

We really want to encourage guys to go through **Wake Up Call** with their wives, their kids, their buddies, and so on.

We also want to encourage you to go through Wake Up Call with your small groups. We'll have weekly wrap up questions for small groups to work through. We will post the weekly Wake Up Call discussion questions on the Men's Community Page at: www.flatironschurch.com/mens.

Now, let's get started...

DAY 1

READ LUKE 1:1-38

TODAY'S READING: The beginning. A quick intro from Luke to his friend Theophilus, then the story of how the births of John the Baptist and Jesus were foretold to Zechariah and Mary by an angel.

THE 10 MINUTE PLAN...IF ALL YOU HAVE IS 10 MINUTES TO SPARE TODAY

Read today's Bible passage (Luke 1:1-38) and answer the following questions:

1) Luke tells Theophilus that he's written "*an orderly account*" so that he may have "*certainty concerning the things*" he'd been taught. What are some of the orderly aspects you see in this section that you think Luke is writing about? _____

2) Who do you relate to the most in this section of Luke, and why? _____

Take a couple of minutes to pray. Ask God to help you with this study through Luke. Ask Him to open your heart and your eyes to new things you've never noticed or heard before in the Bible, and to help you understand Jesus (and His impact on the world) in a whole new way.

THE 20 MINUTE PLAN

Do the 10 Minute Plan, then answer the following questions and read through the rest of the Day 1 pages:

1) Luke was the only Gentile to write a book of the New Testament. He was also a doctor and his Gospel is understood to be the most comprehensive. Why do you think Luke was chosen for this work? _____

2) Zechariah played a key role in these verses and is given a revelation from God. As a priest at the temple in Jerusalem (a very great honor and sign of great respect), should he have been "above" doubting? Explain. _____

3) Have you heard from God, and if so, how did He speak? _____

4) We've all doubted God at some point, but how do you handle your doubts? _____

5) How much guilt do you carry for having ever doubted God? _____

DID YOU KNOW?



Herod the Great reigned 37-4 B.C., and his kingdom also included Samaria, Galilee, Perea, and Traconitis. He was a non-Jew, an Idulmean, who was appointed king of Judea by the Roman Senate in 40 B.C. and gained control in 37. He was ruthless, murdering his wife, his three sons, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, uncle, and many others. He also ordered a massacre of infants in a futile attempt to kill the infant Jesus (READ: Matt. 2:13-18).

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DAY 1 ...MORE

THE ARC

• The Arc of the Covenant was the only piece of furniture in the Holy of Holies (think "*Raiders of the Lost Ark*")



• Kept hidden from view at all times by a floor to ceiling curtain

• Wooden box overlaid with gold 3.75'W x 2.25' L x 2.25' H

• Anyone who touched it would die (thus the poles to carry it)

• Contained the Ten Commandments

• Was kept in the Tabernacle Tent and later the Temple

• God spoke to Moses through the 2 Cherubim on top (thus the big deal)

THE JEWISH PRIESTHOOD: ZECHARIAH'S JOB

What was the priesthood like in Zechariah's day?

In first century Palestine there was no separation between church and state. The priests at the temple in Jerusalem not only officiated over the religious life of the Jews, they were also rulers and judges.

Herod, who was himself a pawn of Rome, had his own pawns installed in the Jewish priesthood. By the first century, the election of the High Priest was more political than religious. The Romans wanted the priesthood to support their occupation, and the Herods made sure their desire was carried out. However, it would be unfair to categorize all of the priesthood as sympathetic to Rome. Some did support rebellion against Rome, but those at the highest levels were undoubtedly in Rome's back pocket.

The priests lived lavish lifestyles while the average Jewish peasant struggled to survive. The temple taxes combined with taxes imposed by Herod and Rome were literally threatening the existence of the Jewish people. The people of the land were carrying a burden they could scarcely bear or tolerate. Palestine had become a powder keg waiting to ignite.



THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM



(Source: Templemount.org)

What's the big deal about the temple?

The temple was very important to the Jews. Anyone that "defiled" the temple or any of the holy articles inside would be destroyed by God, literally, in the Old Testament.

Why all the fuss?

This is where God designated He would dwell so that His people could have access to Him. You can scan through most of the second half of the book of Exodus and see the details and requirements.

Some quick temple facts:

- The Main Temple (the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies) Size: 45'L x 15'W x 15'H
- The Main Temple was separated into these sections: the Outer Courtyards, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies
- Main Temple was made of a wood skeleton, overlaid with gold
- A 15' high curtain separated/concealed the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place
- The closer temple items (lampstands, bowls, etc.) were to the Holy of Holies, the more valuable the metals of which they are made (bronze, silver and gold)
- There were outer courtyards where animals were sacrificed

NAZARETH TODAY...



An archaeological excavation the Israel Antiquities Authority recently conducted has revealed new information about ancient Nazareth from the time of Jesus. Remains of a dwelling that date to the Early Roman period were discovered for the first time in an excavation. It was there that Mary received the revelation by the Angel Gabriel that she would conceive a child to be born the Son of God -- Jesus. (Source: Antiquities.org)

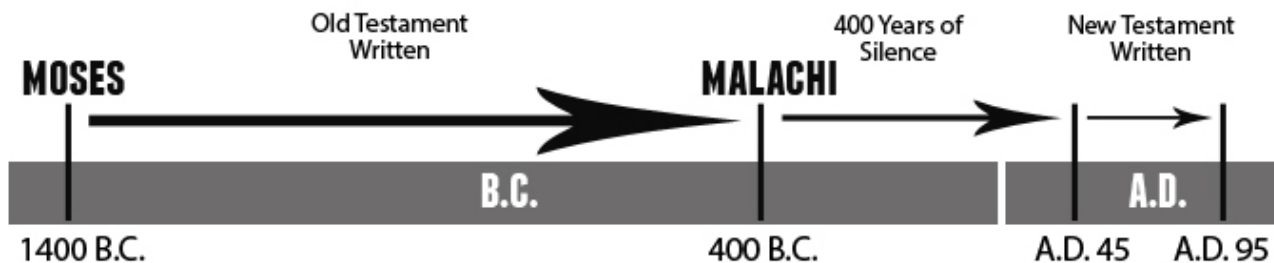
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DAY 1

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THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT TIMELINE



400 YEARS OF SILENCE: THE TIME BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

At the time when Zechariah was a priest, when God sent the angel Gabriel to inform him of John the Baptist's birth, the Jews had gone for 400 years without hearing from God in any form or fashion, known as the 400 Years of Silence. This quiet time between the Old Testament and Jesus' Birth looks like this:

Time Table:

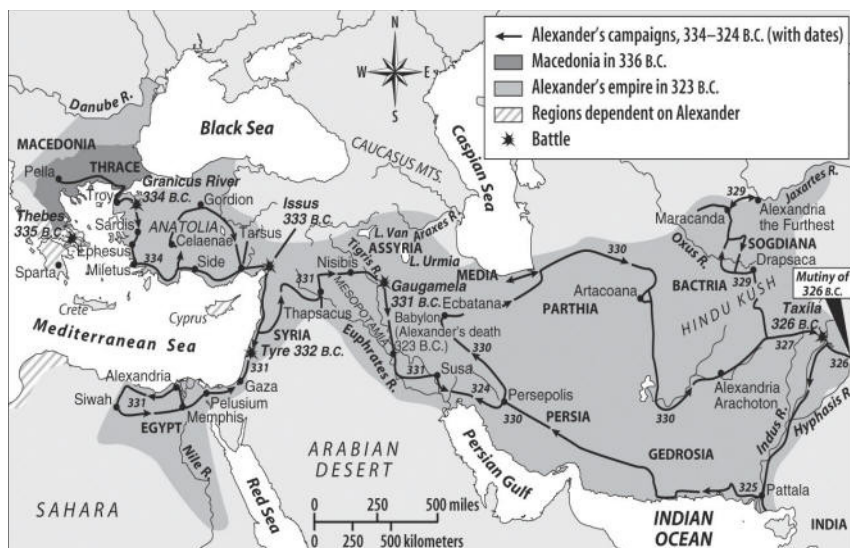
Malachi (last OT book) was written somewhere around 400 years or so before Jesus birth. There was no contact recorded between God and man until around the time of Jesus' birth.

Secular Middle East History During This Time Period:



Alexander the Great

- 330 BC – The Persian Empire was overtaken by Alexander the Great
- The Jews shifted political allegiance to him and were left alone
- Use of the Greek language was spread into the area



After Alexander the Great died his kingdom was divided among four of his generals.

- The general over Egypt (Ptolemy) was a Greek; he was accepted by Egyptians as their Pharaoh
- A sizeable Jewish community also grew in Egypt
- Most of Palestine's countryside outside of Jerusalem adopted the Greek culture
- The first 5 books of the OT (Pentateuch) was translated into Greek in 250 B.C and the rest by 130 B.C

198 B.C – the Syrian Empire took over control of the Jews.

They aggressively spread Greek culture in that area to the point of death if you did not obey. The Temple was turned into a pagan shrine.

164 – 63 B.C. – The Maccabean Period

A family of Jewish Priests led a revolt and gained independence. The temple was cleansed and Jewish faith and culture was restored. Jews celebrate each December with Hanukkah this restoration of their faith. However, successive leaders became more and more corrupt to the point of being pagan. Internal strife led Jewish leaders to reach out to the Roman Empire to restore order. Pompey did so and he brought in Roman rule which began in 63 B.C. and continued to the 4th century AD.

63 B.C. to Jesus Birth – Roman Rule "Pax Romana"

- Roman civilization (roads, money, political organization, taxes, army and related demands)
- The Romans entered the temple and the most holy places causing disruption with the Jews
- Thus – the Jews looking for a liberator from their Roman oppressors (a military perspective of the coming Messiah)

DAY 2

READ LUKE 1:39-80

TODAY'S READING: Mary, pregnant with Jesus, travels from the region of Galilee to Judah to visit her relative Elizabeth--who is pregnant with John the Baptist. Shortly after her visit, John the Baptist is born.

THE 10 MINUTE PLAN...IF ALL YOU HAVE IS 10 MINUTES TO SPARE TODAY

Read today's Bible passage (Luke 1:39-80) and answer the following questions:

1) After John is born, Zechariah is able to speak again and it causes a lot of talk throughout the hill country of Judea. What aspect of Zechariah and Elizabeth's story do you think people were most amazed by? _____

2) What are some ways you have seen God work in your life (and/or the lives of others) that have amazed people? _____

Take a couple of minutes to pray. Ask God to remind you throughout the day today how He has worked in amazing ways in the past...and ask Him to help you have the faith and understanding for the amazing way He's going to work in your future.

THE 20 MINUTE PLAN

Do the 10 Minute Plan, then answer the following questions and read through the rest of the Day 2 pages:

1) In contrast to Zechariah in yesterday's reading, Mary accepts the gift of the Lord without question. Why do you think she accepted this great honor (birthing Jesus) without question? _____

2) Mary sings a song of joy and celebrates what the Lord has done. Why do you think Luke included this in his Gospel and letter to his friend Theophilus? _____

3) Have you experienced a great blessing from God, and if so, how did you share those blessings with your family and friends? _____

4) God is present in the smallest and obscure things. Why do you think He directed the Jews to wait until the 8th day after birth to perform circumcision? _____

A VIRGIN BIRTH? REALLY?



The birth of Jesus to a virgin is a miracle some people find hard to believe. These 3 facts can aid in our faith:

- (1) Luke was a medical doctor, and he knew perfectly well how babies were made. It would have been just as hard for him to believe in a virgin birth as it is for us, yet he reports it as fact.
- (2) Luke was a painstaking researcher who based his Gospel on eyewitness accounts. Tradition holds that he talked with Mary about the events he recorded in the first two chapters. This is Mary's story, not a fictional invention.
- (3) Christians and Jews, who worship God as the Creator of the universe, should have no doubts that God has the power to create a child in a virgin's womb.

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DAY 2 ...MORE

ON THE 8TH DAY...

The circumcision ceremony was an important event to the family of a Jewish baby boy.

God commanded circumcision on the 8th day when He was beginning to form His holy nation (Gen. 17:9-14), and He had reaffirmed it through Moses (Lev 12:1-3).

This ceremony was a time of joy when friends and family members would celebrate the baby's becoming part of God's covenant nation.

"HIS NAME IS JOHN..." (LUKE 1:62)

Family lines and family names were important to the Jews. The people naturally assumed the child (John) would receive Zechariah's name or at least a family name.

CIRCUMCISION AND SCIENCE

What can science tell us about God's call to circumcise on the 8th day?

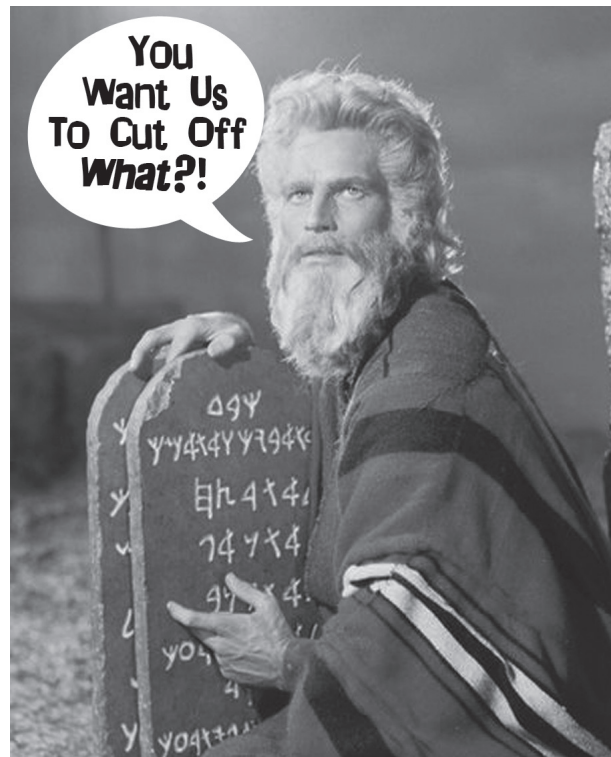
In Genesis 17:12, God specifically directed Abraham to circumcise newborn males on the eighth day. Why the eighth day?

In 1935, professor H. Dam proposed the name "Vitamin K" for the factor in foods that helped prevent hemorrhaging in baby chicks. We now know Vitamin K is responsible for the production (by the liver) of the element known as prothrombin. If Vitamin K is deficient, there will be a prothrombin deficiency and hemorrhaging may occur.

Oddly, it is only on the fifth through the seventh days of the newborn male's life that Vitamin K (produced by bacteria in the intestinal tract) is present in adequate quantities. Vitamin K, coupled with prothrombin, causes blood coagulation, which is important in any surgical procedure. Holt and McIntosh, in their classic work, *Holt Pediatrics*, observed that a newborn infant has "peculiar susceptibility to bleeding between the second and fifth days of life...Hemorrhages at this time, though often inconsequential, are sometimes extensive; they may produce serious damage to internal organs, especially to the brain, and cause death from shock and exsanguination" (1953, pp. 125-126). Obviously, then, if Vitamin K is not produced in sufficient quantities until days five through seven, it would be wise to postpone any surgery until some time after that.

But why did God specify day eight?

On the eighth day, the amount of prothrombin present actually is elevated above one-hundred percent of normal—and is the only day in the male's life in which this will be the case under normal conditions. If surgery is to be performed, day eight is the perfect day to do it. Vitamin K and prothrombin levels are at their peak.



(Source: Apologeticspress.org)

MARY'S HOMETOWN OF NAZARETH

Nazareth was a small and insignificant village during the period of Mary and Jesus. While the site was settled during the period 600-900 BC, it was too small to be included in the list of settlements of the tribe of Zebulun (Joshua 19:10-16), which mentions twelve towns and six villages. Nazareth is not included among the 45 cities of the Galilee that were mentioned by Josephus, and its name is missing from the 63 towns in Galilee mentioned in the Talmud. It seems that the words of Nathanael of Cana, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:47) characterized the site's seeming insignificance.

Needless to say that the people of Judea had never heard of Nazareth. And from this we understand the reason that Pontius Pilate decorates the cross with the sign "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" (John 19:19) - meaning that the "King of the Jews" is from "nowhere." The early name "Nazarenos" given to the Christians might have been a derogatory nickname that the people of Judea gave to the followers of Jesus (Matthew 26:71, Acts 6:38). Jesus was known throughout the Galilee as "Jesus of Nazareth" (Matthew 21:11, Mark 14:67) - but for those not from the Galilee, this name had no meaning for them.

In order to explain where Nazareth was located, the Galileans had to explain that the village was near Gat-Hyefer (Jonah's hometown, Kings II 14:25), which could be seen from Nazareth. Archeological excavations conducted in Nazareth (by Bagati since 1955) show that Nazareth was a small agricultural village settled by a few dozen families.

GOT MORE QUESTIONS?

CHECK OUT THE
MEN'S GROUP
"APOLOGETICS 101"
ON FLATIRONSLIST

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DAY 2

...MORE FACTS, ETC.

DR. LUKE

- During Paul's imprisonment in Rome, he wrote to believers in Colosse and identified Luke as: "the beloved physician" (Col. 4:14).

- Reading through the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts, one is struck with the abundant use of medical terminology in these books.

- Luke is the only gospel writer that recorded Jesus' statements about physicians like, "Physician, heal yourself!" (Luke 4:23)

- Luke has an almost clinical statement about the woman trying to get healed: "Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any." (8:43)

LUKE THE DOCTOR: THE AUTHOR AND RESEARCHER OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Here, we will examine the life of Luke and see how his life and his writings ministered. Luke used the 52 chapters of the Gospel that bears his name, and the Book of Acts, to minister to our physical needs, emotional needs, and spiritual needs.

Luke, The Doctor, is only mentioned by name three times in Paul's epistles (Col. 4:14; Philemon 24; 2 Tim. 4:11), although he might be hinted at on several other occasions. When he wrote his Gospel and the book of Acts, he did not mention his name at all (Acts 1:1), nor did he mention his brother Titus. Luke was a humble person and he did not want to call attention to himself or his family, but rather, he wanted to point people to the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in His Church.

Ethnicity: An Antiochian Gentile

At the end of Paul's epistle to the church at Colosse, written about AD 62, he sent greetings from different people who were laboring with him in Rome, even though he was under house arrest and waiting for his trial before Nero. He wrote: "Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), and Jesus who is called Justus. These are my only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me. Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bare him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis. Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you" (Col. 4:10-14).



These verses imply that Luke was a Gentile. Paul recounted greetings from Aristarchus, (John) Mark, and Jesus/Justus and identified them as being of the circumcision, i.e. they were Jewish. The next three names, by implication, were Gentiles: Epaphras, Luke, and Demas. Luke may also have been a "God-fearer," a Gentile who followed the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but who did not undergo circumcision in order to enter the Jewish nation.

Eusebius stated that Luke was "by race an Antiochian." Sir William Ramsay, the noted authority on the historicity of the Book of Acts, pointed out that: "Eusebius, however, does not say that Luke was an Antiochian; he merely speaks of him as 'being according to birth of those from Antioch.' The curious and awkward expression is obviously chosen in order to avoid the statement that Luke was an Antiochian" (1896: 389). He went on and conjectured that Luke had some kind of family connection with Antioch. On the other hand Jerome, a near contemporary of Eusebius, stated that Luke was "a physician of Antioch" (Lives, 1994: 363). We assume in this essay that he had some personal connection with Antioch.

Luke had the distinct honor of being the only non-Jewish writer of the New Testament. In fact, Luke implied in the introduction to his gospel that he had not seen the Lord, but rather, heard about events in the life of the Lord Jesus from other eye-witnesses (Luke 1:2).

It is hinted in the Book of Acts that he is an Antiochian. He mentioned this city a number of times and gave details of it and showed some "civic pride" (Acts 11:19-30; 13:1; 14:26-28; 15:22, 30-35; 18:22). Interestingly, when he wrote about the six deacons in Jerusalem who were waiting on tables, he mentioned them by name, but only Nicolas is identified by where he was from — Antioch (Acts 6:5). Luke also mentioned the fact that the believers in Jesus were first called Christians at Antioch (11:26).

Luke: Medical Training?

It is interesting to conjecture where Luke got his medical training. There were important Greek medical centers in Pergamum, Tarsus, Athens, Alexandria in Egypt, Berytus (Beirut in Lebanon), Laodicea ad Mare ("by the sea," Latakia in Syria), and the Asklepiion shrine on the island of Cos that was established in honor of Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine. Interestingly, Luke did not record anything about this medical center or what transpired on the island when he and the Apostle Paul landed on the island on their way to Jerusalem at the end of Paul's third missionary journey.

(Source: Biblearcheology.org)

DAY 3

READ LUKE 2-3

TODAY'S READING: Jesus is born in Bethlehem (Chp. 2), then grows up. At age 12, Jesus amazes the teachers of the law in Jerusalem while visiting over Passover. Later (Chp. 3), Jesus is baptized by John and Luke recounts Jesus' family tree or genealogy.

THE 10 MINUTE PLAN...IF ALL YOU HAVE IS 10 MINUTES TO SPARE TODAY

Read today's Bible passage (Luke 2-3) and answer the following questions:

1) In Luke 2 we get the "Christmas Story". Who do you find yourself relating to the most here (Joseph, the shepherds, etc.) and why? _____

2) Which part of Jesus' life in Luke 2 & 3 do you think shows His human side the most...and which shows His divine side the most? _____

Take a couple of minutes to pray. Ask for God to keep you focused on the fact that Jesus was (and is) fully God...and fully human.

THE 20 MINUTE PLAN

Do the 10 Minute Plan, then answer the following questions and read through the rest of the Day 3 pages:

1) Joseph and Mary travel to Jerusalem, fulfilling the Law of the Lord that every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord (Luke 2:23). Why do you think this is significant? _____

2) God (in turn) presents Jesus as His Son, via the proclamations of Simeon and Anna, ("*...a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.*" Luke 2:32)) and John (Luke 3:16.). Why do you think He does this? _____

3) At the end of Chapter 3 we see Jesus' genealogy. Do you recognize any of the names? If so, who and what do you know about them? _____

4) Jesus, God in the Flesh, was perfect and without sin. Why do you think He was baptized? _____

DID YOU KNOW?



Did you know that shepherds, likely 8-10 year old orphans, played an important role in the world of Israel? Their work was to find grass and water for the sheep and to protect them from wild animals and tend to their sicknesses and wounds. It required them to spend long hours exposed to the natural elements – it was not an easy life. It was to the shepherds ("the least of them") that the angels first announced the birth of Jesus. This was especially appropriate since Jesus' famous ancestor, David, had centuries earlier watched his family's sheep in those same fields near Bethlehem. It also reminds us that the coming of Jesus was good news for all people, not just for those already privileged by wealth and power.

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0° LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

Palestine was under the rule of the Roman Empire with Emperor Caesar Augustus, the first Roman emperor, in charge (Luke 2:1-5).

A Roman census (registration) was taken to aid military conscription or tax collection. The Jews weren't required to serve in the Roman army, but they couldn't avoid paying taxes.

Against his better judgment and political convictions, Joseph complied with the Roman order to make a long trip to Bethlehem just to pay his taxes. His fiancée (Mary), who had to go with him, was about to give birth.

JOHN THE BAPTIST: "THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS"

What's the big deal about the temple?

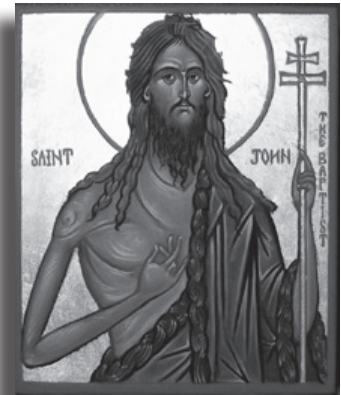
John the Baptist was unique. He wore odd clothes and ate strange food and preached an unusual message to the Judeans who went out to the wastelands to see him. But John did not aim at uniqueness for its own sake. Instead, he aimed at obedience. The angel who had announced John's birth to Zechariah had made it clear that this child was to be a Nazirite — one set apart for God's service (Luke 1:15).

What was a Nazirite?

- Nazirite means "consecrated" or "separated" in Hebrew
- The vow could be from 30 days to a lifestyle

Requirements of the vow:

- Abstain from wine, vinegar, grapes, raisins and related products
- No haircuts
- Avoid corpses and graves, even of family members
- After the time of committing oneself to God, there was a specific process involving sacrifices that needed to be followed
- The vow must be made publicly, either very formally or as informally, as saying "Me Too" when a Nazirite passed by
- Well known Nazirite vow takers: Samson, Samuel, John the Baptist



JEWISH CEREMONIES: BABY JESUS PRESENTED AT THE TEMPLE (LUKE 2:22-38)

Jewish families went through several ceremonies soon after a baby's birth:

- (1) *Circumcision* - Every boy was circumcised and named on the eighth day after birth.
- (2) *Redemption of the Firstborn* - A firstborn son was presented to God one month after birth. The ceremony included buying back — "redeeming" — the child from God through an offering. This way, the parents acknowledged that the child belonged to God, who alone has the power to give life.
- (3) *Purification of the Mother* - For 40 days after the birth of a son and 80 days after the birth of a daughter, the mother was ceremonially unclean and could not enter the Temple. At the end of her time of separation, the parents were to bring a lamb for a burnt offering and a dove or pigeon for a sin offering. The priest would sacrifice these animals and declare her to be clean. If a lamb was too expensive, the parents could bring a second dove or pigeon instead, which is what Mary and Joseph did.



THE BOY JESUS IN JERUSALEM AT PASSOVER



According to God's law, every male was required to go to Jerusalem three times a year for the great festivals (READ: Deut. 16:16).

In the spring, the Passover was celebrated, followed immediately by the weeklong Festival of Unleavened Bread. Passover commemorated the night of the Jews' escape from Egypt when God had killed the Egyptian firstborn but had passed over Israelite homes (READ: Ex. 12:21-36).

Passover was the most important of the three festivals and most Jewish males (often accompanied by their families) tried to be at Passover, if distance prevented them from attending all three.

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FAMILY TREE

The Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke give vastly different genealogies.

Most conservative Bible scholars agree that Luke is recording Mary's genealogy and Matthew is recording Joseph's.

Matthew is following the line of Joseph (Jesus' legal father), through David's son Solomon, while Luke is following the line of Mary (Jesus' blood relative), though David's son Nathan.

Through either line, Jesus is a descendant of David and therefore eligible to be the Messiah. Tracing a genealogy through the mother's side is unusual, but so was the virgin birth.

Luke's explanation is that Jesus was the son of Joseph, "as was supposed".

(Source: Gotquestions.org)

KNOWING JESUS: THE ROMAN EMPIRE

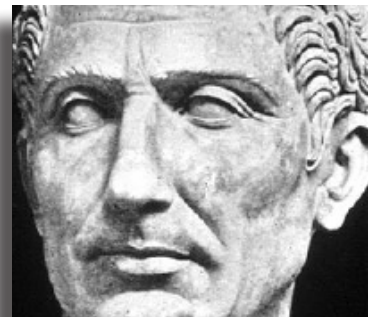
The Roman Empire was a second period of great importance to the biblical lands. The birth of Jesus is clearly set in Roman times. Rome had only recently acquired an emperor. For hundreds of years it had been a republic, governed by a senate of people who had proved themselves in public office. Two senior magistrates were elected to lead the republic on an annual basis, after which they returned to the senate. They represented the two main social groupings of the Roman people.



As the Republic began to expand through wars and through conquest, army commanders, supported by their local troops, became the most powerful people in the Republic. About fifty years before the birth of Jesus, three powerful generals dominated Roman politics, and the senate dared not disregard them — Pompey (who was responsible, among other things, for bringing the Jewish people into the Roman realm), Crassus, and Julius Caesar. It was inevitable that there would be a power struggle and civil war.



Julius Caesar was the ultimate victor and in effect became sole ruler. Before he was murdered in the forum, Julius had willed that his place be taken by his nephew, Octavius. Again, there was a power struggle between those who supported a republic (and had therefore planned the downfall of Julius Caesar) and Octavius. Caesar won, and the people, grateful for peace, gave him the title "Augustus" when he became emperor.



THE JUDEAN WILDERNESS: A PLACE OF REFUGE

The Judean Wilderness occupies the area from the eastern slopes of the Judea Mountains down to the Great Rift Valley, and runs along the western shore of the Dead Sea. Very little rain falls here, so there are very few plants or animals. Many deep wadis, formed by centuries of rain runoff, penetrate this wilderness. Because of its lack of water and good routes, the Judean wilderness has been (mostly) uninhabited throughout history. Consequently, it was an ideal place for those seeking refuge from enemies or retreat from the world.

Since the Judean Wilderness borders fertile mountain ridges for more than fifty miles, villages like Bethlehem were able to support both shepherds and farmers. The shepherds lived on the desert's fringes, while farmers worked the soil of the mountains.

And because the wilderness was so close to settled areas, it became a refuge for those who sought solitude or safety from the authorities. Here David hid from Saul (1 Sam. 24:1), and John the Baptist isolated himself from the religious practices of the day (Matt. 3). It was also here that the Essenes labored over their scrolls, and early Christians built monasteries, some of which still function today.

When on the run from King Saul, David hid in various places in the Judean wilderness (the Wilderness(es) of Ziph, Maon, and En Gedi are part of the Judean Wilderness).

John the Baptist preached here, and it seems likely that this was the wilderness where Jesus was tempted. Herod the Great built two fortresses (Herodium and Masada) in this area for protection should his people ever revolt against him.



(Sources: Bibleplaces.com and Followtherabbit.com)

DAY 3

JESUS' TIMELINE IN LUKE (ALL DATES ARE APPROXIMATE)

	6 BC	BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST	LUKE 1
	6 BC	AUGUSTUS TAXES THE ROMAN EMPIRE	LUKE 2
	5 BC	BIRTH OF JESUS	LUKE 2:6
	8 AD	THE BOY JESUS AT THE TEMPLE	LUKE 2:41
1 ST YEAR OF MINISTRY	26 AD	JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY	LUKE 3
	26 AD	THE BAPTISM OF JESUS	LUKE 3:21
	27 AD	TEMPTATION OF JESUS	LUKE 4
	27 AD	JESUS CALLS HIS FIRST DISCIPLES	LUKE 5
2 ND YEAR OF MINISTRY	28 AD	INSTRUCTIONS ON PRAYER	LUKE 11
	28 AD	JESUS MINISTERS IN GALILEE	LUKE 4:14
	28 AD	JESUS LORD OF THE SABBATH	LUKE 6
	28 AD	JESUS ANSWERS JOHN'S DISCIPLES	LUKE 7
	28 AD	JESUS SPEAKS MANY PARABLES	LUKE 8
	28 AD	JESUS HEALS A DEMONIAK	LUKE 8:26
	29 AD	JESUS FEEDS THE 5,000	LUKE 9
3 RD YEAR OF MINISTRY	29 AD	PETER'S CONFESSION OF CHRIST	LUKE 9:18
	29 AD	THE TRANSFIGURATION	LUKE 9:28
	29 AD	JESUS SENDS OUT THE SEVENTY-TWO	LUKE 10
	30 AD	JESUS SPEAKS MORE PARABLES	LUKE 12 - 16
	30 AD	JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEN LEPERS	LUKE 17
	30 AD	FINAL JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM	LUKE 18
	30 AD	THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY	LUKE 19
	30 AD	CLOSING MINISTRY IN JERUSALEM	LUKE 20, 21
	30 AD	THURSDAY BEFORE PASSOVER	LUKE 22
	30 AD	JESUS' BETRAYAL, TRIAL, CRUCIFIXION	LUKE 23
	30 AD	JESUS' RESURRECTION	LUKE 24

DAY 4

READ LUKE 4

TODAY'S READING: Jesus is led into the wilderness to be tempted, after which, He begins His ministry. Then, Jesus is rejected in His hometown of Nazareth after reading O.T. prophecy in the synagogue about the Messiah and claiming to be him.

THE 10 MINUTE PLAN...IF ALL YOU HAVE IS 10 MINUTES TO SPARE TODAY

Read today's Bible passage (Luke 4) and answer the following questions:

1) What do you think of the temptations of Jesus, and how He was tempted? _____

2) What are some things you do to combat temptation? _____

Take a couple of minutes to pray. Ask God to help you with the temptations that you are going to experience today and ask Him to help you remember some Bible verses or stories that will help you resist being tempted.

THE 20 MINUTE PLAN

Do the 10 Minute Plan, then answer the following questions and read through the rest of the Day 4 pages:

1) Why do you think Jesus was led into the desert (by the Spirit) to fast for 40 days and nights? _____

2) Satan knew exactly what God was doing, and what a threat Jesus was to him. How would you explain the three, very specific, temptations?

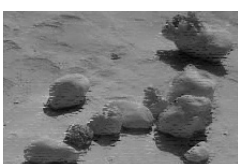
(a) Stones into bread? _____

(b) Worship the devil for earthly authority? _____

(c) Prove His (Jesus') divinity by an angelic rescue? _____

3) Do you see any similarities in how Jesus was tempted...and how we are today? If so, what are the similarities? _____

DID YOU KNOW?



The devil tempted Jesus in the rough Judean wilderness before Jesus returned to His boyhood home, Nazareth. Jesus wasn't tempted inside the Temple or at His baptism but in the wilderness, where He was tired, alone, and hungry, and thus most vulnerable. Temptation is often the combination of a real need and a possible doubt that creates an inappropriate desire.

FIND MORE DAY 4



NEXT PAGE

“And He (Jesus) came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as was His custom, He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day...” Luke 4:16

CHURCH & SCHOOL

Synagogues were very important in Jesus day and time.

During the Exile, when the Jews no longer had their Temple, synagogues were established as places of worship on the Sabbath and as schools for young boys during the week.



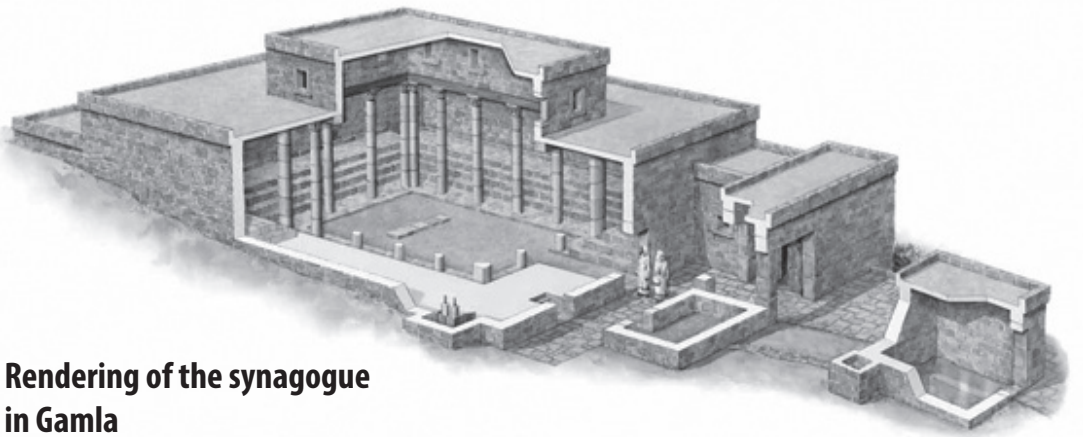
Synagogues continued to exist even after the Temple was re-built. A synagogue could be set up in any town with at least 10 Jewish families, and it was administered by one leader and one assistant.

Itinerant rabbis, like Jesus, were always welcome to speak to those gathered each Sabbath in the synagogues.

THE SYNAGOGUE: IN JESUS DAY

Synagogues continued to be a focal point for Jewish life during the first century. By the time Jesus' ministry began, a synagogue was found in most towns of Galilee. The Gospels specifically mention those of Nazareth (Matt. 13:54) and Capernaum (Mark 1:21). Archaeologists have found scant evidence of these early synagogues, although later synagogues left substantial remains. Only one synagogue dating to Jesus' time has been uncovered, in the town of Gamla.

Typically, synagogues were placed in prominent places, on an elevated platform or high place, symbolizing the importance of living in God's presence. In some cases, the front facade had three doors. And outside each synagogue was a mikveh (ritual bath), where worshipers symbolically cleansed their hearts before entering the synagogue.



Rendering of the synagogue in Gamla

(Source: Ritmeyer.com)

Inside the synagogue, important people sat on benches, called chief seats, which lined three sides of the room (Matt. 23:6). Common people sat on the floor, which was usually made of dirt or flagstones (or elaborate mosaics in later synagogues). Speakers and readers would stand on a small platform, the bema. And a small menorah, like the one in the Temple, probably stood there as well.

Torah readers sat in a special place called the Moses' Seat (or Seat of Honor), so named because they were reading Moses' words (Matt. 23:2). Torah scrolls and the writings of the prophets were either kept in a portable chest that was brought to the synagogue for worship or were stored in a permanent Torah cabinet (called the Torah closet or holy ark) inside the synagogue.



Ancient Moses Seat



(Source: Followtherabbi.org)

“...HAS BEEN FULFILLED IN YOUR HEARING...” LUKE 4:21



There were over 360 prophecies foretold about the coming Jewish Messiah - hundreds of years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Jesus fulfilled all 365 of these prophecies. Of these 360+ prophecies, there are 109 that only Jesus could have fulfilled. See more on the next page...

FIND MORE DAY 4

NEXT PAGE

DAY 4

...MORE FACTS, ETC.

WHAT IS A MESSIAH?

The word "Messiah" means "Anointed One," the name given to the promised Deliverer who would some day come to the people of Israel as their great Savior and Redeemer, "anointed" as Prophet, Priest, and King by God Himself.

The Old Testament promised that the "Messiah" would come to establish a world kingdom of peace and justice centered around the chosen nation, Israel.

The group of Jewish believers who became the first founders of Christianity were convinced that Jesus of Nazareth was their promised Messiah.

The name "Christ" is the Greek equivalent of "Messiah".

We have good reason for such faith too. There are 100s of OT Messianic prophecies that were uniquely fulfilled in Jesus.

See a full list at:
jesus-is-savior.com

(Source: Christiananswers.net)

10 MESSIANIC PROPHECIES JESUS FULFILLED

Here are 10 prophecies from the Old Testament, fulfilled in the coming of Jesus. Take a couple of minutes and read the prophecy Bible passage, then how Jesus fulfilled it in the New Testament:

1. Jesus will come from the line of Abraham

Prophecy: Genesis 12:3. *Fulfilled:* Matthew 1:1.

2. Jesus' mother will be a virgin

Prophecy: Isaiah 7:14. *Fulfilled:* Matthew 1:18–23.

3. Jesus will be a descendent of Isaac and Jacob

Prophecy: Genesis 17:19 and Numbers 24:17. *Fulfilled:* Matthew 1:2.

4. Jesus will be born in the town Bethlehem

Prophecy: Micah 5:2. *Fulfilled:* Luke 2:1–7.

5. Jesus will be called out of Egypt

Prophecy: Hosea 11:1. *Fulfilled:* Matthew 2:13–15.

6. Jesus will be a member of the tribe of Judah

Prophecy: Genesis 49:10. *Fulfilled:* Luke 3:33.

7. Jesus will enter the temple. This is important because the temple was destroyed in A.D. 70 and was never rebuilt

Prophecy: Malachi 3:1. *Fulfilled:* Luke 2:25–27.

8. Jesus will be from the lineage of King David

Prophecy: Jeremiah 23:5. *Fulfilled:* Matthew 1:6.

9. Jesus' birth will be accompanied with great suffering and sorrow

Prophecy: Jeremiah 31:15. *Fulfilled:* Matthew 2:16.

10. Jesus will live a perfect life, die by crucifixion, resurrect from death, ascend into heaven, and sit at the right hand of God

Prophecies: Psalm 22:16; Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 53:10–11; Psalm 68:18; Psalm 110:1.
Fulfilled: 1 Peter 2:21–22; Luke 23:33; Acts 2:25–32; Acts 1:9; Hebrews 1:3.

The God who wrote the Scriptures rules over history. When He makes a promise, He is faithful to His Word.



(Source: The resurgance.com)

DAY 5

READ LUKE 5-6:16

TODAY'S READING: Jesus calls the first disciples and then travels through the region of Galilee teaching and healing. Jesus breaks many of the traditional rules of His day (irritating the powers that be) by touching and healing a leper and plucking grain on the Sabbath.

THE 10 MINUTE PLAN...IF ALL YOU HAVE IS 10 MINUTES TO SPARE TODAY

Read today's Bible passage (Luke 5:6-16) and answer the following questions:

- 1) Why do you think Jesus chose the disciples that He did? _____

- 2) What are attributes you think best describe a true disciple of Jesus? _____

Take a couple of minutes to pray. Ask God to help you follow Jesus today in everything you will experience throughout the day and ask Him to convict you each day to be a true disciple (or follower) of Jesus.

THE 20 MINUTE PLAN

Do the 10 Minute Plan, then answer the following questions and read through the rest of the Day 5 pages:

- 1) Fishing was a key trade in Jesus' day. Jesus was raised as a carpenter. Why do you think Simon (Peter) agreed to follow Jesus' fishing advice in Luke 5:4?

- 2) Why do you think Simon (Peter) responded the way he did to Jesus in Luke 5:8 after the large haul of fish? _____

- 3) In Luke 5:5, Simon (Peter) calls Jesus "Master" and in verse 8, he calls him "Lord". Why did Simon call Him Master and Lord? Is there a difference?

- 4) In Luke 6:1-11, we are told about the "Lord of the Sabbath". Why were the Pharisees and the teachers of the law (v. 11) so upset with Jesus?

- 5) Knowing what you know now about Judas, Why do you think Jesus chose him? _____

SEA OF GALILEE



The Sea of Galilee is a large body of water in Palestine, and it has had many names in its history. In the OT the Sea of Galilee was known as the Sea of Kinnereth. Later, the name was changed to Lake of Gennesaret. It derived the name Sea of Tiberias from the town of Tiberias on its southwestern shore. The most familiar name, the Sea of Galilee, was due to its connection with the province of Galilee to its west.

FIND MORE DAY 5



NEXT PAGE

DAY 5 ...MORE

LEPROSY

Throughout history, few diseases have been as dreaded as the horrible affliction known as leprosy.



The leprosy that Jesus healed was similar to what is today called Hansen's Disease, an infection that can greatly disfigure and destroy the human body.

Though not as contagious as scarlet fever, it can still be transmitted through an infected person's secretions.

Leprosy was greatly feared by the Israelites, not only because of the physical damage done by the disease, but also because of the strict isolation laws applying to leprosy.

JESUS AND HIS FISHERS OF MEN

In Jesus' time, a small, flourishing fishing industry developed around the Sea of Galilee. The town of Magdala (in Greek, Tarichaeae, "the place where fish are salted") was a sardine-pickling center. Many of the images Jesus used indicated that he was familiar with fishing and the sea.

The job of a fisherman in Jesus' day was difficult. Fishermen worked year-round in the heat of summer and the cold of winter, often at night. Certainly, Jesus' choice of Capernaum, on the Sea of Galilee, as His home brought Him into contact with many fishermen.

Several of Jesus' disciples - Andrew, (Simon) Peter, James, and John - knew the trade well. It's possible that Jesus selected fishermen as His disciples not only because the imagery of their occupation fit well with the mission that He had called them to, but also because they were a hardy group of people, accustomed to difficult work and long hours. Jesus even asked them to return to the lake and fish again after a night of fishing without a catch (Luke 5:1-7).



The fishing industry in the area where Jesus ministered, and the fishermen among His disciples, provided effective images for the lessons Jesus taught His audiences. The disciples' task was to become "fishermen" for the kingdom. The long hours, the carefully practiced skills, and the various techniques and nets used in catching specific kinds of fish all must have passed through their minds. Seeking people to follow Jesus would take the same care, dedication, and skill used in fishing (Matt. 4:18-19). The disciples learned that they must seek all kinds of people to follow Jesus, though some would eventually turn away.

The fishing motif apparent in Jesus' teaching about the kingdom was so strong that the Greek word for fish (ichthus) came to represent Jesus' name. The first letters of the Greek words meaning "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior" spell ichthus. The fish itself appropriately became a symbol for Jesus.

(Source: Followtherabbi.org)

THE 12 DISCIPLES: WHO WERE THE MEN JESUS CHOSE?



The 12 disciples/apostles were ordinary men whom God used in an extraordinary manner. Among the twelve were fishermen (Peter, James and John), a tax collector (Matthew), and a revolutionary (Simon the Zealot).

The Gospels record the constant failings, struggles, and doubts of these 12 men who followed Jesus Christ. After witnessing Jesus' resurrection and ascension into heaven, the Holy Spirit transformed the disciples/apostles into powerful men of God who turned the world upside down (READ: Acts 17:6). What was the change? The 12 apostles/disciples had "been with Jesus" (READ: Acts 4:13).

WHAT IS A DISCIPLE OR APOSTLE?

The word "disciple" refers to a learner or follower. The word "apostle" means "one who is sent out." While Jesus was on earth, His 12 followers were called disciples. The 12 disciples followed Jesus Christ, learned from Him, and were trained by Him. After His resurrection and ascension, Jesus sent the disciples out to be His witnesses (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8). They were then referred to as the 12 apostles. However, even when Jesus was still on earth, the terms "disciples" and "apostles" were used somewhat interchangeably.

FIND MORE DAY 5

NEXT PAGE

DAY 5: JESUS TRAVELS - 1ST YEAR OF MINISTRY (Source: ccel.org)

Jesus' Travels – Year One

[1] Jesus, now about 30 years old (Lk 3:23) travels from his home-town of Nazareth in Galilee

[2] At the River Jordan, possibly near Bethany-across-the-Jordan, Jesus is baptized by John the Baptist (Mt 3:13; Mk 1:9)

[3] Jesus goes in to the Judean Desert or wilderness to face the devil's temptation (Mt 4:1; Mk 1:12; Lk 4:1)

[4] At the River Jordan near Bethany across the Jordan, or Bethabara (Jn 1:28), and according to John's Gospel, Jesus calls his first five disciples (Jn 1:35). These include Philip, Andrew, and Simon Peter all from Bethsaida in Galilee (Jn 1:44)

[5] Jesus returns north to Galilee with his disciples (Jn 1:43), and at a wedding in Cana, changes the water into wine - his first recorded miracle (Jn 2:1)

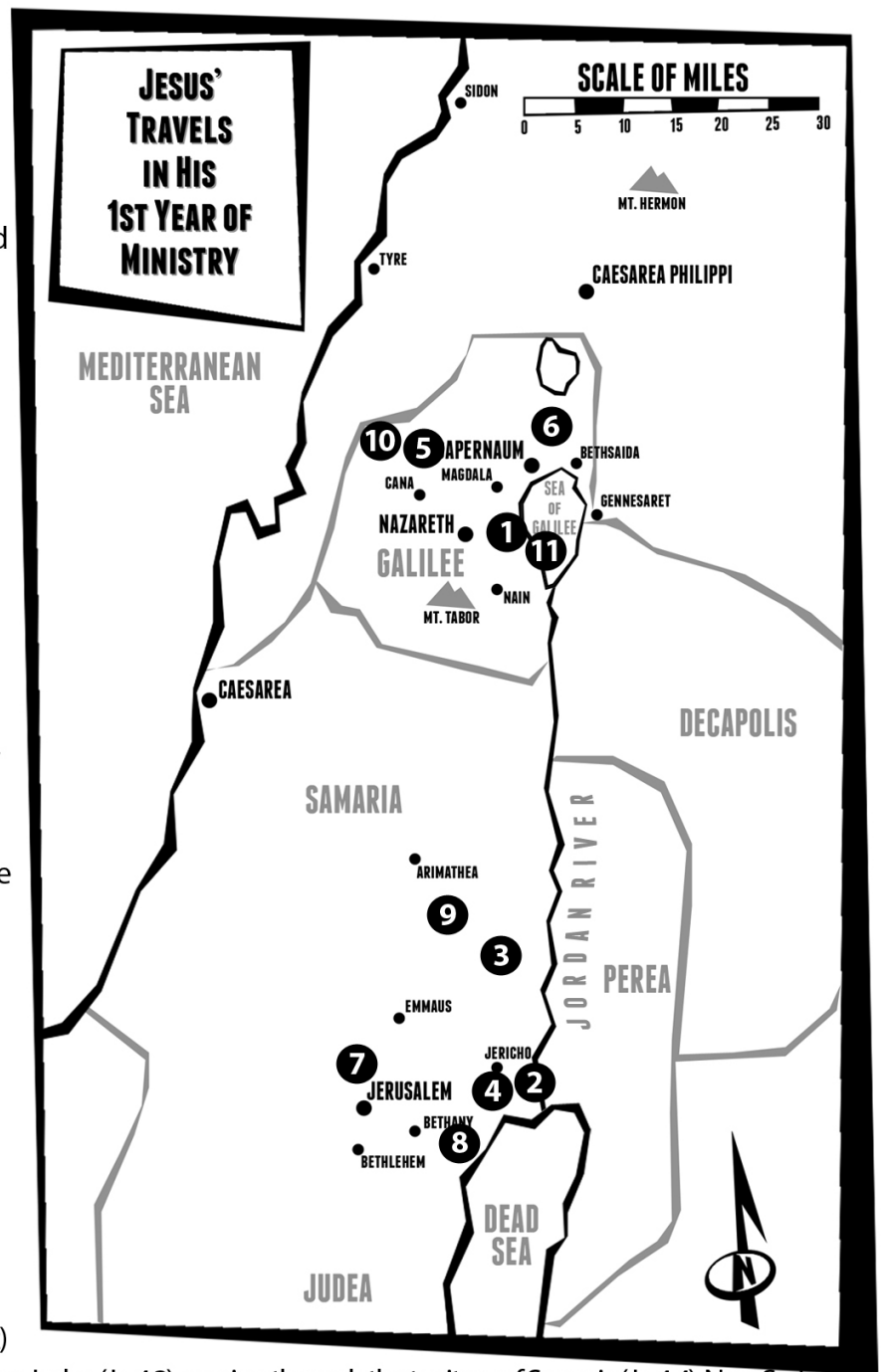
[6] Jesus continues on to Capernaum, on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee with his mother, brothers and disciples, and stays there a short time (Jn 2:12)

[7] Jesus travels south to Jerusalem for the Passover - the first one mentioned in the Gospels (Jn 2:13). There he drives the money-changers from the Temple for the first time (Jn 2:14). He also meets the Pharisee, Nicodemus (Jn 3:1)

[8] Jesus leaves for the countryside of Judea where his disciples baptize believers (Jn 3:22)

[9] Jesus and his disciples continue north from Judea (Jn 4:3), passing through the territory of Samaria (Jn 4:4). Near Sychar, Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn 4:5). Many Samaritans believe in him (Jn 4:39), after which he continues on to Galilee (Jn 4:43)

[10] He reaches Galilee (Mt 4:12; Mk 1:14; Lk 4:14; Jn 4:45), and back in Cana heals the official's son who lays sick in Capernaum (Jn 4:46)



HISTORY: SEA OF GALILEE & CAPERNAUM

According to the gospels, Jesus' earthly ministry centered around the Sea of Galilee. While important events occurred in Jerusalem, Jesus spent most of the three years of His ministry along the shore of this freshwater lake. Here He gave more than half of His parables and here He performed most of his miracles.

Capernaum, on the northwestern shore, became Jesus' "hometown" throughout His ministry. Three of His disciples hailed from Bethsaida, a few miles distant from Capernaum. These two cities, together with Chorazin 3 km (2 mi) inland from Capernaum, were condemned by Jesus for receiving much but believing little. A famous follower of Christ was Mary of Magdala, a town on the lake's western shore. Early Christians hallowed the lakeside, building churches commemorating the feeding of the five thousand, the Sermon on the Mount, the primacy of Peter, and the house of Peter.

(Source: Biblearcheology.org)

DAY 6

READ LUKE 6:17-49

TODAY'S READING: Jesus gives His first great message, the Sermon on the Mount, where He teaches on loving our enemies, not judging others and why listening to (and following) what He says is like building your house on the best (and strongest) foundation.

THE 10 MINUTE PLAN...IF ALL YOU HAVE IS 10 MINUTES TO SPARE TODAY

Read today's Bible passage (Luke 6:17-49) and answer the following questions:

1) Do you really think that you can love your enemies? Why or why not? _____

2) Who are some enemies that you need to show some love? _____

Take a couple of minutes to pray. Ask God to show you your enemies (or people you are treating like enemies), then ask Him to help you and show you how you're to show them love--knowing that it's only by God that this will happen.

THE 20 MINUTE PLAN

Do the 10 Minute Plan, then answer the following questions and read through the rest of the Day 6 pages:

1) In His Beatitudes, Jesus talks about blessings and woes. Do they seem "out of sync" or backwards to you? If so, explain. _____

2) What do you think Jesus is trying to say here? _____

3) In Luke 6:46 Jesus starts to talk about building the right foundation. What are some things that you think Jesus points to as good foundation pieces?

4) Where do you see room for change in your life when you read what Jesus says about the differences between people who simply hear Him, and those who put His words into practice? _____

5) What do you see as the greatest benefit to putting Jesus' words into practice? _____

WHAT THE HECK IS A BEATITUDE?

The word beatitude comes from the Latin word meaning "blessing". Each beatitude tells how to be blessed by God. But being blessed means more than happiness. It implies the fortunate or enviable state of those who are in God's kingdom. The beatitudes don't promise laughter, pleasure, or earthly prosperity. Being "blessed" by God means the experience of hope and joy, independent of outward circumstances.

FIND MORE DAY 6



DAY 6 ...MORE

YOUR ENEMIES

Love Your Enemies
(Luke 6:27)

The Jews despised the Romans because they oppressed God's people. But Jesus told them to love these enemies.

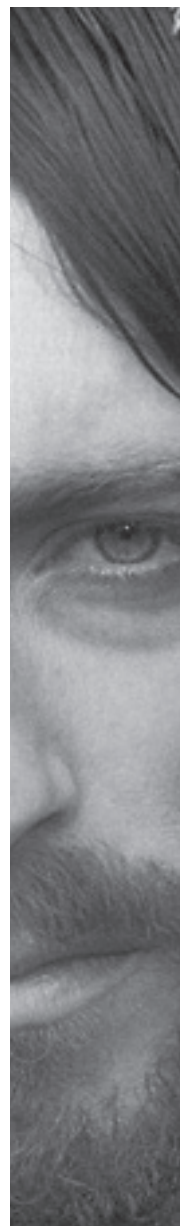
Jesus' call to "love your enemies" turned many away from Him.

Jesus wasn't talking about having affection for enemies. He was talking about an act of the will.

"Turn the other cheek": By telling us not to retaliate, Jesus keeps us from taking the law into our own hands.



JESUS RADICAL MESSAGE



The Sermon on the Mount was revolutionary. No one had ever heard anything like it before. It was radical. It still is today. The Sermon on the Mount has changed the lives of people. It has transformed communities, and it has altered human history. The words of Jesus in this sermon are powerful. They are life-changing.

Jesus tells us to love our enemies

What enemies? Who is He talking about? He does not elaborate. He just says enemies. This means we have to love everyone who is our enemy. This means we have to love terrorists. We have to love people who hate us and who want to inflict harm upon us. They are our enemies.

Jesus says, "If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two."

This is not some saying Jesus pulls out of the blue. Roman soldiers occupied Israel and they could force a Jew to carry their bags one mile, but not any further. The Jews resented Roman occupation and they resented this law. Some Jews, like the Zealots, advocated violence. Instead, Jesus says carry their bag, and after you go a mile, offer to carry it another. What would carrying the bag an extra mile do? It may change the soldier's perception of the Jewish people. It may cause him to rethink his occupation. It may change how he treats other people.

A person does not have to seek revenge. Jesus presents a new way of responding to people who have wronged us. Some of the people listened to these words and decided to follow the Jesus way, but others followed the way of the Zealots. The Jewish people had all they could stand and they rebelled against Rome. Rome marched on Jerusalem, destroyed the city and the temple, and killed thousands of Jews. The followers of Jesus chose to love their enemies and Christianity rapidly spread across the empire until finally Constantine, a Roman emperor, converted to the Christian faith and the empire embraced Christianity.

Jesus elaborates further. He says, "If all we can do is love those who are like us, then we are no different than the world." Loving our friends and family is what everyone does. If this is all we do then we are no different than any worldly person. Instead we are called to be different. We are called to be like God. What does God do? God loves everyone, even His enemies. We are to imitate Jesus who loved His enemies so much that He laid down His life for them.

Jesus came and he turned the world upside down. He ate with sinners. He envisioned a world where peace was the norm. He envisioned a world where groups like Jews and Samaritans, groups that hated each other, could come together and love each other. He did more than just dream. He did something about it. He gave us these principles to live by and he gave us an example to follow. He chose the way of the cross and willingly sacrificed his life for others. We follow a crucified Messiah.

(Source: Faithvillage.com)

WHICH IS IT? THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT OR THE BEATITUDES?

The Beatitudes are called the *Sermon on the Mount* because Jesus gave it on a hillside near Capernaum.

This "sermon" probably covered several days of preaching. In it, Jesus proclaimed His attitude towards the law. Position, authority, and money are not important in His kingdom - what matters is faithful obedience from the heart.

The *Sermon on the Mount* challenged the proud and legalistic leaders of the day and called them back to the messages of the Old Testament prophets, who, like Jesus, taught that heartfelt obedience is more important than legalistic observance.



(Source: Followtherabbi.org)

WHERE'S THE MOUNT?

Tradition holds that the Mount of the Beatitudes (right) is the place where Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount (READ: Matt. 5-7). There is no concrete evidence to support this belief because the exact location is not specified in the Scriptures. However, this slope is in the right geographical area, and its appearance is certainly similar to what we might expect.



FIND MORE DAY 6

NEXT PAGE

DAY 6

...MORE FACTS, ETC.

JUDGING, FORGIVING AND GIVING

Jesus gives a discourse on how to treat other people in Luke 6:37-38. He speaks about many aspects of relationships and then ends with judging one another and forgiveness.

Jesus then makes the famous statement, *"Give, and it shall be given unto you. Good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."*

When we read this in Luke, in its context, we have to conclude that Jesus was talking about the measure of treatment you give other people is the measure of treatment you will receive in return - particularly concerning judgment and forgiveness.

PLAYERS YET-TO-BE-NAMED: PHARISEES, SADDUCEES, ZEALOTS, ETC.

Throughout Luke (and the other 3 Gospels; Matthew, Mark and John) there are several references to people like the Pharisees, and the Sadducees, and the Zealots. Here's a quick rundown and explanation of some of the "players, yet-to-be-named" in the Gospels:

The Pharisees

This group arose during the time of the Maccabees under the reign of John Hyrcanus (134-104 BC). They were a conservative group in belief as opposed to the liberal Sadducees, and guardians of the written and oral law. They were the bitter and most hateful enemies of Christ. They condemned Him for just about everything He did, for healing and working on the Sabbath, casting out demons, they denied His miracles, and they sought to kill Him early in His ministry. They threatened retaliation upon all who would accept Jesus, they accused Him of outright lying, they plotted His death, and ordered His arrest at Gethsemane.

The Jewish Encyclopedia lists seven types of Pharisees, which are the "Shoulder," "Wait a Little," "Blind," "Pestal," "Ever-Reckoning," "God Fearing," and "God Loving" Pharisee. The Pharisees were utterly denounced by Jesus and John the Baptist. There were about 6,000 Pharisees during the time of Christ.

The Sadducees

This group came from Zadok, the high priest during the reign of Solomon. They were the aristocratic and political party among the Jews and the rivals of the Pharisees. They were the "modernists" of the day. Unlike the Pharisees, they denied the existence of spirits, the resurrection of the just and the immortality of the soul. They were totally anti-supernatural. They came into prominence about the same time the Pharisees did. Both parties briefly set aside their differences to accomplish their common goal of getting rid of Jesus. They attempted to ridicule Jesus on the subject of resurrection, but wound up being ridiculed themselves.

The Zealots

The Zealots lived by the strictest conformity to the Torah. In addition, they refused to acknowledge anyone as king, since "you shall have no other gods" (Ex. 20:3). These defenders of freedom influenced Galilee in particular. They were committed to the Scriptures' promise of a coming anointed one who would be a great military leader and king. They knew they would soon prevail over the detested Romans and their collaborators, the Herodians (Jews who supported the Herods) and the Sadducees.

The Herodians

This was a political group from the family of Herod. They derived their authority from the Roman government, and favored Greek customs. They were committed to maintaining the status quo and were law-and-order advocates. They joined the efforts of the Pharisees to silence Christ, whom they regarded Him as a revolutionary fanatic.

The Galileans

They were the political extreme-right fanatics of their day. The group arose in northern Israel, headed by a man named Judas of Galilee (Judas was a very common name in those days), who led a rebellion against all foreign elements. They advocated that Galilee was for Galileans. They came into violent collision with Pilate, who slaughtered some of them on one occasion. Christ's enemies attempted to identify both Him and the disciples with the Galilean extremists.

The Sanhedrin

The Sanhedrin was the religious and legal Jewish Supreme Court. It may have come from the time of Moses, or during the days of King Jehoshaphat. The council had 70 to 72 members and consisted of the High Priest, who was president, the heads of the 24 priestly service divisions, the Scribes and lawyers, and the elders who were representatives of the laity. This is where Christ stood during His third illegal trial. The Sanhedrin normally met in a semicircle with the prisoner standing in the midst, facing them.

The Scribes

They were the students, interpreters, and teachers of the OT scriptures. They were also called lawyers.



(Source: konig.org and Followthe Rabbi.org)

DAY 7

READ LUKE 7

TODAY'S READING: Jesus continues to prove that He has come for the lost and broken by healing a Roman Centurions' servant and raising a poor widows' son from the dead. Jesus rankles the Pharisees by forgiving the sins of a prostitute during a dinner party.

THE 10 MINUTE PLAN...IF ALL YOU HAVE IS 10 MINUTES TO SPARE TODAY

Read today's Bible passage (Luke 7) and answer the following questions:

1) At the dinner in verses 36-50, what do you think upset the Pharisees the most, and why? _____

2) How do you usually treat the "sinful" people in your life, and do you need to change? _____

Take a couple of minutes to pray. Thank God for saving you from your sinful past through Jesus and ask Him to help you follow the example of Jesus by reaching out, caring and loving the lost and the broken who cross your path.

THE 20 MINUTE PLAN

Do the 10 Minute Plan, then answer the following questions and read through the rest of the Day 7 pages:

1) Jesus heals the centurion's servant from afar. What do you make of that? Does that encourage or trouble you, and why? _____

2) How does your faith in Jesus stack up to the centurion's? _____

3) In Luke 7:1-17, Jesus heals a widow's son. What did it mean for this woman to have no husband or son in this day-and-age? _____

4) Have there been times in your past where Jesus answered your prayers exactly as you wanted? _____

5) Likewise, have there been times in your past where Jesus hasn't answered your prayers exactly as you wanted? _____

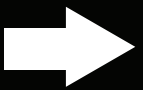
"...HE CAME UP AND TOUCHED THE BIER..."

The word translated "*bier*" may mean a bier or coffin, and the scholars are about equally divided as to which it was. It was more likely a stretcher of boards, with the pallet or bed upon it, and the body of the young man wrapped in linen lying upon the bed. Coffins, were rarely used by the Jews, except in the burial of people of distinction. When they were used, the body was placed in them, and carried without a lid to the place of sepulture (or burial). Jesus was, no doubt, known to many in Nain, and it is no wonder that those who carried the bier stood still when He touched it. Though we can not say that Jesus had raised the dead prior to this, He had healed lots of diseases known to these people, and would therefore cause reasonable expectancy that He might do something even here.



Source: biblestudytools.com)

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DAY 7 ...MORE

WHAT WAS A CENTURION?

A centurion was an officer in the Roman army. They got their name because they commanded 100 men (centuria = 100 in Latin).



Centurions were hardened soldiers, skilled at killing. Most were enlisted men promoted through the ranks.

A number of Roman centurions are mentioned in the New Testament, including one in today's study through Luke.

JESUS AND THE CENTURION

"I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith."

After Jesus proceeded from the mountain to Capernaum, which was now his home, or headquarters, a centurion or captain (a Gentile) sends friends to ask Jesus to heal his servant. This series of events most likely shows that the centurion had heard how Jesus had healed the son of his fellow-townsmen (See: John 4:46-54), but modestly refrains from coming into Jesus' immediate presence -- asking him if he would come and save his servant.

The centurion evidently believed in and worshiped God, but, influenced probably by his profession, did not become a proselyte by being circumcised and conforming entirely to the Mosaic law. The ruins of Capernaum today show the ruins of a synagogue (See: Below).

The centurion, knowing that it was unlawful for Jews to go into the houses of Gentiles, wished to spare Jesus any embarrassment. Whatever he may have thought of this custom, with regard to the Pharisees, he attributed to Jesus so high a degree of sanctity that he accepted this doctrine as true for Jesus.

The centurion showed his great faith, partly by believing that Jesus could heal by a word, but chiefly in his lofty conception of Jesus as compared with himself. The less faith we have, the less we esteem Jesus, and the more faith we have, the less we esteem ourselves. As Jesus rises, we sink in the scale of our estimation.

The centurion's faith would have been amazing enough for a Jew or Israelite, but it was even more amazing for a Gentile. The word "found" suggests that Jesus came seeking faith: he will come seeking it again (Luke 18:8).



(Source: Biblestudytools.com)

THE CENTURION'S SYNAGOGUE?

The excavated remains of Capernaum, a small village on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, give us a glimpse into life in Jesus' day and time. "Capernaum" comes from the Hebrew Kfar Nahum, which means "Nahum's Village".

Jesus chose this place as the hub of his ministry, being on the main international road, sometimes called the Way of the Sea (Via Maris). Roman milestones still mark the road. Jesus called Capernaum his hometown. Several of his disciples Peter, Andrew, James, and John, were called to ministry here.

There is a synagogue amongst the ruins and to the side of the synagogue, there was a small Roman garrison (Luke 7:1-10), probably the home of the centurion whose faith Jesus commended. Capernaum was a small village (some estimate 1,200 people) of fisherman, farmers, and merchants all religious and devoted to serving God.



**DON'T FORGET
TO CHECK OUT
SCOTT NICKELL'S
VIDEO BLOG
ONLINE**



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DAY 7: JESUS TRAVELS - 2ND YEAR OF MINISTRY (Source: ccel.org)

Jesus' Travels - Year Two

[1] Jesus moves to Capernaum (Mt 4:13; Mk 1:21; Lk 4:31). According to the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus call His first disciples - perhaps only now to full-time service (Mt 4:18; Mk 1:16; Lk 5:1). In Capernaum He heals the madman in the synagogue (Mk 1:23; Lk 4:33) and Peter's mother-in-law of her fever (Mt 8:14; Mk 1:29; Lk 4:38)

[2] Jesus travels throughout Galilee, preaching and healing (Mt 4:23; Mk 1:39), including the leper (Mt 8:2; Mk 1:40; Lk 5:12).

[3] Returning to Capernaum (Mk 2:1) a paralyzed man is healed (Mt 9:2; Mk 2:3; Lk 5:18) and Jesus calls Matthew (or Levi) the tax collector to be a disciple (Mt 9:9; Lk 5:27)

[4] Jesus travels from Galilee south to Jerusalem for a Jewish festival - possibly the 2nd Passover identified in the Gospels (Jn 5:1). At the Pool of Bethesda He heals the crippled man (Jn 5:2)

[5] Returning north to Galilee, Jesus heals the man with the shriveled hand (Mt 12:9; Mk 3:1; Lk 6:6) and many others (Mt 12:15; Mk 3:7)

[6] On a hillside in Galilee, probably near Capernaum, He selects His twelve apostles (Mt 10:1; Mk 3:13; Lk 6:12) and delivers the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:1). In Luke's report Jesus comes down from a hillside to give the Sermon (Lk 6:20)

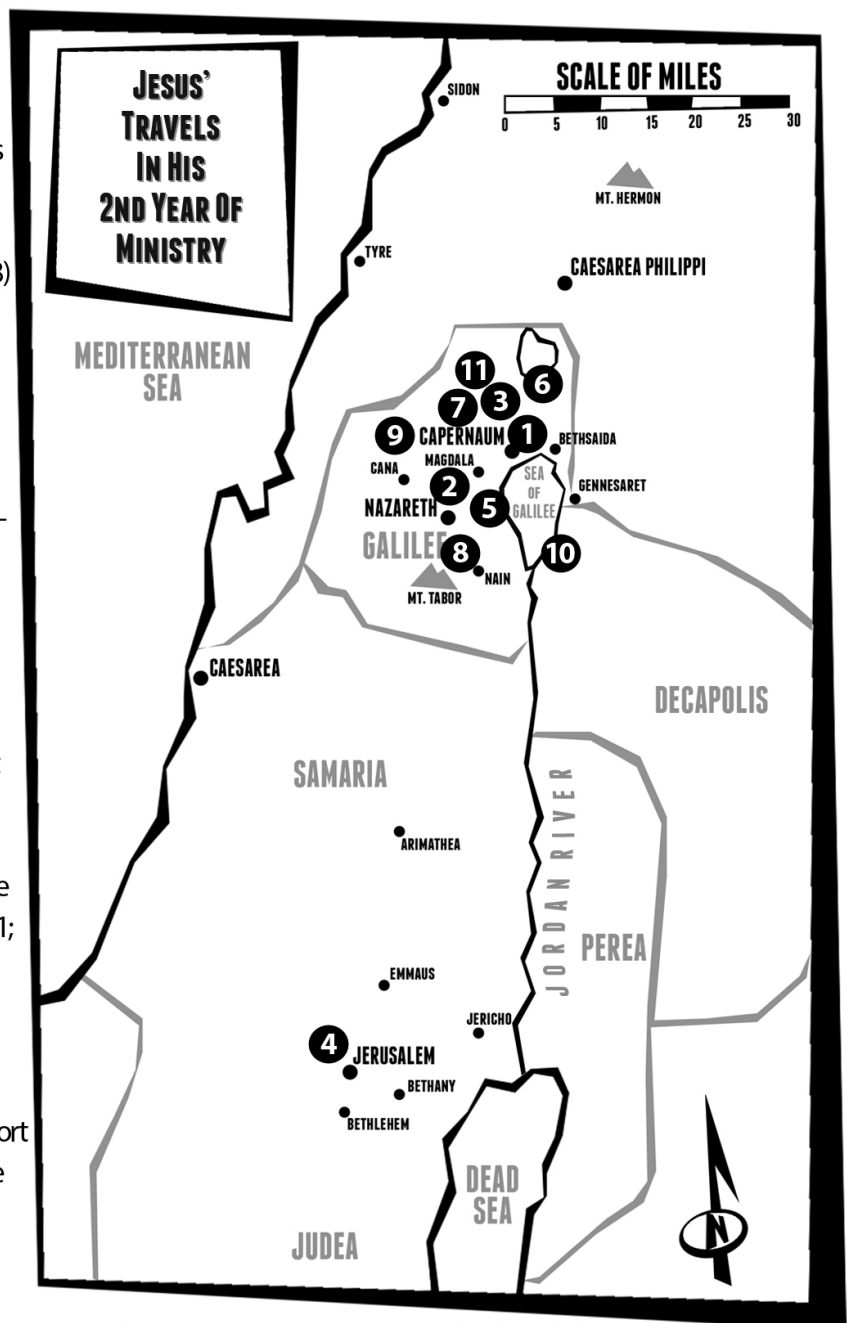
[7] Back in Capernaum, (Mt 8:5; Lk 7:1) Jesus heals the Roman centurion's servant (Lk 7:2)

[8] Jesus continues preaching and healing in Galilee, and in Nain brings the widow's son back to life (Lk 7:11)

[9] Accompanied by the twelve apostles and some of His women helpers, Jesus continues His second Galilee tour (Lk 8:1)

[10] He sails across the Sea of Galilee (Mt 8:18; Mk 4:35; Lk 8:22) and calms a storm (Mt 8:24; Mk 4:37; Lk 8:23). Landing in the region of the Gerasenes (Mk 5:1; Lk 8:26) or Gadarenes (Mt 8:28) in Gentile Decapolis - the Ten Towns or Cities, Jesus heals the madman in the story of the Gadarene Swine (Mt 8:28; Mk 5:2; Lk 8:27)

[11] Sailing back across the Sea of Galilee (Mk 5:21) Jesus lands at "His own town" of Capernaum (Mt 9:1). Here He raises Jairus' daughter



FORGIVING A "SINFUL WOMAN"

The ointment which the "sinful woman" in Luke 7:36-50 brought with her was called "alabaster." These ointments were used on the face and hair with profusion. They were scented with sweet-smelling vegetable essence, especially that extracted from the myrtle. Originally the small vases, jars or broad-mouthed bottles, in which the ointment was stored, were carved from alabaster, a variety of gypsum, white, semi-transparent and costly.

In this scene, Jesus (in traditional fashion) would have stretched upon a couch, reclining on His left elbow. The woman stood at the foot of the couch behind His feet. His feet were bare; for every guest on entering left his sandals outside the door. The woman, feeling strongly the contrast between the sinlessness of Jesus and her own stained life, could not control her emotions.



(Source: biblestudytools.com)

DAY 8

READ LUKE 8

TODAY'S READING: Jesus teaches the crowds following Him by using parables--simple stories with deeper, heavenly meanings. Jesus frightens and amazes His disciples by stopping a storm as they cross a lake in their boat.

THE 10 MINUTE PLAN...IF ALL YOU HAVE IS 10 MINUTES TO SPARE TODAY

Read today's Bible passage (Luke 8) and answer the following questions:

1) What do you make of the miracles performed by Jesus in Ch. 8, and why do you think He did them? _____

2) Have you ever been hurt, upset or angry because Jesus didn't do a miracle in some part of your life? If so, what was it? _____

Take a couple of minutes to pray. Ask God to help you understand, in a deeper sense, why He acts in miraculous ways sometimes...and sometimes not.

THE 20 MINUTE PLAN

Do the 10 Minute Plan, then answer the following questions and read through the rest of the Day 8 pages:

1) Jesus was a great storyteller. He used parables to show us the kind of life He wants us to live. Which of Jesus' parables speaks the most to you, and why? _____

2) Jesus tells the crowd the Parable of the Sower (Luke 8:4-8), but only shares the meaning with His disciples. Why do you think He did this? _____

3) Do you think the crowd was "short changed" by not hearing the meanings of Jesus' parables, and how would that make you feel? _____

4) After Jesus calms the storm (Luke 8:22-25), we're told the disciples were afraid. What do you think they were afraid of the most? _____

5) Try to put yourself in the disciples' shoes (sandals?). Do you think your first reaction to Jesus' miracles would be fear too? Why? _____

WHAT EXACTLY IS A PARABLE?

Jesus (The Rabbi) used simple word-pictures, called *parables*, to help people understand who God is and what his kingdom or reign is like. Jesus used images and characters taken from everyday life to create a miniature play or drama to illustrate His message. This was Jesus' most common way of teaching. His stories appealed to the young and old, poor and rich, and to the learned and unlearned as well.

(Source: rc.net)

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JESUS THE RABBI

The term *rabbi* in Jesus' day did not necessarily refer to a specific office or occupation. Rather, it was a word meaning "great one" or "my master" which was applied to many kinds of people in everyday speech. It clearly was used as a term of respect for one's teacher.



Many people referred to Jesus as Rabbi. His disciples, lawyers, ordinary people, the rich, Pharisees, and Sadducees.

Jesus fit the description of a 1st century rabbi, especially one at the most advanced level, the one sought by *talmidim* (See Right).

He traveled from place to place with his disciples depending on the hospitality of others (Luke 8:1-3) and often meeting in private homes.

(Source: Followtherabbi.org)

DISCIPLES: EDUCATION IN GALILEE

At five years old a young Jewish boy was considered fit to study. At ten years, ready for the Mishnah (oral Torah, interpretations), and at thirteen, ready for the fulfilling of the commandments. At fifteen, young men were ready for the Talmud (making Rabbinic interpretations), at twenty, they were set for pursuing a vocation, and at thirty, schooled to the point of authority (able to teach others).

This clearly describes the exceptional student, for very few would become teachers, but indicates the centrality of Scripture in the education in Galilee. It is interesting to compare Jesus' life to this description. Though little is stated about his childhood we know that He "grew in wisdom" as a boy (Luke 2:52) and that He reached the "fulfilling of the commandments" indicated by ones first Passover at age twelve (Luke 2:41). He then learned a trade (Matt. 13:55, Mark 6:3) and spent time with John the Baptist (Luke 3:21; John 3:22-26) and began His ministry when He was thirty (Luke 3:23).

This parallels the Mishnah description quite closely. It certainly demands a closer look at the education process in Galilee.

Schools were associated with the local synagogue in 1st century Galilee. Apparently each community would hire a teacher (respectfully called "rabbi") for the school. While this teacher was responsible for the education of the village, he had no special authority in the synagogue itself. Children began their study at age 4-5 in **Beth Sefer** (elementary school). Most scholars believe both boys and girls attended the class in the synagogue. The teaching focused primarily on the Torah, emphasizing both reading and writing Scripture. Large portions were memorized and it is likely that many students knew the entire Torah by memory by the time this level of education was finished. At this point most students (and certainly the girls) stayed at home to help with the family, and in the case of boys to learn the family trade. It is at this point that a boy would participate in his first Passover in Jerusalem. Jesus' excellent questions for the teachers in the temple at His first Passover indicate the study He had done (Luke 2:41-52).

The best students continued their study in **Beth Midrash** (secondary school) also taught by a rabbi of the community. Here they (along with the adults in the town) studied the prophets and the writings, in addition to Torah and began to learn the interpretations of the Oral Torah to learn how to make their own applications and interpretations. Memorization continued to be important because most people did not have their own copy of the Scripture so they either had to know it by heart or go to the synagogue to consult the village scroll. Memory was enhanced by reciting aloud, a practice still widely used in Middle Eastern education, both Jewish and Muslim. Constant repetition was considered to be an essential element of learning.

A few (very few) of the most outstanding Beth Midrash students sought permission to study with a famous rabbi often leaving home to travel with him for a lengthy period of time. These students were called *talmidim* (talmid, s.) in Hebrew, which is translated *disciple*. There is much more to a talmid than what we call student. A student wants to know what the teacher knows for the grade, to complete the class or the degree or even out of respect for the teacher. A talmid wants to be like the teacher, that is to become what the teacher is. That meant that students were passionately devoted to their rabbi and noted everything he did or said. This meant the rabbi-talmid relationship was a very intense and personal system of education. As the rabbi lived and taught his understanding of the Scripture his students (talmidim) listened and watched and imitated so as to become like him. Eventually they would become teachers passing on a lifestyle to their talmidim.

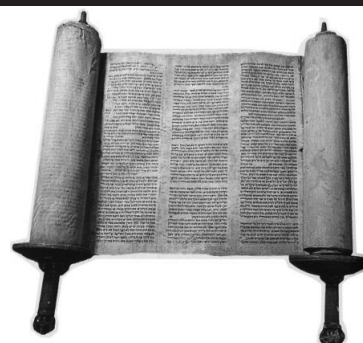
As a result, Galilee was a place of intense study of Scripture. People were knowledgeable about its content and the various applications made by their tradition. They were determined to live by it and to pass their faith and knowledge and lifestyle on to their children.

It was into this world that Jesus came as a child and eventually a rabbi.

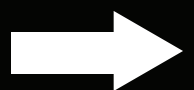
(Source: Followtherabbi.org)

PENTATEUCH, TORAH. TOMATO, TOMATAH...

Torah is a Hebrew word meaning "to instruct." **The Torah** refers to the five books of Moses in the Hebrew Bible/ Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy)—also referred to as **The Pentateuch**. The Pentateuch is a name for the first five books of the Bible that conservative Bible scholars believe were mostly written by Moses. Even though the books of the Pentateuch themselves do not clearly identify the author, there are many passages that attribute them to Moses or as being his words.



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BOATS IN JESUS' DAY

A replica has been constructed based on the remains of a first-century boat found recently in the mud of the Sea of Galilee.



It is considered to represent the type of boat the disciples used for fishing and in their travels. It is 26 ft. long and 7 1/2 ft. wide. It is made of wood, and the planks are joined with mortise-and-tenon construction.

The boat would have had a small sail and a crew of 5. Four crew members would have used the 2 pairs of oars while the other person steered. The sail would also have been used. The boat is large enough to have held several people besides the crew members. A cushion could be placed on the small deck at either end of the boat so someone could sleep.

THE SEA OF GALILEE

The Sea of Galilee is a freshwater lake which is the largest in Israel and among the world's most beautiful. Since Jesus spent most of His short time of ministry near or on the Sea of Galilee, we will be able to enhance our understanding of His message and ministry by learning as much as we can about it.

The Sea...The Lake...

This sea has many names, but most New Testament readers recognize 'the Sea of Galilee' as its most common designation. It is also called the Sea of Kinnereth (Num. 34:11; Josh. 12:3), the Lake of Gennesaret (Luke 5:1), the Sea of Tiberias (John 6:1, 21:1), and sometimes simply "the lake" (Luke 8:22). Set in the hills of northern Israel, the sea is nearly 700 feet below sea level. It is nearly eight miles wide at its widest point, and more than 12 miles long from north to south. Its depth is more than 200 feet in some places.

Geographic Nature

Surprising to many first-time visitors is the fact that from any point on the rocky shore, all other locations along the shoreline are visible. Around the sea, the hills of Galilee reach nearly 1,400 feet above sea level, and the mountains of the Golan Heights (the Decapolis in Jesus' time) reach more than 2,500 feet above sea level.

Much of the sea's beauty comes from its being nestled among the hills, which are green in the spring, brown during the dry season, and always in contrast with the deep blue of the sea. The slopes of the Golan Heights on the east and Mount Arbel on the west drop sharply down to the sea. The sea's location below the mountains to the east makes it subject to sudden and violent storms as the wind comes over these mountains and drops suddenly onto the sea. This happens especially when an east wind brings cool air over the warmer blanket of air that covers the sea itself. The cold air, which is heavier, drops as the warm air rises. This sudden change can produce surprisingly furious storms in a short time, as it did in Jesus' day (Luke 8:22-25).

Industry Then, And Now

As it is today, the Sea of Galilee was teeming with fish in Jesus' time. This made for a prosperous commercial fishing industry in the many small villages and larger towns along its shore. Among these was Bethsaida, which means "house of fishermen." Jesus' choice of this location for His ministry, along with His selection of several fishermen as His disciples, made it natural that He would illustrate much of His teaching with fishing imagery (Matt. 4:19).

Jesus Calms the Storm

Jesus acted to demonstrate His authority over the sea and its destructive power. He walked on the stormy water (Mark 6:47-50; Matt. 14:22-33; John 6:16-20). He calmed the storms on the sea (Mark 4:35-41; Matt. 8:23-27; Luke 8:22-25). He even empowered His disciple to walk on the water (Matt. 14:28-32). Peter's cry of "Lord, save me!" as his lack of faith caused him to sink into the deep takes on intense meaning in light of the symbolism of the sea (Matt. 14:30). The reaction of the disciples was profound. They were amazed (Matt. 14:33; Mark 6:51) and terrified (Mark 4:41) at Jesus' power. They recognized that His power was more than just authority over the elements of nature; the stilling of the storm produced not only awe at the power of God within Jesus, but also the realization that He was God. "Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God'" (Matt. 14:33).

The Sea of Galilee is one of the most significant locations in the world. Here God sent His Son to continue the work of salvation with the message that the kingdom of God was at hand. The sea and its fishermen provided images He used to explain His kingdom and His followers' role in it. And the sea and what it represented gave Him opportunities to demonstrate that He was truly God.

(Source: Followthe Rabbi.com)



DAY 9

READ LUKE 9:1-36

TODAY'S READING: Jesus gives a (sort of) "test run" by sending out His 12 disciples on a journey to preach, teach and heal. Upon their return, Jesus miraculously feeds over 5,000 people in the town of Bethsaida. Disciples Peter, James and John witness Jesus' transfiguration.

THE 10 MINUTE PLAN...IF ALL YOU HAVE IS 10 MINUTES TO SPARE TODAY

Read today's Bible passage (Luke 9:1-36) and answer the following questions:

1) How do you think Jesus' disciples interpreted His statement to deny themselves and to take up their crosses? _____

2) Why is denying ourselves such an important part of following Jesus? _____

Take a couple of minutes to pray. Ask God for His help in denying yourself (and what you really need to work on) so that you can grow as a disciple and follower of Jesus. Also, ask God to strengthen you as the battle heats up and you fight, like never before, with your selfish desires.

THE 20 MINUTE PLAN

Do the 10 Minute Plan, then answer the following questions and read through the rest of the Day 9 pages:

1) When Jesus feeds the 5,000 in Luke 9:10-17, what part of this incident speaks to you the most? _____

2) Is there any part of the Feeding of the 5,000 that you struggle with? If so, what is it and why does it bother you? _____

3) In Luke 9:18-21, Jesus asks His disciples, "*Who do the crowds say that I am*". Do you think this was an odd question? _____

4) What do you make of the answers His disciples gave Him? _____

5) Who do people say that Jesus is today--that resemble what the crowds said back then? _____

6) Who do you say Jesus is, and how much of it is based on what He said (which we can read in the Bible)? _____

"THE CHRIST OF GOD"



In Luke 9:20, Peter makes his great confession and it represents a significant turning point in the Gospel. Peter's confession of Jesus as "*The Christ of God*" not only answers the question of Jesus' identity but also brings a shift in Jesus' teaching. From this point Jesus begins to prepare the disciples for his death and for the discipleship of bearing one's cross daily.

(Source: Biblegateway.com)

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HEROD THE TETRARCH

Herod Antipas or *The Tetrarch*, (born 21 BC—died AD 39), son of Herod the Great who became tetrarch (*"Ruler of a quarter"*) of Galilee and ruled throughout Jesus ministry.

About 4 BC Herod Antipas inherited part of his father's kingdom after the Roman emperor Augustus had adjusted his father's will.

He divorced his Nabataean wife, the daughter of Aretas IV, king of the desert kingdom adjoining his own, to marry Herodias, formerly the wife of his half brother. The marriage offended his former father-in-law and alienated his Jewish subjects. (See: Matt. 14)

When Jesus was arrested in Jerusalem (Luke 23), Pilate, the Roman procurator of Judaea, first sent Him to Antipas, who was spending Passover in the capital, because Jesus came from Antipas' realm.

(Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica.com)

THE FEEDING OF THE 5,000

While going about His ministry, Jesus Christ received some terrible news. John the Baptist, His friend, kinsman, and the prophet who proclaimed Him as the Messiah, had been beheaded by Herod Antipas, ruler of Galilee and Perea (READ: Matt. 14:1-12). Jesus' 12 disciples had just returned from a missionary journey He had sent them on. After they told Him all they had done and taught, He took them with him in a boat on the Sea of Galilee to a remote place, for rest and prayer. Great crowds of people in the area heard that Jesus was near. They ran to see Him, bringing their sick friends and relatives. When the boat landed, Jesus saw all the men, women and children and had compassion on them. He taught them about the Kingdom of God and healed those who were sick.

Looking at the crowd, which numbered about 5,000 men, not counting women and children, Jesus asked His disciple Philip, *"Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"* (John 6:5) Jesus knew what He was going to do, but He asked Philip to test him. Philip replied that even eight months' wages would not be enough to give each person even one bite of bread. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, had more faith in Jesus. He brought forward a young boy who had five small loaves of barley bread and two small fish. Even so, Andrew wondered how that could help.

Jesus ordered the crowd to sit down in groups of fifty. He took the five loaves, looked up to heaven, gave thanks to God His Father, and passed them to His disciples to be distributed. He did the same with the two fish. Everyone—men, women and children—ate as much as they wanted! Jesus miraculously multiplied the loaves and fishes so there was more than enough. Then He told His disciples to gather the leftovers so nothing was wasted. They collected enough to fill 12 baskets. The crowd was so overwhelmed by this miracle that they understood Jesus was the prophet who had been promised. Knowing they would want to force him to become their king, Jesus fled from them.

Points of Interest from the Feeding the 5000:

- This miracle when Jesus feeds, 5000 is recorded in all four Gospels, with only slight differences in details. It is a separate incident from the feeding of the 4,000 (See: Mark 8:1-10).
- Only the men were counted. When the women and children were added, the crowd probably numbered 10,000 to 20,000.
- These Jews were as "lost" as their ancestors who wandered in the desert during the Exodus, when God provided manna to feed them. Jesus was superior to Moses because He not only provided physical food but also spiritual food, as the "bread of life."
- Jesus' disciples focused on the problem rather than on God. When we are confronted with an unsolvable situation, we need to remember "For nothing is impossible with God." (Luke 1:37)
- This miraculous feeding of the multitude was another sign that Jesus was the Messiah. However, the people did not understand that He was a spiritual king, and wanted to force Him to be a military leader who would overthrow the Romans. This is the reason Jesus fled from them.

THE BREAD OF LIFE



(Source: Followtherabbi.com)

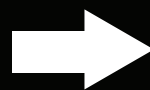
In a place near Capernaum, Jesus fed 5,000 people with just 5 loaves of bread and 2 fishes. But the real message of the miracle came as the disciples picked up the leftovers.

The miracle happened in *"the land of the twelve"* where devout Jews, descendants of Israel's twelve tribes, continued to worship God. And twelve baskets were picked up after the meal. Through this miracle, Jesus clearly communicated that He was the bread of life for the Jews.

Later in Jesus' ministry, a similar miracle happened. This time, Jesus fed a crowd of 4,000 people and seven baskets of bread were left over. But this miracle was done across the lake, in *"the land of the seven"*—the Decapolis area dominated by pagans.

Through His feeding miracles, Jesus presented a wonderful message: Not only was He going to save the Jews, but He also came to save the pagans. The Messiah showed His audience, in a very concrete way, that He was truly the bread of life for the world.

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THE MOUNT OF TRANS- FIGURATION

Mount Tabor is strategically located on the main north-south ancient road, and has been traditionally thought to be "the mount of Transfiguration".

This mountain was an important fortress during the 1st and 2nd Temple, Greek, Roman and Crusaders times.

Mount Tabor is located 9KM east of Nazareth, at the north-east corner of the Jezreel Valley. It is a round steep hill, visible from the whole area.

It is not an extinct volcano, although it does look like one.

It had a prime location in the ancient times, and there were several roads that crossed it.



(Source:Biblewalks.com)

WHAT WAS THE TRANSFIGURATION?

We read in Luke 9:28-36 that Jesus took Peter, James and John up on to a mountaintop where they experienced an amazing event called: The Transfiguration. Let's look at what happened and what it meant.

About a week after Jesus plainly told His disciples that He would suffer, be killed, and be raised to life (Luke 9:22), He took Peter, James and John up a mountain to pray. While praying, His personal appearance was changed into a glorified form, and His clothing became dazzling white. Moses and Elijah appeared and talked with Jesus about His death that would soon take place.

Peter, not knowing what he was saying and being very fearful, offered to put up three shelters for them. This is undoubtedly a reference to the booths that were used to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, when the Israelites dwelt in booths for 7 days (READ: Lev. 23:34-42). Peter was expressing a wish to stay in that place. When a cloud enveloped them, a voice said, "This is My Son, whom I have chosen, whom I love; listen to Him!" The cloud lifted, Moses and Elijah had disappeared, and Jesus was alone with His disciples who were still very much afraid. Jesus warned them not to tell anyone what they had seen until after His resurrection. The three accounts of this event are found in Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:2-8, and Luke 9:28-36.

Could it be that the purpose of the transfiguration of Jesus into, at least a part of His heavenly glory, was so that His "inner circle" of disciples could gain a greater understanding of who Jesus was? Jesus underwent a dramatic change in appearance in order that the disciples could behold Him in His glory. The disciples, who had only known Him in His human body, now had a greater realization of the deity of Jesus the Christ, though they could not fully comprehend it...which may have given them the reassurance they needed after hearing the shocking news of His coming death.

Symbolically, the appearance of Moses and Elijah represented the Law and the Prophets (the O.T.). But God's voice from heaven - "Listen to Him!" - clearly showed that the Law and the Prophets must point to Jesus. The One who is the new and living way - and the fulfillment of the Law and the countless prophecies in the Old Testament. Also, in His glorified form they saw a preview of His coming glorification and enthronement as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The disciples never forgot what happened that day on the mountain and no doubt this was intended. John wrote in his gospel, "We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only" (John 1:14). Peter also wrote of it, "We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory, saying, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.' We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with Him on the sacred mountain." (2 Peter 1:16-18). Those who witnessed the transfiguration bore witness to it to the other disciples and to countless millions down through the centuries.

(Source:Gotquestions.org)

THE "KINGDOM OF GOD" ...

Throughout Jesus' ministry He referred, over and over again, to the "Kingdom of God". He was clearly talking about something more than the "great here-after". The Kingdom of God is much, much more:

Bible scholars agree that "the Kingdom of God was the central message of Jesus." The Biblical evidence for this is quite clear. For example, each of the gospels speak to Jesus and this mission. In Luke 4:43 Jesus says, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose. Again, in Luke 9:27, Jesus assures His disciples that some would "not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

The Hebrew word for kingdom is *mallkut* and its Greek counterpart is *basileia*. Both terms primarily mean "rule" or "reign." Only secondarily do they denote a realm, sphere, or territory over which a rule or reign is exercised. Both terms have an active meaning, and refer to the exercise of God's power, dominion, or sovereignty.

We easily see (throughout the Gospels) that the expression "Kingdom of God" does not refer to heaven or the church or the heart or to moral reform or to a future realm. Rather it refers to the active, dynamic exercise of God's rule, authority, dominion, and power in the world.

The Kingdom of God is the rule or reign of God. Not the church, or heaven, or the heart, or the future realm. It is God's sovereignty in action. It came into the world in Jesus. It is both present and future. Its arrival, however, was startling. It came as a mystery, in an unexpected form through the humble person and work of Jesus as the Suffering Servant who defeated sin, death, and Satan.

(Source:Colsoncenter.org)



"Behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you..."
Luke 17:21

Jesus' Travels – Year Three (Pt. I)

[1] Jesus travels from Capernaum to "His own native town" of Nazareth (Mk 6:1)

[2] In Nazareth, He is rejected for a second time (Mt 13:54; Mk 6:1)

[3] He continues through Galilee (Mt 13:58; Mk 6:6) and sends out the twelve apostles to preach the Gospel (Mt 10:5; Mk 6:7; Lk 9:1)

[4] The Twelve return to Capernaum from their mission (Mk 6:30; Luke 9:10)

[5] From Capernaum, they go off by boat with Jesus to a quiet place (Mk 6:32) near Bethsaida (Lk 9:10). Here He feeds the 5,000 (Mt 14:14; Mk 6:33; Lk 9:11; Jn 6:5)

[6] The disciples return across the Sea of Galilee (Mt 14:22; Mk 6:45), Jesus walking on the water to join them (Mt 14:25; Mk 6:48; Jn 6:19). They land near the Plain of Gennesaret and Jesus heals many people there (Mt 14:34; Mk 6:53).

[7] From Gennesaret they make their way back to Capernaum (Jn 6:24) and Jesus teaches about the Bread of Life (Jn 6:26)

[8] Jesus retires from Galilee to the region of Tyre and Sidon in Syrian-Phoenicia (Mt 15:21; Mk 7:24) where He heals the daughter of the Gentile Syrophenician woman (Mt 15:22; Mk 7:25).

[9] He leaves Syrian-Phoenicia via Sidon for Galilee (Mt 15:29) but travels through the Decapolis (Mk 7:31).

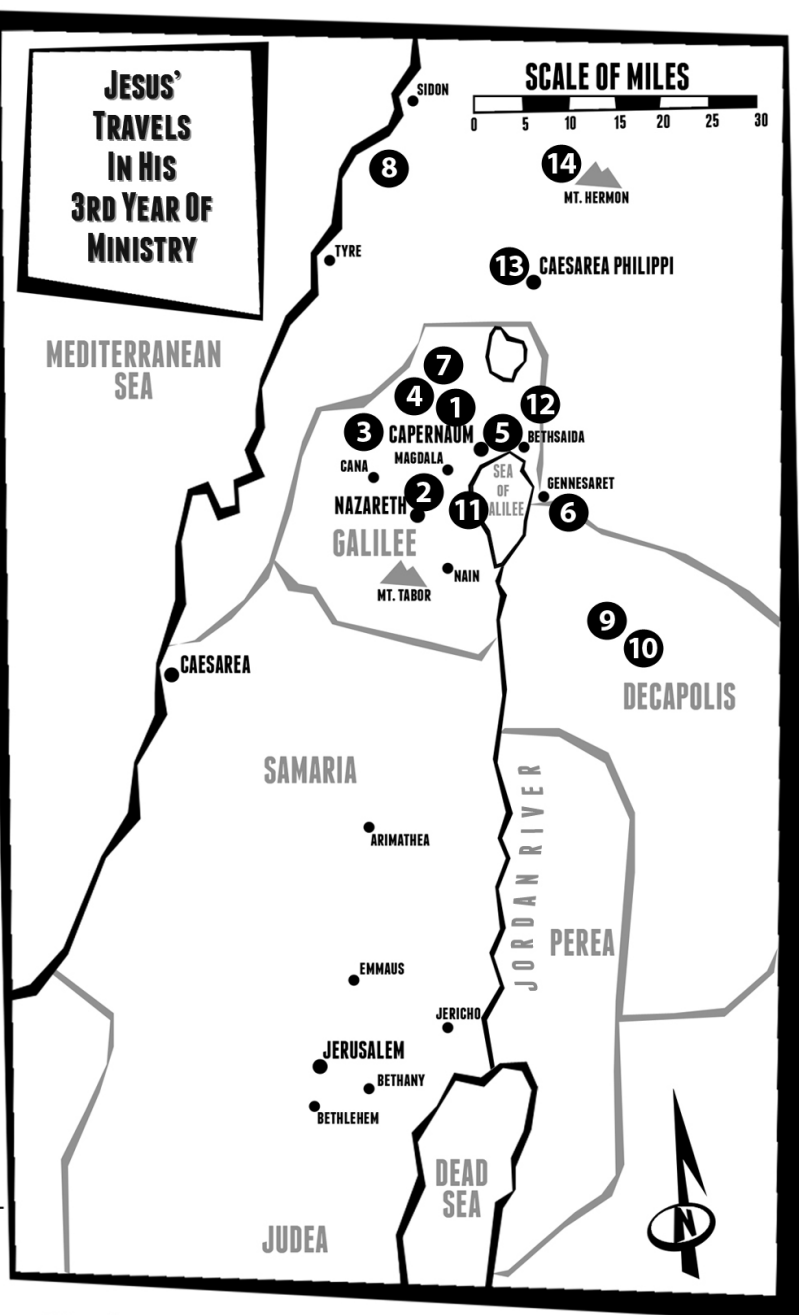
[10] In the Decapolis He heals the deaf and mute man (Mk 7:32) and feeds the 4,000 (Mt 15:32; Mk 8:1)

[11] Reaching the Sea of Galilee, He crosses by boat to the Magadan/Dalmanutha region (Mt 15:39; Mk 8:10). There the Pharisees and Sadducees ask for a sign from heaven (Mt 16:1; Mk 8:11)

[12] Continuing on to Bethsaida, a blind man is healed (Mk 8:22)

[13] Jesus now travels from Galilee, north to Caesarea Philippi in Iturea and Trachonitis, where Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ (Mt 16:13; Mk 8:27)

[14] Continuing on from Caesarea Philippi possibly further north towards Mount Hermon, three of the disciples see Jesus Transfigured in the presence of Elijah and Moses (Mt 17:1; Mk 9:2; Lk 9:28). On His return, Jesus heals the boy with epilepsy (Mt 17:14; Mk 9:14; Lk 9:37).



JESUS AND DECAPOLIS

The Bible records (See: Above) two of Jesus' visits to the Decapolis (the "10 Cities" in Greek were founded by the Greek settler-soldiers of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kingdoms). It also mentions crowds of people from the Decapolis following Jesus. Understanding the pagan world represented by these city-states helps us see the significance of Jesus' response to it. His message clearly was for the inhabitants of the Decapolis, for they heard and followed. He confronted the darkness of the pagan world in choosing to visit its people.

(Source: Followtherabbi.com)

DAY 10

READ LUKE 9:37-10:24

TODAY'S READING: Jesus' ministry nears its end as He makes His way to Jerusalem for Passover. Jesus heals, prophesies His own death, and warns people of the cost of following Him. He sends 72 of His followers ahead of Him to the towns and villages He is passing through.

THE 10 MINUTE PLAN...IF ALL YOU HAVE IS 10 MINUTES TO SPARE TODAY

Read today's Bible passage (Luke 9:37-10:24) and answer the following questions:

1) How would you paraphrase (and describe) what Jesus says in Luke 9:46-48? _____

2) Why do you think the "least among us" are SO important to Jesus? _____

Take a couple of minutes to pray. Ask God to help you become a "great" man by becoming a "child" before Him. Ask Jesus to show you where you need to become more childlike in your pursuit of Him--and for the wisdom and strength to follow.

THE 20 MINUTE PLAN

Do the 10 Minute Plan, then answer the following questions and read through the rest of the Day 10 pages:

1) In Luke 9:41 Jesus calls the people a "faithless and twisted generation". That seems a little harsh. Why do you think He said that? _____

2) How do you think Jesus might describe the world around us today? _____

3) In Luke 9:46-48 a fight breaks out amongst the disciples. They're arguing about who was the greatest. First, why do you think the fight broke out? _____

4) Secondly, what criteria do you think they were using to prove who was the greatest? _____

5) In Luke 9:57-62 Jesus talks about the cost of following Him. If you had to sum up this passage in a sentence what would it be? _____

JESUS (AGAIN) FORETELLS HIS DEATH...

It's tempting to scoff at the disciples for not understanding Jesus' predictions of His impending death. But to do so is to miss the point: we're no different. Like the disciples, we don't always understand what God is doing in our lives. We read God's clear promises in the Bible, yet often succumb to stress and doubt when life gets tough. Sometimes it isn't until after God has brought us through a trial that we are able to look back at Scripture and understand that He was with us from the beginning. God loves us, as He loved the disciples; He wants to bring us into understanding and belief. We can be grateful to Jesus' hapless disciples for providing us an object lesson in human ignorance...and divine patience.



(Source: Biblegateway.com)

**FIND MORE
DAY 10**



NEXT PAGE

DAY 10 ...MORE

SENDING OUT 2-BY-2

As Jesus did with the 12 (Luke 9), He sends the 72 (Luke 10) out in pairs, a pattern later followed by Paul and Barnabas, Paul and Silas, Barnabas and Mark, and other early missionaries.



Traveling in pairs was always safer, provides more encouragement, and uses the spiritual gifts of the pair rather than just a single person.

Even today (as Flatirons does frequently) teams are often put together to reach out, visit and connect with missions partners around the world.

WAS JESUS TOO HARD ON PEOPLE?

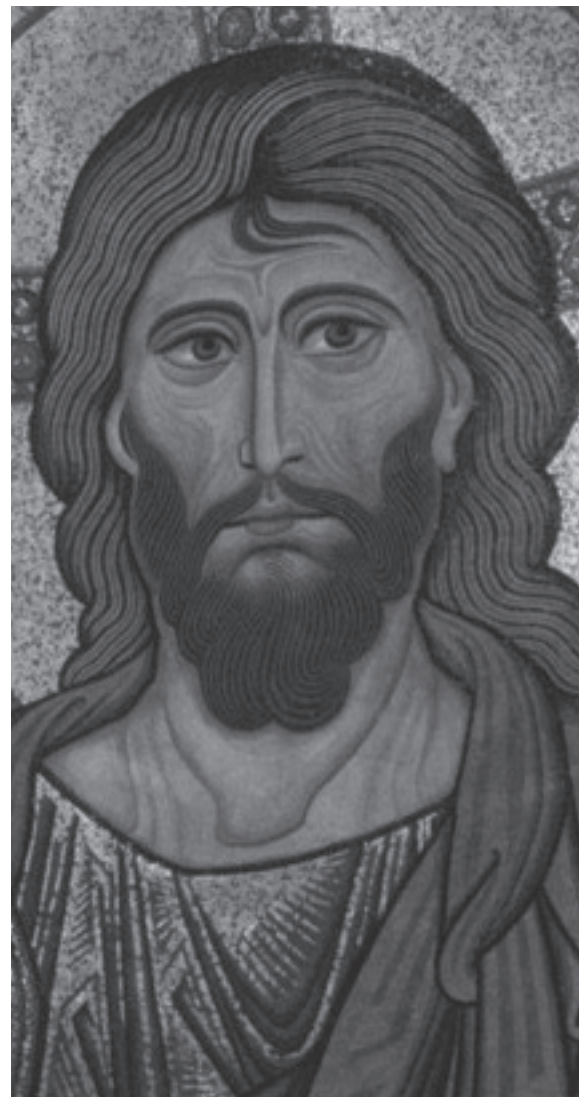
"Leave the dead to bury their own dead." Luke 9:60

One day Jesus invited a man to follow Him and become His disciple—but the man refused. He said he would follow Jesus later, but first he wanted to go bury his father. Jesus responded, *"Follow me...Leave the dead to bury their own dead."* (Luke 9:59-60)

What did He mean by this? Jesus wasn't saying that people who were physically dead should bury other dead people, that wouldn't make sense. Instead He was speaking of those who were spiritually dead—those who were alive physically but dead toward God in their souls. We may be very strong and healthy physically, and yet be spiritually dead—which is far more serious.

To us Jesus' words to this man might sound harsh—but that is because we don't understand what the man was really saying. When someone in Jesus' day said they wanted to go bury their father, it didn't necessarily mean he was already dead. Instead they really were saying that they wanted to stay with their father until he died—something that might be years away. This man was simply looking for an excuse to avoid becoming Jesus' disciple.

What keeps us from following Jesus as we should? Almost anything can come between us and God; the devil will make sure of that. But Jesus' call has not changed: *"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."* (Luke 9:23).



(Source: Billygraham.org)

BURIAL IN JESUS' DAY

The Israelites began to use new burial practices in the first century A.D. Tombs were still cut into the rock around cities (e.g., Jerusalem), as they had been for generations. The new tombs generally had two chambers. There was an outer chamber where the body could be laid out to be prepared for burial. This chamber may have even served as a place for mourning the deceased shortly after death. A second inner chamber provided a place for the burial itself. Many tombs had a number of shelves, or niches, cut into the rock (*kokhim* in Hebrew).



(Source: Followtherabbi.com)

After the flesh had decayed from the bones, the bones often were collected and placed in a small box, usually made of soft stone, called an ossuary (See: Left). These boxes were usually about 20 inches long, 12 inches high, and 12 inches wide. In some cases, they were decorated with geometric designs. The ossuary was placed in a small niche cut into the rock on the side of the chamber. Over time, several people from the same family would be placed in the same ossuary. In many cases, the family name would be inscribed on the side. Occasionally, additional details might be included, such as the person's accomplishments or status.

"The most dangerous thing I can think of is a man with a Bible in his hand and a friend at his side."

Scott Nickell
DANGEROUS:
Men's Retreat
2013

**FIND
MORE DAY 10**

NEXT PAGE

Jesus' Travels – Year Three (Pt. 2)

[15] In Galilee (Mt 17:22; Mk 9:30), in Capernaum (Mk 9:33), Jesus pays the Temple Tax with a fish! (Mt 17:24). Then to avoid the dangers in Judea, he remains in Galilee (Jn 7:1)

[16] Jesus leaves Capernaum and Galilee for the last earthly time (Mt 19:1; Mk 10:1) and heads for Jerusalem (Lk 9:51; Jn 7:10). Traveling by Samaria, He heals the ten lepers (Lk 17:11) but is rejected in a Samaritan village (Lk 9:52)

[17] Arriving in Jerusalem for the Feast of the Tabernacles in the Autumn of c AD29 (Jn 7:10), Jesus forgives the woman caught in adultery (Jn 8:2) and heals the blind man who is taken before the Sanhedrin (Jn 9:1)

[18] During His travels in Judea, Jesus visits Martha and Mary in Bethany (Lk 10:38), returning to Jerusalem for "Hanukkah", the Feast of Dedication in December c AD29 (Jn 10:22)

[19] Jesus withdraws to Bethany-across-the-Jordan (or Bethabara), and into the province of Perea, and stays for a while (Jn 10:40)

[20] Following the death of Lazarus, Jesus returns to Bethany near Jerusalem, and raises him (Lazarus) from the dead (Jn 11:1).

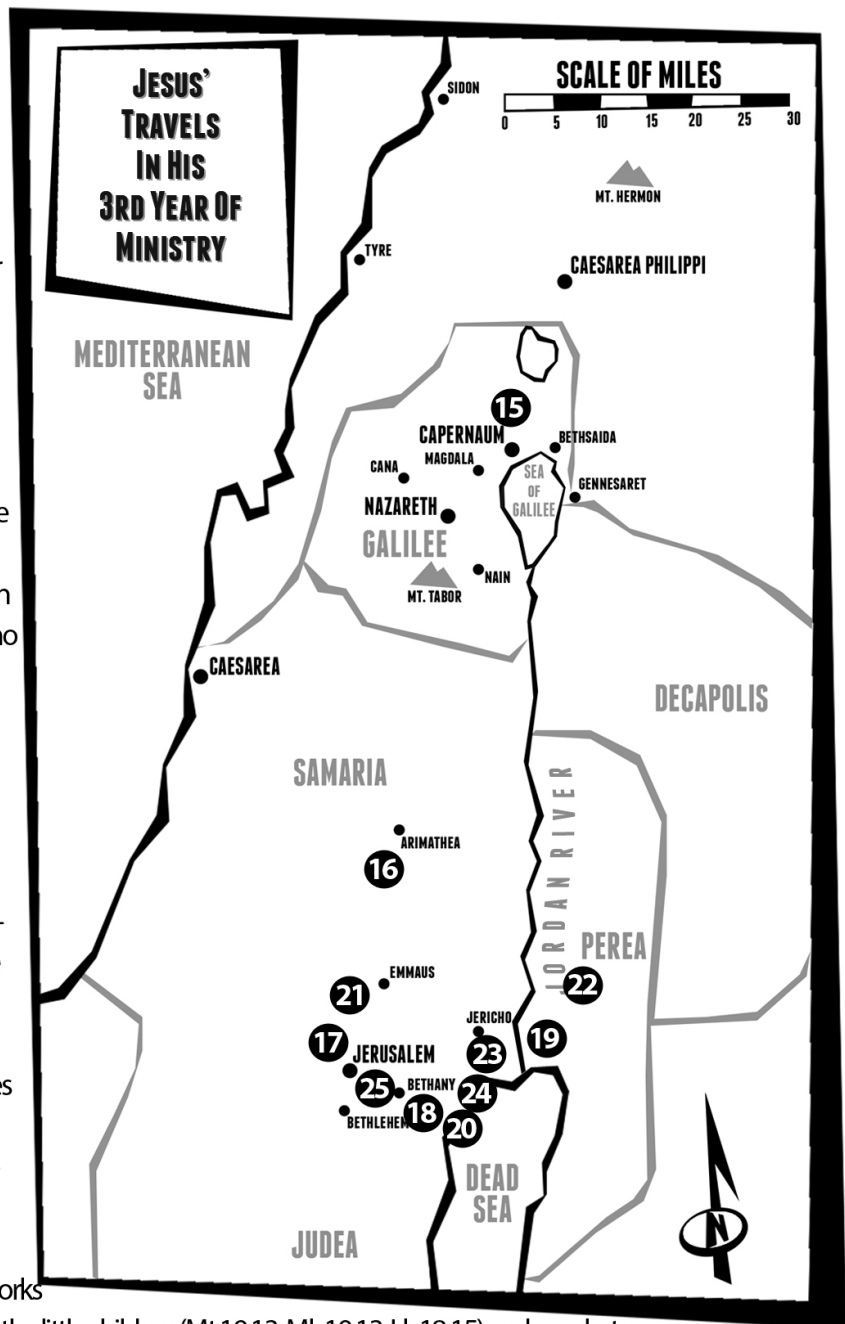
[21] Because of threats to His life, Jesus withdraws to Ephraim to the north of Jerusalem (Jn 11:54)

[22] He then crosses the River Jordan and works in Perea (Mt 19:1; Mk 10:1). There He blesses the little children (Mt 19:13; Mk 10:13; Lk 18:15) and speaks to the rich young man (Mt 19:16; Mk 10:17; Lk 18:18)

[23] Jesus now travels towards Jerusalem for the last time (Mt 20:17; Mk 10:32; Lk 18:31). Passing through Jericho He heals one (or two) blind men (Mt 20:29; Mk 10:46; Lk 18:35) and converts Zacchaeus the tax collector (Lk 19:1).

[24] Reaching Bethany (Jn 12:1) the home of Lazarus, Mary and Martha, Jesus is anointed by Mary either now (Jn 12:2), or later (Mt 26:6; Mk 14:3) after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Mt 21:1; Mk 11:1; Lk 19:29; Jn 12:12)

[25] During the Easter week, Jesus returns to Jerusalem each day after staying overnight in Bethany on the Mount of Olives (Mt 21:17-18; Mk 11:11-12; 19; Lk 21:37).



JESUS' FRIENDS: MARY, MARTHA AND LAZARUS

Mary and Martha lived with their brother Lazarus at Bethany, a village not far from Jerusalem. They are mentioned in several episodes in the Gospels. On one occasion, when Jesus and His disciples were their guests (Luke 10:38-42), Mary sat at Jesus' feet and listened to Him while her sister Martha busied herself with preparing food and waiting on the guests, and when Martha complained, Jesus said that Mary had chosen the better part. When Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, had died, Jesus came to Bethany. Martha, upon being told that He was approaching, went out to meet Him, while Mary sat still in the house until He sent for her. It was to Martha that Jesus said: "*I am the Resurrection and the Life.*" (READ: John 11:1-44)

DAY 11

READ LUKE 10:25-11:36

TODAY'S READING: Jesus tells the Parable of the Good Samaritan and visits His friends, Mary and Martha. After praying in private, Jesus' disciples ask Him to teach them how to pray (*The Lord's Prayer*).

THE 10 MINUTE PLAN...IF ALL YOU HAVE IS 10 MINUTES TO SPARE TODAY

Read today's Bible passage (Luke 10:25-11:36) and answer the following questions:

1) How would you describe God (our heavenly Father) after Jesus' description of the man in Luke 11:5-13? _____

2) When you pray, how would you say you perceive God? _____

Take a couple of minutes to pray and when you pray ask God to open your heart and mind to who He really is; a loving Heavenly Father--a dad--who only wants what is best for you and is asking you to trust Him.

THE 20 MINUTE PLAN

Do the 10 Minute Plan, then answer the following questions and read through the rest of the Day 11 pages:

1) The Parable of the Good Samaritan is probably Jesus' most famous story. What part of the story do you relate to the most, and why? _____

2) The lawyer (putting Jesus to the test) asks Him what he must do to "inherit eternal life". Why do you think he chose this to test Jesus? _____

3) After the Parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus tells the lawyer to "*go and do likewise*". What did that *really* mean to a Jew in this time? _____

4) What does "*go and do likewise*" look like for us today? _____

5) Take a couple of minutes to think, then write down some ways you need to "*go and do likewise*." _____

THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE...



In Luke 11:33-36 Jesus tells us not to hide our light under a basket. The oil lamps in Jesus' day were in the shape of a shell or saucer with a lip.

Lamps of stone, metal, and shell were used; although the majority were made of pottery. Most lamps were fueled by olive oil and the average lamp could hold enough oil to burn through the night.

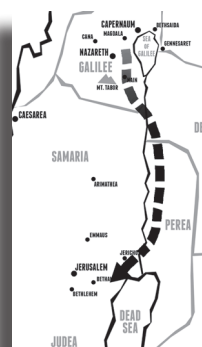
**FIND MORE
DAY 11**



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A JEWISH BY-PASS

At the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, the land of Samaria was situated between the regions of Galilee in the north of Israel, and Judea in the south.



Jews traveling between Galilee and Judea would take the longer, six-day journey along the Jordan River valley rather than taking a shorter, more direct route through Samaria.

The Jews avoided all contact with the Samaritans because of their shared bitter history (See: Right).

The fact that Jesus, a Jew, traveled through Samaria speaks volumes about the way God cares for everyone.

"But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion." Luke 10:33

THE SAMARITANS AND THE JEWS: AN AGE-OLD STRUGGLE

HISTORY: Israel Splits into Two Kingdoms

After the death of King Solomon in 975BC, the nation of Israel split into north and south. (See: 1 Kings 11:26-39 and 1 Kings 12:1-24.) The northern 10 tribes of Israel were collectively called Israel, and their capital city was Samaria (See: 1 Kings 16:24). The southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin were collectively called Judah, and their capital city was Jerusalem.

The Fall of Israel

All the kings of Israel, without exception, were unfaithful and disobedient to God. They embraced idolatrous religions and were extremely wicked. After repeated prophetic warnings about coming disaster – unless Israel repented – the northern kingdom of Israel was overpowered by the Assyrians in around 724BC. Most of the Israeli inhabitants – those who survived the attack – were taken to foreign lands where they were assimilated into the native populations (See: 2 Kings 17:5-6). These northern tribes are referred to as the *"lost tribes of Israel"*. However a few groups of Israelite families retained their ancestral integrity.

The Assyrians sent five eastern tribes to live in Northern Israel. These five tribes brought with them their own foreign religions and customs. The tribes were sent with the purpose of corrupting the Israeli identity and culture. The eastern foreigners intermarried with the remaining, much depleted Israeli population. This hybrid people group was the beginning of the Samaritans.

The Fall of Judah

In 586BC, the southern kingdom of Judah was also conquered by the Babylonians (See: 2 Chron. 36), and the whole of Israel and Judah came to be known as Samaria. The Jews were exiled from their homeland and taken captive into Babylon for 70 years, as prophesied by Jeremiah (See: Jer. 25:11-12; 2 Chron. 36:21). The Jewish population was taken in several stages to Babylon. Only the poorest, sickest and least skilled were ultimately left behind. These remaining people intermarried with their northern neighbors with the result that foreign beliefs and customs mixed with Jewish beliefs and customs.

The Returning Jews

The Babylonian exile had been a punishment for Judah's unfaithfulness to God, and the Jews had learned from it. The returned Jews were zealous for God and righteous living, and they never again engaged in blatant idolatry. The returning Jews were keen to rebuild the Jerusalem Temple so that they could worship God in the way He had prescribed. The Samaritans offered to help the Jews in rebuilding the Temple but this offer was scornfully rejected (See: Ezra 4:1-5).

The Samaritans

Meanwhile, the Samaritans had developed their own compromised version of Judaism. The Samaritans still believed in the God of the Jews, but they worshiped at Mount Gerizim (instead of Jerusalem) with their own, adapted, worship practices. The Samaritans also had their own Pentateuch in Aramaic, which differed from the Hebrew Pentateuch in places. The Samaritans eventually built a temple on Mount Gerizim. This caused a lot of tension and hostility between the Jews and the Samaritans. The Jews ultimately destroyed the Samaritan temple in 128/9BC.

The Jews regarded the Samaritans as ignorant, superstitious, mongrels, outside of God's favour or consideration. The Samaritans however were still very much part of God's plans, as shown in the fourth chapter of John's gospel, where Jesus brings the Good News to a Samaritan Village. And Jesus specifically mentions Samaria in Acts 1:8 where he tells his disciples: *"You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

(Source: <http://newlife.id.au>)



DAY 11

...MORE FACTS, ETC.

2 LORD'S PRAYERS?

Why are there two versions of the Lord's Prayer (in Luke 11 and Matthew 6)?

Most traditional scholars believe that both prayers are original, they were simply given on different occasions.

The Luke version may have been an earlier version that Jesus used the first few times he gave this teaching. Matthew's version may be the more mature version that He used in later teachings.

Like so many of the minor differences we read in the Gospels, we can rest assured that they are true accounts of the life and teachings of Jesus—accounts given in a day and time before mass communication, where Jesus needed to share His teachings to multiple crowds throughout Galilee and Judea over His 3 year ministry.



(Source:Gotquestions.org)

THE PRAYERS OF JESUS

In addition to The Lord's Prayer, the gospel writers - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John - recorded in the Bible other prayers that Jesus said. Looking at these prayers, we can learn a lot to help our own prayer life...

Prayer of Praise

"In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.'"
Luke 10:21, Matthew 11:25-26

In this prayer Jesus gives thanks that all people, not just the elite, can know God and become part of the Christian family. All people can share Jesus' close relationship with His Father, because God likes it that way - it is God's initiative.

Jesus Prays Before Raising Lazarus

"So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, 'Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.'"
John 11:41-42.

Jesus prays that the crowd, on seeing Lazarus return from the grave, will have faith in Him and know that He is from God.

Jesus Prays For God's Name to be Glorified

"Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." John 12:27-28.

Here, as in the prayers of Jesus in Gethsemane recorded in the other gospels, Jesus reveals His anguish about what is to happen (His death). He could pray to be saved or He could pray for God's will to be accomplished. Jesus chooses the second option, and makes His prayer that God will be glorified by the success of His mission.

A Chapter of Prayer

READ: John 17. This prayer from John's gospel is the longest prayer of Jesus recorded. In this chapter Jesus consecrates Himself to the task that lies ahead, not for His sake, but for ours. This prayer of Jesus brings us to a closer understanding of the mind of Jesus, His relationship with God, and His selfless love of those, like us, in His care.

Jesus Prays in Gethsemane

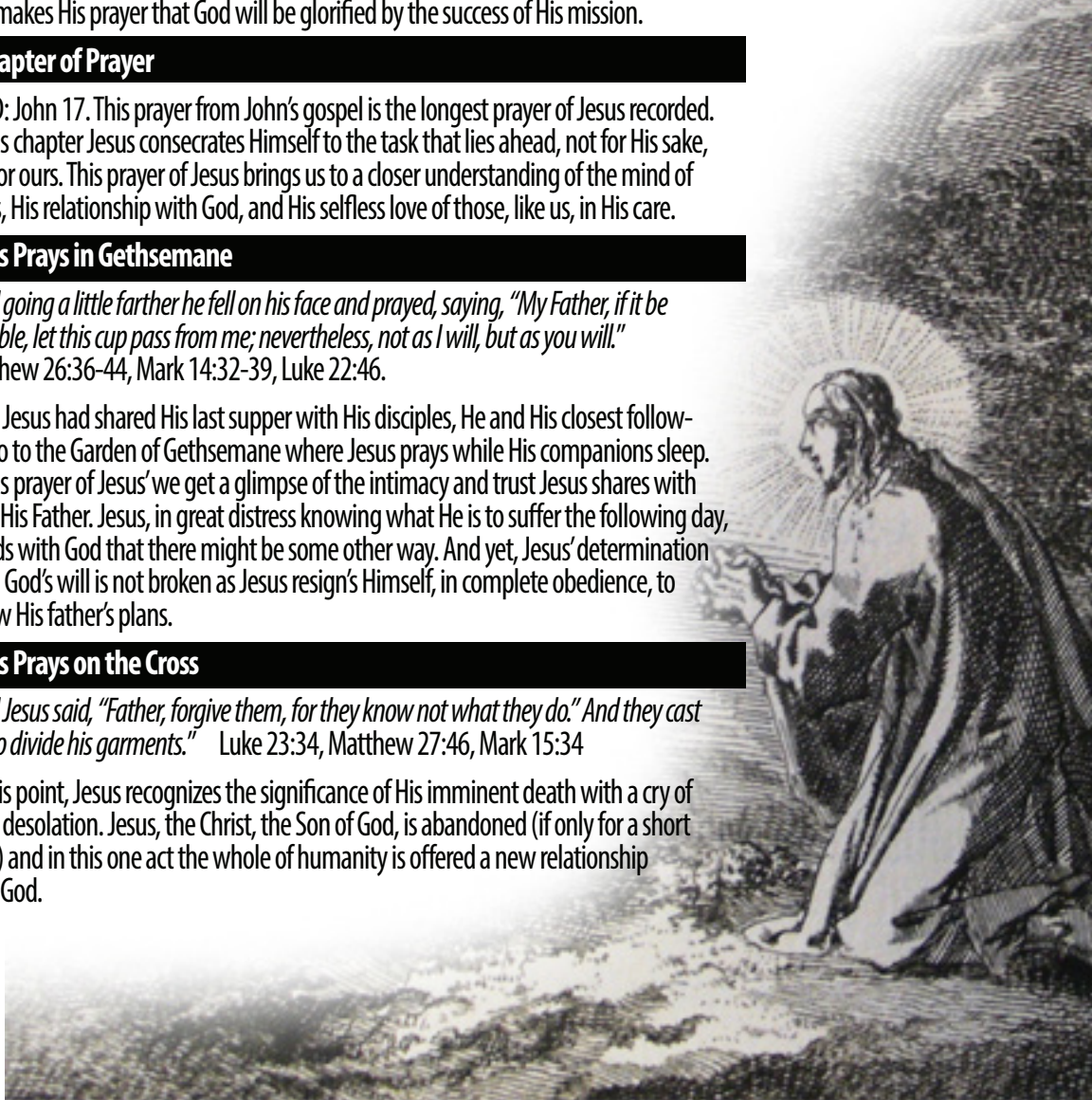
"And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.'"
Matthew 26:36-44, Mark 14:32-39, Luke 22:46.

After Jesus had shared His last supper with His disciples, He and His closest followers go to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus prays while His companions sleep. In this prayer of Jesus' we get a glimpse of the intimacy and trust Jesus shares with God, His Father. Jesus, in great distress knowing what He is to suffer the following day, pleads with God that there might be some other way. And yet, Jesus' determination to do God's will is not broken as Jesus resigns Himself, in complete obedience, to follow His father's plans.

Jesus Prays on the Cross

"And Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' And they cast lots to divide his garments." Luke 23:34, Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34

At this point, Jesus recognizes the significance of His imminent death with a cry of utter desolation. Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, is abandoned (if only for a short time) and in this one act the whole of humanity is offered a new relationship with God.



(Source:prayers-of-jesus.info)

DAY 12

READ LUKE 11:37-13:9

TODAY'S READING: Jesus again upsets the Pharisees and religious leaders at a dinner by pointing out their legalism, their judgemental nature, and their wickedness. Jesus shares more parables like the Parable of the Rich Fool and of the Barren Fig Tree.

THE 10 MINUTE PLAN...IF ALL YOU HAVE IS 10 MINUTES TO SPARE TODAY

Read today's Bible passage (Luke 11:37-13:9) and answer the following questions:

1) When Jesus explains to His disciples that they shouldn't be anxious (Chp. 11:22-34), what do you think made them most anxious back then? _____

2) What are the things that make you the most anxious about these days? _____

Take a couple of minutes to pray. Tell God what has you the most worried and anxious today (even though He already knows) and be open and honest with Him—telling Him your frustrations and concerns, then ask God for His peace to surround you and remove your worry about today.

THE 20 MINUTE PLAN

Do the 10 Minute Plan, then answer the following questions and read through the rest of the Day 12 pages:

1) Jesus had to deal with the Pharisees (extremely judgmental leaders) time and again. What was their biggest issue with Jesus? _____

2) There are people today who have similar issues with Jesus—and His followers. Why do you think that is? _____

3) Jesus talked a lot about money. What point do you think He's trying to get across in the Parable of the Rich Fool? (Luke 12:13-21) _____

4) What do you think this parable has to say about our stuff today (i.e., retirement planning, 401Ks, etc.)? _____

5) In Luke 12:51 Jesus says that He didn't come to bring peace, "...but rather division". Does that contradict what the angels said in Luke 2:14? And why? _____

THE PHARISEES

Jesus was constantly having to deal with the needling, judgemental and self-righteous Pharisees.

What was their deal?!

ORIGIN: Descended from Hasidim freedom fighters of the Maccabee era

MEMBERSHIP: Middle-class merchants numbering about 6,000

BELIEFS: Believed in entire O.T. as law...Accepted oral interpretation of the O.T....

Believed study of Torah was the highest act of worship...God's desire was for his

people to keep the law...Believed in bodily resurrection and life after death

PRACTICES: Supported synagogues for Torah study and interpretation...Strict,

detailed obedience to oral and written law...Accepted Rome as a necessary evil

as long as they were allowed to practice their beliefs

**FIND MORE
DAY 12**



NEXT PAGE

DAY 12

...MORE

“UNMARKED GRAVES”?

What's the BIG deal about an unmarked grave?

What was Jesus getting at when He referred to the Pharisees as *unmarked graves*?

Under the law anyone who touched a grave or tomb or human bone was immediately unclean, they were instantly enrolled in a VERY labor intensive cleansing process that took 7 whole days (READ: Num. 19:14-22).

By calling the Pharisees “*unmarked graves*” Jesus meant that the people who followed them would unknowingly remain unclean and defiled. That's the deception of a false teacher. The Pharisees weighed people down with extra-Biblical commands, extra duties, etc. They would look down on people for being a mess and missing the mark yet they themselves were filled with lawlessness.



(Source: Preparingtheway.net)

WHY DOES GOD ALLOW DISASTERS? (LUKE 13:1-5)

“Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” (Luke 13:4-5)

SUMMARY:

In this passage from Luke (Luke 13:1-5), Jesus is referring to a well-known disaster of His day, the collapse of the tower at Siloam, which killed 18. That disaster had caused people to think that the victims must have been “above average” sinners in particular, and Jesus corrects this false impression. But Jesus does not treat as interchangeable (as many today do) a “false interpretation” with “no interpretation possible.” He admonishes them for taking away the wrong meaning, not for taking away any meaning at all. A book difficult to read ought not to be confused with a book impossible to read.

This passage in Luke involves the place Siloam. This was a principle source of water for the city of Jerusalem, and a tower in that same place had collapsed. It also involves people misinterpreting the meaning of the misfortune of others. In one place, they thought the 18 were worse sinners than anybody.

A TOWER AND SOME WATER:

As we consider these things, beware of reading the decrees of God glibly. Do not rush to assign meanings. Do not jump to carnal conclusions. As Jesus said elsewhere—“*Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment*” (See: John 7:24). At the same time, don't fall into a “who's to say” relativism. Tornadoes can be read, but only in the light of the Word. Just as Jesus said there was a night coming in which no work could be done, so also there is a kind of night in which nothing can be read—and especially the work of God in natural disaster. Beware of the obvious meanings.

THE REALITY OF NATURAL EVIL:

Now we know from Scripture that God is God over all things. We know that God freely and unalterably ordains whatsoever comes to pass, and yet in such a manner as to not displace the freedom and responsibility of us as His image bearers. Further, we know what those decrees are, in the event (See: James. 4:15). Once something has happened, we know that it happened by the will of God. But even though we know what has occurred, we only know a tiny fraction of what has occurred. Consequently, what we don't know yet is why. For help with that, we must be steeped in the scriptural take on the world, which will enable us to offer our understanding with a humble confidence and a confident humility. For the rest, we are willing in patience to postpone a fuller understanding. As the gospel song has it, “*Farther along, we'll know all about it, farther along, we'll understand why.*”

THE REALITY OF A GOD WHO BLEEDS:

We can have this confidence because we have been made sons and daughters of the Father. We are not fatalists; we are not stoics. We are not resigning ourselves to some inescapable fate of having gotten ourselves caught in the machinery. As we are reeling under the weight of natural disasters, or personal disasters, or a world groaning for the redemption of all things, we have to remember that a scriptural view of the world places the cross of Jesus Christ at the very crux of that world. He said that when He was lifted up, He would draw all men to Himself. Our comfort is that the Author of this great disaster story wrote Himself into the very center of that disaster, that He might carry the weight of it Himself.

THE WORD MEANS “SENT”:

If we rest in God's sovereignty alone, we will become fatalistic determinists. If we rest in the Christ's sufferings alone, detached from the Father's good pleasure and purpose in all things, then all we have done is make a Jesus who is caught in the machinery also.

Jesus sent a blind man to Siloam (See: John 9:10-12). He was sent there by the One who had been sent into the world by His Father. “Sent” denotes purpose. Suffering has a point. And if you have been sent to see the rubble of the tower, then you have been sent to testify as to its meaning. If you have been sent to the pool to wash, you have been sent to testify to your gift of sight. And in both cases, you are testifying to the reality of Jesus Christ, Lord and Savior of mankind.

—Doug Wilson

(Source: dougwils.com)

LOOKING FOR COMMUNITY?

Check out Flatironslist (www.flatironschurch.com/flatironslist) and see all the different community groups meeting at Flatirons—or post a new group yourself. FlatironsList is the best and fastest way to find or build community at Flatirons!

FIND MORE DAY 12



DAY 12

...MORE FACTS, ETC.

ALMS AND GIVING



In Luke 11:40-42, Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for giving alms but *"neglect[ing] justice and the love of God."*

In other words, these religious leaders gave to charity, yet they did not have true charity in their hearts.

Giving to the needy does not necessarily prove a right relationship with God.

Biblically, giving financially to those in need is an important expression of the Christian faith. However, we should make sure our giving is done out of a true love for God, without drawing attention to ourselves.

When we invest what God has given us to impact the lives of others, we can trust that the results will make a difference both now and for eternity.

(Source: Gotquestions.org)

A DIVIDED HOUSE...

In Luke 12:49-53 Jesus--the Prince of Peace-- speaks very little about peace, but of division. Divided families, homes and relationships. Let's take a look at this:

Not Peace but Division

"Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division." (12:51)

You'd think the Prince of Peace would bring peace. And He will bring about the time when:

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah 11:6-9).

But that comes later. We know that when Jesus returns He deal with the sins and the transgressions of those who have not accepted Him. It will be a time of judgement-- and finally peace for all believers who will live with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit in eternity (READ: Rev. 22:1-5). But until that time...

Divided Families

Unfortunately, this present division extends into the households of followers:

"For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law." (Luke 12:52-53)

You are blessed when your whole household are believers in Jesus. But Jesus understands if that is not the case. He describes the division in a typical household of five: father, mother, daughter, son, son's wife. Yes, individuals can find inner peace and inner tranquility as they surrender their lives to Jesus. But outer peace and outer tranquility too often will not come until Jesus' return. It's a fact of following Jesus...and He understands and sympathizes with you.

(Source: Jesuswalk.com)



"SETTLE UP, BOYS!" (LUKE 12:54-59)

Jesus expects His disciples to accurately read the signs of the times! Farmers and seafarers know the importance of spotting weather conditions for safe travel and planting. A lot of effort is made today, with the help of science and technology, to discern potential natural dangers. Our need for accurately discerning spiritual danger is even more necessary if we want to avoid a spiritual crisis or a moral disaster. Jesus used a vivid illustration to point out the urgency of getting right with God before it is too late. If you got into serious trouble with your neighbor and did something that could get you severely penalized (like being thrown into jail and loosing everything you owned), would you not try to settle the case out-of-court to avoid the worst consequences?

None of us has the power and strength of will for overcoming sin and evil on our own. We stand in constant need of God's grace, help, strength, and protection. That is why scripture uses vivid language to describe God as our *rock, refuge, fortress, and mighty defense*. We are also vulnerable to Satan's lies and deceptions as well as our own spiritual blindspots for recognizing sin and moral weakness in our own lives. That is why we need God's help and discernment for distinguishing between truth and error, right and wrong, good and evil. The light of Jesus Christ reveals what is in our hearts and His grace frees us from the tyranny of sinful habits, hurtful desires, and harmful addictions.

(Source: letjesushelpyou.com)

DAY 13

READ LUKE 13:10-15:32

TODAY'S READING: Jesus gives several parables; telling the parable of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast, the Narrow Door, and the Wedding Banquet. He also shares the parable of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin and the Prodigal Son--all pointing to God's love for the lost.

THE 10 MINUTE PLAN...IF ALL YOU HAVE IS 10 MINUTES TO SPARE TODAY

Read today's Bible passage (Luke 13:10-15:32) and answer the following questions:

1) Jesus tells parables about 3 lost things (a lost sheep, lost coin and lost son) in Ch. 15:1-32. What do you think Jesus was trying to tell people back then?

2) What is Jesus telling you today through these parables? _____

Take a couple of minutes to pray, asking God for a clear understanding on how you should act on what you've learned from this Bible passage today.

THE 20 MINUTE PLAN

Do the 10 Minute Plan, then answer the following questions and read through the rest of the Day 13 pages:

1) In Luke 13:10-17 Jesus, once again, has to deal the legalists who condemn Him for healing on the Sabbath. Why do you think they just couldn't "get it"?

2) Jesus comes down hard and calls them hypocrites. How was their hypocrisy evident? _____

3) Christians are often called hypocrites today. Is that a valid call or not? Why or why not? _____

4) Do you think parts of your life could be seen as hypocritical, and if so, where? _____

A QUICK LOOK AT THE MUSTARD SEED



In Jesus' analogy of the kingdom of God as a mustard seed (Luke 13:18-19), He uses the reality of a large tree growing from a tiny (the tiniest) of seeds into a tree where birds can nest.

Jesus uses the mustard seed (and yeast) to represent kingdom growth. He is telling His followers that the kingdom will soon grow extremely large--from just a very small start.

**FIND MORE
DAY 13**



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DAY 13 ...MORE

"YOU HYPOCRITES!" LUKE 13:15

Hypocrisy is derived from the Greek word *hypokrisis*, which meant playing a part on the stage, or putting on a mask to misrepresent reality. In the ancient Greek theater, actors were known as hypocrites, without any negative connotation.



In the real world however, being a hypocrite, pretending to be something while actually being something else, was (and is) definitely viewed as wrong. Jesus called it downright evil.

...AND GOD RAN

***"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him."* Luke 15:20**

In the first century, a Middle Eastern man never — never — ran. If he were to run, he would have to hitch up his tunic so he would not trip. If he did this, it would show his bare legs. In that culture, it was humiliating and shameful for a man to show his bare legs.

So, here's the question: If it was shameful for a man to run in that culture, why did the father run when his son returned to him? What motivated him to shame himself?

Before we answer that question, we have to understand an important first-century Jewish custom. Kenneth Bailey, author of *The Cross & the Prodigal*, explains that if a Jewish son lost his inheritance among Gentiles, and then returned home, the community would perform a ceremony, called the *kezazah*. They would break a large pot in front of him and yell, "You are now cut off from your people!" The community would totally reject him.

So, why did the father run? He probably ran in order to get to his son before he entered the village. The father runs — and shames himself — in an effort to get to his son before the community gets to him, so that his son does not experience the shame and humiliation of their taunting and rejection. The village would have followed the running father, would have witnessed what took place at the edge of the village between father and son. After this emotional reuniting of the prodigal son with his father, it was clear that their would be no *kezazah* ceremony; there would be no rejecting this son — despite what he has done. The son had repented and returned to the father. The father had taken the full shame that should have fallen upon his son and clearly shown to the entire community that his son was welcome back home.

The amazing application for our own lives is crystal clear. Our heavenly Father has taken our shame through his Son, Jesus, who willingly endured the cross on our behalf. He took our sins' shame so that we would not have to. As a result, we can be forgiven, restored — accepted. We do not have to fear going home to our Father and confessing our sins, no matter what we have done, or how many times we have done it (remember, Jesus taught his followers to forgive 70 times seven).

In the parable, only the father could restore the son to full sonship in the family. In our case, we are sinners, and there is nothing that we can do to restore our lost relationship with the Holy God of the Universe. He calls us and waits — a single repentant step in his direction, and he is off and running to welcome us back home!

Not only does God forgive us, but He takes upon Himself our shame. He lifts off that weight that we carry on our shoulders for our past mistakes, and willingly wipes the slate clean once more. May we experience what the prodigal son encountered upon returning to the Father: "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him." (Luke 15:20).

(Source: Biola.com)



DECAPOLIS: THE "FAR COUNTRY"?

The farmers of Galilee could see the sophisticated Gentile world barely eight miles away in Decapolis, and the steep cliffs of the Eastern Shore must have seemed evil and menacing to them.

But the Gentiles' culture was probably alluring to the faithful Jews as well.

Some scholars believe the "far country" mentioned in Jesus' Parable of the Prodigal Son referred to the Decapolis. It was barely a days walk from Galilee and the riotous lifestyle and pigs could certainly be found there.

(Source: Followtherabbi.com)



**FIND
MORE DAY 13**

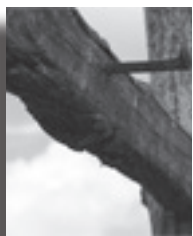
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DAY 13

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TAKE UP YOUR CROSS

Many people interpret "cross" as some burden they must carry in their lives: a thankless job, etc.. Such an interpretation is not what Jesus meant when He said, *"Whoever does not bear his own cross...cannot be my disciple."*



When Jesus carried His cross to be crucified, no one thought of the cross as symbolic of a burden to carry. To a person in the 1st-century, the cross meant one thing and one thing only: death in the most painful and humiliating way. The cross represented nothing but torturous death.

Therefore, *"Take up your cross and follow Me"* means being willing to die in order to follow Jesus. It's a call to absolute surrender.

(Source: Gotquestions.org)

JESUS' PARABLES OF THE LOST: LOST SHEEP...LOST COIN...AND LOST SON

Luke 15 starts off like so many of Jesus' encounters with the Pharisees and scribes: *"Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them.' So he (Jesus) told them..."* And so begins three of Jesus' greatest parables. The Parable of the Lost Coin and the Parable of the Lost Sheep can be linked with the Parable of the Lost Son (Prodigal Son). While each story emphasizes something different from the other, all three depict a seeker in search of something or someone lost.



What can we learn from the lesson of Jesus' parable about a lost sheep? This parable gives us a glimpse of the heart of a true shepherd, and the joy of a community reunited with its lost members. Shepherds not only had to watch over their sheep by day and by night; they also had to protect them from wolves and lions who preyed upon them, and from dangerous terrain and storms. Shepherds often had large flocks, sometimes numbering in the hundreds or thousands. It was common to inspect and count the sheep at the end of the day. You can imagine the surprise and grief of the shepherd who discovers that one of his sheep is missing! Does he wait until the next day to go looking for it? Or does he ask a neighboring shepherd if he might have seen the stray sheep? No, he goes immediately in search of this lost sheep. Delay for even one night could mean disaster leading to death. Sheep by nature are very social creatures. An isolated sheep can quickly become bewildered, disoriented, and even neurotic. Easy prey for wolves and lions!

The shepherd's grief and anxiety is turned to joy when he finds the lost sheep and restores it to the fold. The shepherd searches until what he has lost is found. His persistence pays off. What was new in Jesus' teaching was the insistence that sinners must be sought out time and time again. How easy to forget and be distracted with other matters while the lost become prey for devouring wolves of the soul. The Apostle Peter reminds us that the *"devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking some one to devour"* (See: 1 Peter 5:8). God does not rejoice in the loss of anyone, but desires that we be saved and restored to friendship with him. That is why the whole community of heaven rejoices when one sinner is found and restored to fellowship with God. God is on a rescue mission today to save us from the destructive forces of sin and evil. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, watches over every step we take. Do you listen to His voice and heed His wise counsel? Do you follow the path He has set for you - a path that leads to life rather than death?



The housewife who lost a coin faced something of an economic disaster, since the value of the coin would be equivalent to her husband's daily wage. What would she say to her husband when he returned home from work? They were poor and would suffer greatly because of the loss. Her grief and anxiety turn to joy when she finds the coin.



Both the shepherd and the housewife *"search until what they have lost is found"*. Their persistence pays off. They both instinctively share their joy with the whole community. The poor are particularly good at sharing in one another's sorrows and joys. The restoration of the prodigal son ends with a festive party celebrated by the whole community. What was new in Jesus' teaching was the insistence that sinners must be sought out and not merely mourned for. God does not rejoice in the loss of anyone, but desires that all be saved and restored to fellowship with Him. That is why the whole community of heaven rejoices when one sinner is found and restored to fellowship with God.

(Source: rc.net)

DAY 14

READ LUKE 16:1-18:17

TODAY'S READING: Jesus continues to teach using parables...and continues to frustrate and upset the Pharisees. He tells the parable of the Shrewd Manager, the Rich Man and Lazarus, and the Persistent Widow. He heals 10 lepers and tells us to have the faith of a child.

THE 10 MINUTE PLAN...IF ALL YOU HAVE IS 10 MINUTES TO SPARE TODAY

Read today's Bible passage (Luke 16:1-18:17) and answer the following questions:

1) In Jesus' parable in Luke 18:9-14, why was the tax collector justified, and what do you think that means? _____

2) Who do you relate to more in this parable...and why? _____

Take a couple of minutes to pray, thinking about the Pharisee and the tax collector, humbly asking God to continue a good work in you--molding you and shaping you into a man who walks away with each moment spent with Him...justified.

THE 20 MINUTE PLAN

Do the 10 Minute Plan, then answer the following questions and read through the rest of the Day 14 pages:

1) Jesus taught a lot about the kingdom of God. In Luke 17:20-21 the Pharisees ask Him when the kingdom was to come. What do you think they had in mind when they heard "kingdom of God"? _____

2) What first comes to mind when you hear the phrase "kingdom of God"? _____

3) Jesus tells His disciples about some disturbing future events (Luke 17:22-37). What do you think Jesus is talking about here? _____

4) What was the disciples life like in the years that followed? (See: Next Page) _____

5) Are you confused, troubled or excited when people talk about the "end times"? Why? _____

MESSIAH: A POLITICAL LEADER?

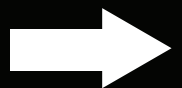
To understand the struggle that Jewish leaders had in believing that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, you have to realize that by the time of Jesus, the Messianic hope had become greatly politicized in the minds of the people. They were seeking deliverance from the tyranny of Rome.

Although the Scripture spoke both of the sufferings and of the victories of the Messiah, the victorious aspect had become uppermost in the minds of the common people because of the Roman domination -- and Jesus spoke very little of Rome...and what He did say...only angered Jewish leaders like the Scribes and Pharisees.

(Source: Jewsforjesus.org)



**FIND MORE
DAY 14**



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DAY 14 ...MORE

JESUS AND LEPERS

Leprosy is a debilitating disease. Today it's controlled with medicine, but in Jesus' day it was incurable and was a slow growing and painful disease. It was infectious and contagious and as a result lepers were shunned and separated from the community into a lepers colony.



In Luke 17:11-19, Jesus comes upon 10 lepers who stood at a distance and raised their voices saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." Jesus responded by telling them to go show themselves to the priests. Under the law, when a person was cleansed of leprosy, they followed rituals which included certain sacrifices and showing themselves to the priests. What Jesus told them to do was in accordance with the law so that when they did they would be given a clean bill of health..

(Source: Freegftfromgod.com)

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

Jesus tells the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). It is a story loaded with meaning which people have been chewing over since Jesus first told it. Is it a story about Heaven and Hell? Or about how poor people are somehow better than rich people? Or is it about how God calls us to care for "the least of these"...

Jesus is talking to a group of Pharisees in Luke 16:19-31. This is the context of this story. A group of Pharisees who were lovers of money were ridiculing Jesus because of what He was saying. We have to go to chapter Luke 15:1, to get the whole picture. Here we read: "Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them.'"

So, Jesus told them a few parables (the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin and the Prodigal Son) and landed on this one...

It is the story of Lazarus and the Rich Man, in which Abraham tells the rich man there is a great gulf fixed that keeps those in Hades separate from those who are with Abraham. There are three characters in the story, the rich man (representing the Pharisees), the miserable beggar Lazarus (representing a class of people despised by the Pharisees), and Abraham (whose bosom or lap was a Jewish figure of comfort and peace in the afterlife).

And the point Jesus uses this story to make is the same point He has been making all along: You consider yourselves the high and mighty blessed of God, but the truth is you love money and hate God—that is why you are so rankled that I spend My time in fellowship with unvarnished sinners, this is why you despise your fellow human beings and will not humble yourselves and believe in me and find true riches. Jesus wants them to know that "there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."

Back to the story. The beggar dies, but then (without missing a beat) Jesus again pokes the Pharisees in the eye by saying, "The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side." This is (as usual with Jesus' stories) exactly the opposite of what the Pharisees expected would happen to a man like Lazarus. They believed such people were poor and diseased beggars because they were under God's curse. They assumed, and therefore it is only natural, that such people go to be tormented in Hades when they die. "Not so," Jesus is saying. "Your worldview is upside down. You know nothing of my Father's kingdom. Not only are you wrong about how my Father feels about the beggar, but you are wrong about how my Father feels about you."

Jesus completes the turnabout by telling them that the rich man also died and was buried, but he, not the beggar, is the one who finds himself being tormented in Hades. Jesus' condemnation of the unbelief of the Pharisees in this story concludes with the rich man arguing that if someone would warn his brothers, they would not come into the place where he was. "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them," Abraham tells him.

This story is primarily about the refusal of the Jewish leaders to believe in Jesus, and the willingness of others to do so, and secondarily about the reversal of common assumptions about riches being a sign of God's favor. It is not there to paint us a portrait of Heaven and Hell. It is a parable of judgment against the unbelieving Israelite leadership and the unkind rich, using common Jewish imagery of the afterlife (Hades and "being with Abraham") as a literary backdrop to make the point. In other words, Jesus was not commenting on the validity of Jewish imagery of the afterlife; he was simply using that imagery as scenery for his story.



(Source: cgi.org)

NEXT WAKE UP CALL: THE BOOK OF ACTS

Next month's **Wake Up Call** study is through the book of Acts. The Gospel of Luke and Acts were both written by the good doctor Luke—to his friend Theophilus. Do both studies and you'll get the story of Jesus, His followers, the first church, and the Apostle Paul!

FIND MORE DAY 14



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DAY 14

...MORE FACTS, ETC.

DEFENDER OF THE WIDOW

In the Parable of the Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1-8) Jesus teaches about the importance and character of persistent prayer as He describes a circumstance that is all too familiar in our world even today: the plight of the widow.



Widows in the Bible play a very powerful symbolic role in terms of justice and Jesus describes a widow who has had her rights violated.

No figure in scripture, except perhaps the orphan, is categorized as having a greater right to justice than the widow.

Jesus emphasizes that God our father is neither unwilling or slow to grant us justice when we ask him to intervene on our behalf -- just as He is "Father of the fatherless and protector of widows. . ." (Psalm 68:5).

(Source: spiritalliving360.com)

JESUS AND THE KIDS

Jesus' love for all mankind was never more evident than when He was with children -- especially given the thoughts and attitudes towards kids in His day. As always, Jesus takes an incident with His disciples (Luke 18:15-17) and teaches us all what is needed to enter the kingdom of God.

Jesus and His apostles had left Capernaum and crossed into the region of Judea, on His final journey toward Jerusalem. In a village, people began bringing their little children to Jesus to have Him bless them or pray for them. However, the disciples rebuked the parents, telling them not to bother Jesus. Jesus became indignant and told His followers:

"Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." (Luke 18:16-17)

Then Jesus took the children in His arms and blessed them.

The accounts of Jesus and the little children in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are remarkably similar. John does not mention the episode. Luke (a man of details) was the only one who referred to the children as babies. As was often the case, Jesus' disciples did not understand. Perhaps they were trying to protect His dignity as a rabbi or felt the Messiah should not be bothered by children. Ironically, the children, in their simple trust and dependance, had a more heavenly attitude than the disciples did.

Jesus loved children for their innocence. He taught that entering heaven is not about great scholarly knowledge, admirable accomplishments, or social status. It requires simple faith in God. Immediately after this lesson, Jesus instructed a rich young man about humility, continuing this theme of childlike acceptance of the gospel (Luke 18:18-30). The young man went away sad because he was unable to trust fully in God instead of his wealth.

Sometimes we can make our spiritual life more complicated than it should be. We each need to ask, *"Do I have the childlike faith to depend on Jesus, and Jesus alone, for entering God's kingdom?"*

"Let the children come to me..." Luke 18:16



THE EARLY CHURCH: A RADICAL CHANGE TOWARDS CHILDREN



Jesus' teachings concerning children were faithfully followed by the early church, which believed that to receive a child in the name of Christ was to receive Christ Himself. Admonitions against the pagan practices of abortion and child abandonment were found in the earliest Christian writings. Early extra-Biblical writings commanded: *Thou shalt not slay the child by procuring abortion; nor again, shalt thou destroy it after it is born. Thou shalt not withdraw thy hand from thy son, or from thy daughter, but from their infancy thou shalt teach them the fear of the Lord.*

Christians began collecting infants abandoned by their parents and raised them as their own. If pagans took in such abandoned children, it was most often for immoral purposes. The 2nd century Christian Justin Martyr spoke out against the practice of abandoning children: *"As for us, we have been taught that to expose newly born children is the action of wicked men... We refuse to do this, first, because we see that almost all so exposed - boys as well as girls - are brought up for prostitution. As the ancients are said to have reared herds of oxen, or goats, or sheep, or grazing horses, so now we see that you rear children for this shameful purpose."*

Why was the early Christian attitude toward children so unusual? Simply because it recognized the child as a person. Both children and adults were equal in the kingdom of God. The Christians taught that God cared for children, as well as slaves, women and barbarians, just as much as He did for men. Entrance into the Kingdom of God did not depend on wealth, status, learning, or personal merit. Therefore, salvation was open to children as much as to adults.

(Source: Christianity.com)

DAY 15

READ LUKE 18:18-19:27

TODAY'S READING: Jesus confronts a rich, young ruler about how to “*inherit eternal life*”, prophesies about His death again and heals a blind man. In Jericho, Jesus befriends Zacchaeus, a despised tax collector and (once again) shows His love for the lost and broken.

THE 10 MINUTE PLAN...IF ALL YOU HAVE IS 10 MINUTES TO SPARE TODAY

Read today's Bible passage (Luke 18:18-19:27) and answer the following questions:

1) Jesus says in Luke 18:24 that it's difficult for the wealthy to enter the Kingdom of God. How do you think most of the people listening took this truth?

2) Today, living in the wealthiest country in the world, how are we to take this same truth? _____

Take a couple of minutes to pray. Ask God for His help in getting your understanding of wealth--and what He wants you to do with your wealth--in order, following Jesus, knowing that this is an impossible task without Him.

THE 20 MINUTE PLAN

Do the 10 Minute Plan, then answer the following questions and read through the rest of the Day 15 pages:

1) After Jesus tells the Rich Ruler the commandments he must keep to inherit eternal life, the ruler says, “*All these I have kept from my youth.*” What do you think answer say about the ruler? _____

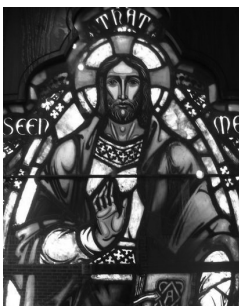
2) What was Jesus doing here? Do you think He was saying all this guy needed to do was keep those commandments? _____

3) Read: Luke 10:27 and answer this: can anyone (or has anyone) ever been able to do this perfectly, 100% of the time? _____

4) What hope do any of us have if we're not able to keep God's commandments perfectly? (Read: John 3:16-17) _____

5) What is the only thing we can say when someone asks us what they need to do to inherit eternal life? _____

WHAT DOES “SON OF DAVID” MEAN?



(Source: Gotquestions.org)

There are 17 verses in the New Testament that describe Jesus as the “*Son of David*.” Jesus (the Messiah) was the fulfillment of the prophecy of the seed of David (See: 2 Samuel 7:14-16). Jesus was the promised Messiah, which meant He was of the seed of David (See: Jesus Genealogy in Matt. 1 and Luke 3). Primarily though, when Jesus was referred to as the Son of David, it was meant to refer to His Messianic title as the OT prophesied concerning Him. Jesus was addressed as “Son of David” several times by people who, by faith, were seeking mercy or healing (See: Matthew 15:22, 20:30 and Mark 10:47). The titles of honor they gave Him declared their faith in Him. Calling Him, they were professing Him to be the Messiah. Jesus Christ, the only son of God and the only means of salvation for the world (See: Acts 4:12), is also the son of David, both in a physical sense and a spiritual sense.

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DAY 15**



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DAY 15 ...MORE

JERICO

Jericho, which literally means “fragrant place,” boasts a pleasant climate with plenty of sunshine and a lush oasis watered by Elisha’s Spring.

There are actually 3 cities at Jericho: an OT city, a NT city, and modern Jericho.

It is the oldest known city in the world.

Jericho was a natural place for the Israelites to enter the Promised Land. After crossing the Jordan, it was the first city they defeated.

Many Bible characters traveled this way to Jerusalem.

(Source: followtherabbi.com)

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE

“Jesus, seeing that he (Rich Ruler) had become sad, said, “How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” Luke 18:24

What gives hope and satisfaction to our desire for happiness and security?

A person of position and means who had the best the world could offer — wealth and security — came to Jesus because he lacked one thing. (Who was this ruler? He was likely a Pharisee, a religious leader. This person wanted the kind of lasting peace and happiness which money could not buy him. The answer he got, however, was not what he was looking for. He protested that he kept all the commandments, but Jesus spoke to the trouble in his heart. One thing kept him from giving himself wholeheartedly to God. While he lacked nothing in material goods, he was nonetheless possessive of what he had. He placed his hope and security in what he possessed. So when Jesus challenged him to make God his one true possession and treasure, he became dismayed.

Why did the rich ruler go away from Jesus with sadness rather than with joy?

His treasure and his hope for happiness were misplaced. Treasure has a special connection to the heart, the place of desire and longing, the place of will and focus. The thing we most set our heart on is our highest treasure. The Lord Himself is the greatest treasure we can have. Giving up everything else to have the Lord as our treasure is not sorrowful, but the greatest joy (See: Jesus’ parable about the treasure hidden in a field in Matthew 13:44). Selling all that we have could mean many different things—our friends, our job, our “style” of life, what we do with our free time. Jesus challenged the young man because his heart was possessive. He was afraid to give to others for fear that he would lose what he had gained.

Those who are generous towards God, and others, find that they cannot out-give God in generosity. God blesses us with spiritual goods that far outweigh the fleeting joys of material goods. He alone can satisfy the deepest longing and desires of our heart.

Are we willing to part with anything that might keep us from seeking true joy with Jesus?

(Source: rc.net)



A CAMEL THROUGH THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE?

Sometimes people wonder what Jesus meant by a camel going through the eye of a needle. Simply, He meant exactly what He said. He gave an illustration of something that is normally impossible.

This is exactly as impossible as it is for a rich man (or, frankly, any man trusting in anything other than Jesus) to be saved. But with God, it is possible. So, the rich man was trusting in his ability to do something to save himself. He lacked faith in Jesus. Because of his lack of faith, he could not be saved and went away sorrowful.

But Jesus said that with God all things are possible. Do you see, then, that this must mean that God can supply the one thing that is naturally lacking for a person to be saved? So, was Jesus really telling the rich, young ruler to keep the commandments to be saved? No, not at all. Jesus was getting him to begin to think, to realize that all of his commandment keeping had not saved him, that he was too weak and carnal to give up his riches and follow Jesus, and that he lacked one thing—the gift of saving faith that would enable him to put his trust in Jesus Christ alone as His Savior.

(Source: wordofthisgrace.org)



***Watch or listen to
Jim Burgen and
Scott Nickell's
past teachings at:
flatironschurch.
com/messages***

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DAY 15

...MORE FACTS, ETC.

BEGGING IN JESUS' TIME

For the most part, beggars in the New Testament appear to have been genuine paupers whose destitution was caused by circumstances beyond their control, such as physical handicaps or infirmities.

Far from condemning the needy for being reduced to begging, Jesus paused to perform miracles on their behalf (Luke 18:35-43). Jesus also contrasted a righteous beggar named Lazarus with an uncharitable rich man in of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16: 19-31)



(Source: timefortruth.org)

DEATH AND TAX...COLLECTORS

In Luke 19:1-10 Jesus travels through Jericho and meets up with a chief tax collector—a man named Zacchaeus. Jesus honors this despised tax collector and (once again) offends the religious leaders. What exactly was so upsetting to the leaders in Jericho?

Tax collectors have never been popular. But in Roman Palestine, they were particularly hated. It was bad enough that they collaborated with the foreign oppressors. It's understandable that the Jews felt about the same thing for the Romans as the French did for the occupying Nazis in World War II.

But the Roman system of "tax farming" made tax collectors especially despised. The Romans wanted to collect as much tax as they could without tying up their own personnel. So they recruited locals and gave them a percentage of what was collected. The more they could wring out of the people, the more they could keep.

So these blood-suckers profited off their countrymen's misfortune. In so doing, they helped raise the funds necessary to finance the brutal repression of God's chosen people by the Romans. Obviously, these dogs were beyond the pale, repugnant to all decent, God-fearing people, the enemies of God Himself.

Zacchaeus should have known that there was no hope for him. After all, he had done a particularly good job of extorting money from his countryman, for Luke 19:1 says he was a wealthy man. But when Jesus came to Jericho, Zacchaeus just had to "see what he was like." The tug that Zacchaeus felt inside was the grace of God drawing him to his Son.

Zacchaeus dropped what he was doing and went to great lengths to see Jesus. He had a hard time seeing, for he was "small of stature." So he tried to run in front of the crowd, and ultimately climbed a sycamore tree to get a good view of the celebrity. There were many in the crowd. But Jesus zeroed right in on the short man in the tree. He had never met him, but called him by name: "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today."

To understand how shocking this was, consider that Jews made themselves ritually impure by entering the house of a public sinner. But, of course, Jesus was not any Jew. A sinner could not make Him impure. Rather, He would purify the sinner. Jesus saw past Zacchaeus' crimes to his heart, which was open to the grace that prompted him to climb that tree. Inviting himself to the tax-collector's home meant an offer of forgiveness, mercy, acceptance by God.

People knew this, and were stunned. They began to grumble. But Zacchaeus "stood his ground." He was determined not to lose his chance at redemption. He instinctively knew that accepting Jesus into his home meant that his life had to change. His wealth had come at the expense of his people. Clinging to it would mean letting Jesus go. He had to choose. "...the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold."

But remember, Zacchaeus did not buy his forgiveness. He had already been offered mercy. Salvation came to Zacchaeus not by his initiative, but by God's.

(Source: crossroadsinitiative.com)



MIRROR, MIRROR

As a teacher, Jesus wasn't afraid to repeat Himself. The parables the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30) and the Ten Minas (Luke 19:11-27) are great examples. While the two share several similarities, they also have several major differences. It is these differences that lend to slightly different applications. Read through them both and see what application differences you see.

DAY 16

READ LUKE 19:28-19:48

TODAY'S READING: The Passion Week begins as Jesus makes His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. He is honored and praised by the crowd, but after chasing the money changers from the temple, the Chief Priests and Scribes begin to plot a way of getting rid of Jesus.

THE 10 MINUTE PLAN...IF ALL YOU HAVE IS 10 MINUTES TO SPARE TODAY

1) Jesus is cheered and praised as He enters Jerusalem by His followers, but the Pharisees are still at odds with Him. What do you think bothered them the most about Jesus on His Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem? _____

2) What is it about Jesus that non-believers struggle with the most? _____

Take a couple of minutes to pray. Ask God to open your heart, mind and soul so that you can see Jesus for who He really is: the Mighty King who comes in the name of the Lord, the Prince of Peace, the Savior of all Mankind.

THE 20 MINUTE PLAN

Do the 10 Minute Plan, then answer the following questions and read through the rest of the Day 16 pages:

1) Jesus gave His two disciples some pretty detailed instructions (Luke 19:29-32). What does this say about Jesus' understanding of His life and mission? _____

2) Read Psalm 118. Write down your thoughts and comparisons of Luke 19:28-40 and Psalm 118. _____

3) What was it that upset Jesus so much in Luke 19:45-46? _____

4) Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. What does this say about God's temple today? _____

5) What are some things in your "temple" you think Jesus needs to drive out? _____

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL WITH THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY?



The story of the triumphal entry is one of the few incidents in the life of Jesus which appears in all four Gospel accounts (*Matthew 21:1-17; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-40; John 12:12-19*). Putting the four accounts together, it becomes clear that the triumphal entry was a significant event. Jesus' purpose in riding into Jerusalem was to make public His claim to be their Messiah and King of Israel in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (READ: Zechariah 9:9). Jesus rides into His capital city as a conquering King and is hailed by the people as such, in the manner of the day. He receives the worship and praise of the people. The spreading of cloaks was an act of homage for royalty (READ: 2 Kings 9:13). Jesus was openly declaring to the people that He was their King and the Messiah they had been waiting for.

**FIND MORE
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DAY 16 ...MORE

THE DONKEY

The donkey was the common beast of burden throughout biblical times.



Female donkeys could be ridden or milked, and males were good for plowing and trampling seed.

Like camels and many other desert animals, donkeys can tolerate significant water loss and are able to replenish that loss quickly. This is because their sweat contains a low concentration of chloride.

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***"Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"*** Luke 19:38

WHY THE QUICK TURNAROUND?

On the day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem...on the back of a borrowed donkey's colt...one that had never been ridden before, the disciples spread their cloaks on the donkey for Jesus to sit on. The multitudes came out to welcome Him, laying before Him their cloaks and the branches of palm trees. The people hailed and praised Him as the *"King who comes in the name of the Lord"* as He rode to the temple, where He both taught the people, healed them, and drove out the money-changers.

Unfortunately, the praise the people lavished on Jesus was not because they recognized Him as their Messiah. They welcomed Him out of their desire for a deliverer, someone who would lead them in a revolt against Rome. There were many who, though they did not believe in Christ with a spiritual faith, nevertheless hoped that perhaps He might be to them a great temporal deliverer. These are the ones who hailed Him as King with their many Hosannas, recognizing Him as the Son of David who came in the name of the Lord. But when He failed in their expectations, when He refused to lead them in a massive revolt against the Roman occupiers and those who collaborated with them, the crowds quickly turned on Him.

Within just a few days, their Hosannas would change to cries of *"Crucify Him!"* (Luke 23:20-21). Those who hailed Him as a hero would soon reject and abandon Him.

The story of the triumphal entry is one of contrasts and those contrasts are the application to believers. It is the story of the King who came as a lowly servant on a donkey, not a prancing steed, not in royal robes, but on the clothes of the poor and humble. Jesus comes not to conquer by force as earthly kings, but by love, grace, mercy, and His own sacrifice for His people.

His is not a kingdom of armies and splendor, but of lowliness and servanthood. He conquers not nations, but hearts and minds. His message is one of peace with God, not of temporal peace. As His followers, we exhibit those same qualities, and the world sees the true King living in triumph in us.



(Source: <http://gotquestions.org>)

CLEARING THE TEMPLE

When Jesus cleared the temple of the moneychangers, He showed great emotion and anger (READ: Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-18; John 2:13-22). Jesus' emotion was described as *"zeal"* for God's house (John 2:17). His anger was pure and completely justified because at its root was concern for God's holiness and worship. Because these were at stake, Jesus took quick and decisive action.

Many times, we think of anger as a selfish, destructive emotion that we should eradicate from our lives altogether. However, the fact that Jesus did sometimes become angry indicates that anger itself, as an emotion, is amoral. This is borne out elsewhere in the New Testament. Ephesians 4:26 instructs us *"in your anger do not sin"* and not to let the sun go down on our anger. The command is not to *"avoid anger"* (or suppress it or ignore it) but to deal with it properly, in a timely manner.

Here are some quick facts about Jesus' displays of anger:

- 1) *His anger had the proper motivation. He was angry for the right reasons, with no selfishness involved.*
- 2) *His anger had the proper focus. His anger targeted sinful behavior and true injustice.*
- 3) *His anger had the proper supplement. Jesus' anger stemmed from love and nothing to do with ill will.*
- 4) *His anger had the proper control. Jesus was never out of control, even in His wrath.*
- 5) *His anger had the proper duration. He did not allow His anger to turn into bitterness or grudges.*
- 6) *His anger had the proper result. Jesus' anger, as with all His emotions, was held in check.*



(Source: <http://gotquestions.org>)

DAY 16

...MORE FACTS, ETC.

JESUS WEPT

Jesus cries over Jerusalem in Luke 19:41-44, shortly before He was crucified at the insistence of His own people, the people He came to save.

Earlier Jesus said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings..." (Luke 13:34).



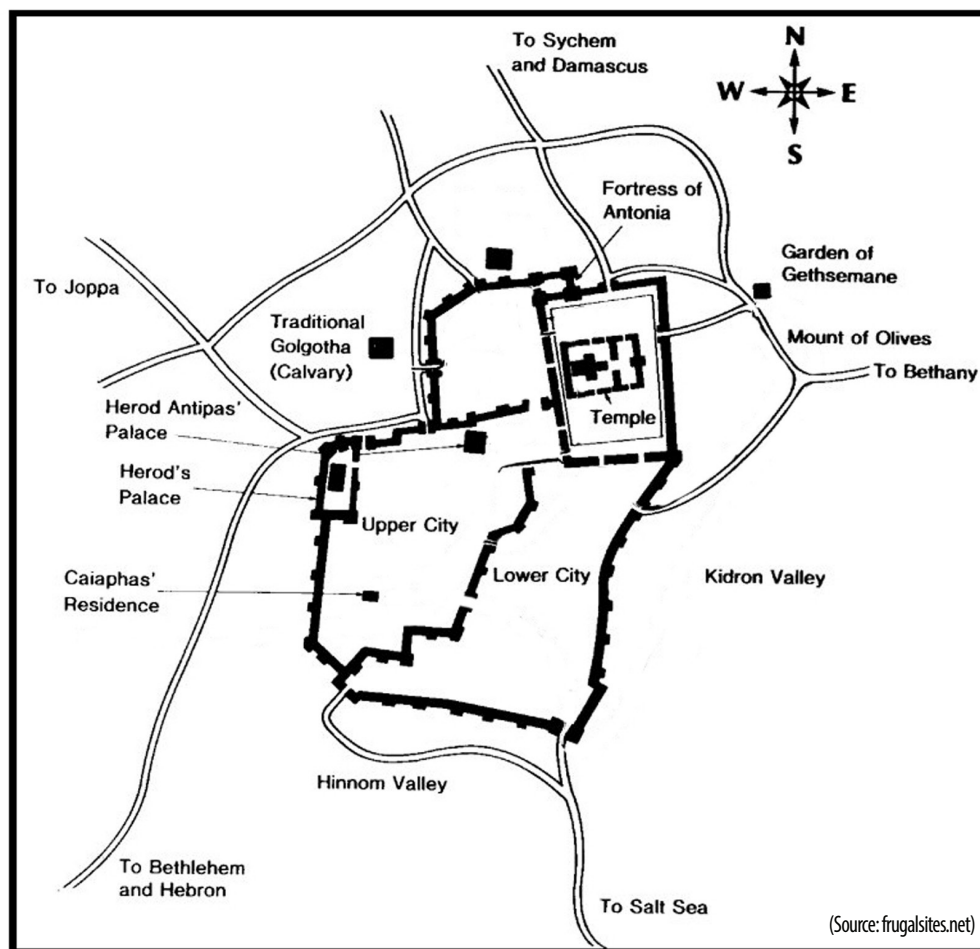
As Jesus approached Jerusalem He, "...saw the city and wept over it" (Luke 19:41).

Here, "wept" is the same word used to describe the weeping of Mary and the others in John 11:33, so we know that Jesus cried aloud in anguish over the future of the city. In 70 AD more than 1,000,000 residents of Jerusalem died in one of the most gruesome sieges in recorded history.

(Source:Gotquestions.org)

A MAP OF JERUSALEM

A quick look at Jerusalem in Jesus' final days:



(Source: frugalsites.net)

Hinnom Valley

This valley formed the western boundary of the Upper City of Jesus' time; it began along the Western Hill and ended where the Tyropean and Kidron Valleys meet. Just west of Jerusalem, this valley was once the city sewage dump, and the place where Judean kings sacrificed their children. The valley, with its filth, rottenness, and burning flesh, came to symbolize hell.

Kidron Valley

About three miles long, this deep wadi formed the eastern border of Jerusalem between David's city and the Mount of Olives. During the reforms by Israel's kings, idols and many other pagan objects were disposed of here. The spring of Gihon, the source of Hezekiah's tunnel, and the garden of Gethsemane are in this valley.

Mount of Olives

This mountain, standing about 2,641 feet above sea level, stands east of Jerusalem across the Kidron Valley. It is approximately 325 feet higher than the Temple area and the highest peak in the area. Jesus entered Jerusalem, gave his final teaching, and ascended to heaven from here.

(Source:Gotquestions.org)

THE MONEY CHANGERS (LUKE 19:45-46)

Entering the Temple, Jesus saw the money changers, along with merchants who were selling animals for sacrifice. Pilgrims carried coins from their home towns, most bearing the images of Roman emperors or Greek gods, which Temple authorities considered idolatrous.

The high priest ordered that only Tyrian shekels would be accepted for the annual half-shekel Temple tax because they contained a higher percentage of silver, so the money changers exchanged unacceptable coins for these shekels. Of course, they extracted a profit, sometimes much more than the law allowed. Jesus was so filled with anger at the desecration of the holy place. He drove the exchangers out of the area, along with the men selling pigeons and cattle.

(Source:Christianity.about.com)

MORE DAY 16 ON THE



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DAY 16 ...AND EVEN MORE...

JERUSALEM: A CITY DIVIDED

The city of Jerusalem that Jesus entered the last week of His life, was a city divided into several parts—based on religious and class structure (See: map on previous page). Below is a description and explanation of a couple of those divided areas:

Lower City

Common people made their home in Jerusalem's Lower City, where Jesus brought healing to a blind man.

Jerusalem's Lower City was an area built along the Western Hill and stretching into the Tyropean Valley. To the east was David's City, and on the elevated land to the West, the Upper City was built. During Hezekiah's day, a tunnel was built to channel water from a spring in David's City to the Pool of Siloam in the Lower City. This pool provided the city's water supply and could satisfy the physical thirst of city dwellers.

As Jesus ministered to the city, He represented the living water that could satisfy all thirst. Jesus and His disciples may have celebrated the Last Supper in the Lower City. On that night, Jesus used water to wash the disciples' feet, showing them that God's true followers would be servants. And through the symbolism of the Supper, Jesus revealed that He would serve His people even to the point of dying for them.

Jesus brought His message of hope to the Lower City when He healed a blind man by placing mud in his eyes and asking him to wash at the Pool of Siloam. The man had been physically blind, but he was able to see the truth about Jesus, and his faith made him well. Unfortunately, many people in Jerusalem were blind to Jesus' true identity as the Son of God. Instead of finding their thirst satisfied in Jesus, they chased after other gods, and never found the satisfaction they sought.

Upper City

The Upper City was home to Herod's palace and wealthy, Hellenistic Jews. They saw Jesus as a threat to their power, but He really offered them a power they didn't have the power over: sin.

The Upper City was built on the highest part of Jerusalem. It was home to wealthy Jews, many of whom were religious elites with influence over Temple practices. Many of these Jews embraced the Romans and lived an affluent Hellenistic lifestyle.

In the Upper City area, archaeologists have uncovered ruins of an opulent mansion that belonged to an influential religious leader, much like the home where Jesus was brought when He was interrogated in Caiaphas' home.

The most elaborate structure of the Upper City area was Herod's Palace, an impressive structure with rich mosaics, large pools, elaborate gardens, and three huge watchtowers that overlooked the city. Despite his regal surroundings and sophisticated lifestyle, Herod never grasped the truth. It was probably from his Jerusalem palace that he decided to kill the babies of Bethlehem when he heard of a potential threat to his power.

Years later, Jesus was likely brought to Herod's palace for His interrogation by Herod Antipas. Sadly, the Herod family never recognized the truth about Jesus. They saw a threat to their power, influence, and comfort, but Jesus offered them the only kind of power that really mattered, the power over sin.

Business District and New City

On His crucifixion day, Jesus faced the insults and hostility of crowded market streets. In the end, He died outside of Jerusalem's walls.

The northern portion of Jerusalem contained the business district, an area filled with busy markets and shops. On its western edge stood the Fortress Antonia, a massive fort built by Herod the Great and named after his friend Marc Antony. Jesus was imprisoned and abused by Roman soldiers inside the Antonia. And it was by the Antonia where Pilate most likely turned Jesus over to the screaming crowd yelling "Crucify him!" From the Antonia, Jesus was forced to carry His cross through crowded streets, facing jeers and hostility along the way.

Beyond the business district, the city of Jerusalem was expanding to the north. Wealthy citizens built extravagant villas in an area that was eventually walled several years after Jesus' crucifixion. Between the New City and the Business District stood the Garden Gate, opening into an old quarry area, a public spot where crucifixions usually took place.

Jesus touched lives in every district of Jerusalem, some who responded with faith, and some who responded with violence. But as He died for the sins of the world, He was led outside that great city to die a humiliating public death. His last journey mirrored that of the scapegoats that had been led outside the city on each Day of Atonement for hundreds of years.

On His crucifixion day, Jesus became the final scapegoat, taking the sins of all people on Himself so that salvation could be brought to every corner of the world.

DAY 17

READ LUKE 20

TODAY'S READING: During His last week, before His trial and crucifixion, Jesus is confronted and challenged by the Chief Priests and Scribes. He constantly thwarts their attacks and teaches the crowd on what God wants us to do about money and paying taxes.

THE 10 MINUTE PLAN...IF ALL YOU HAVE IS 10 MINUTES TO SPARE TODAY

Read today's Bible passage (Luke 20) and answer the following questions:

1) The Scribes and Chief Priests wanted to seize Jesus but were afraid of the people (v. 19). Why do you think they were afraid? _____

2) Is there anything about following Jesus that causes you concern? If so, what? _____

Take a couple of minutes to pray. Ask Jesus to help you in putting the things of this world (jobs, house payments, health, paying taxes, etc.) at His feet knowing that He came to ease your struggles, and that He is in control of yesterday, today and tomorrow.

THE 20 MINUTE PLAN

Do the 10 Minute Plan, then answer the following questions and read through the rest of the Day 17 pages:

1) What are your thought on the meaning of the *Parable of the Wicked Tenants* in Luke 20:9-16? _____

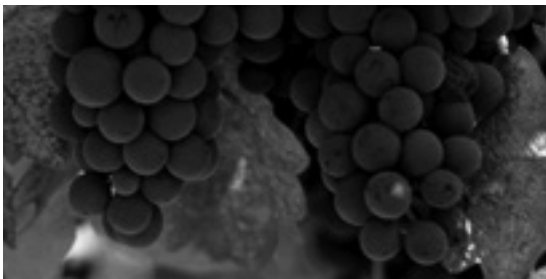
2) Do you think any of this applies to us today? If so, where and what? _____

3) In Luke 20: 45-47, Jesus tells His disciples to beware of the Scribes (teachers of the law). What was He warning His disciples about here? _____

4) Do you see anything similar to what Jesus was pointing out in Luke 20:45-47 today? _____

5) The tough questions is this, do you think Jesus is pointing out any of that behaviour in your life, and if so, what needs to change? _____

THE VINEYARD, THE FARM AND THE GARDEN



Some areas of Israel are well suited for agriculture. The climate of Galilee, for example, is quite tropical, and the soil is fertile. The coastal plain and Jezreel Valley also provide very fertile land. In Jesus' time, wheat, barley, figs, grapes, and olives were produced in large quantities.

Many first-century families provided their own food through farming. Small gardens, vineyards with grapes and olive trees, and some small livestock provided most of their diet. (Source: Followtherabbi.com)

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DAY 17 ...MORE

JESUS: THE CORNERSTONE (LUKE 20:17-18)

In ancient times, the cornerstone was the stone at the corner of two walls that united them. It was the visible corner of the foundation of the building and the starting point of all future building above the foundation. It was the most costly stone because of its beauty and strength. To cast aside the cornerstone would be to resist any future building on that foundation. Jesus was not only the Cornerstone but the "chief" (highest) Cornerstone.

(Source: Biblehistory.com)



"...Or who is it that gave you this authority?" (Luke 20:1-8)

JESUS' AUTHORITY QUESTIONED



So what does it mean that Jesus has "the authority"?

Jesus is described as the author and perfecter, or finisher, of our faith in Hebrews 12:2. An author is an originator or creator, as of a theory or plan. The Greek word translated "author" in Hebrews 12:2 can also mean "captain," "chief leader" or "prince." Acts 3:15 uses the same word: "And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses" (KJV), while the NIV and ESV use the word "author" instead of "prince."

From this we can deduce that Jesus is the originator of our faith in that He begins it, as well as the captain and prince or our faith. This indicates that Jesus controls our faith, steers it as a captain steers a ship, and presides over it and cares for it as a monarch presides over and cares for his people.

The Greek word translated "perfecter" in Hebrews 12:2 appears only this one time in the New Testament. It means literally "completer" or "finisher" and speaks of bringing something to its conclusion. Putting the two words together, we see that Jesus, as God, both creates and sustains our faith. We know that saving faith is a gift from God, not something we come up with on our own (READ: Ephesians 2:8-9), and that gift comes from Jesus, its creator.

He is also the sustainer of our faith, meaning that true saving faith cannot be lost, taken away or given away. This is a source of great comfort to believers, especially in times of doubt and spiritual struggles. Jesus has created our faith and He will watch over it, care for it, and sustain it.

It is important for us to understand that God in Christ is not only the creator and sustainer of our saving faith, but He is also the sustainer of our daily walk and the finisher of our spiritual journey. For if God, in Christ, is not the author of our new life, and if Jesus is not the finisher and perfecter of our faith through the Holy Spirit's indwelling power, then we are neither born again nor are we a true follower of Christ. "And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory" (Philippians 1:6 and Ephesians 1:13-14).

(Source: Gotquestions.org)

THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED TENANTS (LUKE 20:9-18)

Like so many of Israel's prophets, Jesus brought a message that repelled the political, cultural, and religious leaders. But His message was even more inflammatory than the message of the prophets. It was so inflammatory that He didn't bring it to the center of political power until the end of his ministry, realizing that when He did He would be killed (See: Matthew 16:21; Luke 9:51).

The parable of the vineyard/wicked tenants in Matthew, Mark, and Luke represents one of Jesus' most consistent prophetic themes. Its symbolism was especially compelling to Jewish listeners because of its prominence in earlier prophecy. Psalm 80 portrays Israel as a great vineyard planted by God but ravaged by outsiders. The psalmist begs God to mercifully restore and reestablish Israel. The prophet Isaiah also uses the image of the vineyard, but in a way strikingly similar to the way Jesus uses it. The whole fifth chapter of Isaiah is dedicated to its exposition.

This parable, along with many of Jesus' prophecies, warns Israel that it is about to carry out the most decisive act of rebellion in its history of rebellion—(See: Luke 11:29-32, 51; 12:58-59; 13:1-9; 14:7-11, 15-24; 16:312). In His parable, Jesus identifies Himself as the last of a series of prophets calling Israel to repentance.

Israel rebelled against God many times in the past and suffered military defeats, massacres, starvation, and exile as a consequence. In spite of its rebellion, the vineyard had been plundered but never taken from Israel. Now, however, the rejection and murder of the Heir by Israel will have irrevocable consequences.

FLATIRONS MEN'S RETREATS:

**TWO WEEKENDS IN
SEPTEMBER-
9/12-14 AND
9/19-21**

DON'T MISS OUT!

**FIND
MORE DAY 17**



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DAY 17

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RENDER TO CAESAR



The demand for tribute to Rome and taxes to Herod, in addition to the tithes and offerings to the Temple and priesthood, dramatically escalated the economic pressures on peasant producers, whose livelihood was perennially marginal at best.

After decades of multiple demands from multiple layers of rulers, many village families fell increasingly into debt and were faced with loss of their family inheritance of land.

The impoverishment of families led to the disintegration of village communities, the fundamental social form of such an agrarian society.

These are precisely the deteriorating conditions that Jesus addresses in the Gospels: impoverishment, hunger, and debt.

(Source:patheos.com)

THE PASSION WEEK: JESUS' LAST WEEK

At the beginning of His last week, Jesus was greeted in Jerusalem as a heroic savior, someone to free the Jews from Roman authority. By the end of the week, Jesus was no longer seen as a hero. He was publicly ridiculed and disgraced as He hung on a cross.

No one knows the thoughts of Jesus as He faced those turbulent days. But the Gospel writers provide a great deal of information about Jesus' actions during Passion Week. To His dying day, Jesus spoke the truth and obeyed His Father's calling.

A general outline can be developed based on the gospel accounts:

Palm Sunday

- Jesus enters Jerusalem.
- Crowds greet Him with palm branches and shouts of "Hosanna," the battle cry of nationalistic Zealots.
- Jesus weeps for Jerusalem, knowing the Zealots' extremism will eventually lead to the destruction of the city and the temple.

Monday

- Jesus curses the fig tree.
- Jesus returns to the temple.
- Jesus clears the Gentile courts of moneychangers and vendors.

Tuesday

- Religious leaders question Jesus' authority, but Jesus evades their trick questions and speaks the truth.
- Jesus teaches in the temple, telling several parables and warning people against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.
- Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple and tells His disciples about His future return.

Wednesday

- The gospel writers do not tell us what Jesus did on this day.
- Religious leaders probably continued plotting Jesus' death, and Judas agreed to betray him.

Thursday

- In the evening, Jesus celebrates the Passover meal with His disciples.
- Jesus institutes the Last Supper, giving the Passover meal new meaning.
- Late Thursday evening, Jesus prays at Gethsemane and is later arrested.

Later Thursday Night or Friday Morning

- Peter denies Jesus three times and Jesus is questioned by Caiphas, the high priest.

Friday

- Just before dawn, Jesus has trials before Pilate and Herod Antipas.
- At 9 A.M., Jesus is nailed to the cross.
- Jesus dies at 3 P.M.
- To avoid breaking Sabbath law, Jesus was placed in the tomb before sundown.

Resurrection Sunday

- Jesus' tomb is found empty.
- Jesus appears to the women visiting the tomb.
- Jesus appears to the travelers on the road to Emmaus.

(Source:Followtherabbicom)



DAY 18

READ LUKE 21

TODAY'S READING: Jesus tells His disciples about what the future holds for Jerusalem and the world: wars, persecution and destruction. Knowing that He will be arrested, tried and killed at the end of this week, Jesus tries to prepare His disciples for what's ahead.

THE 10 MINUTE PLAN...IF ALL YOU HAVE IS 10 MINUTES TO SPARE TODAY

Read today's Bible passage (Luke 21) and answer the following questions:

1) Jesus shares a few prophecies in Ch. 21 (the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem, and the end times). How much of what Jesus said do you think His followers understood? _____

2) We can look at history and see what Jesus said about the temple and Jerusalem finally came true, but what about the end times? Do you see anything that Jesus spoke about in Luke 21:25-28 being fulfilled today? If so, what? _____

Take a couple of minutes to pray, thanking God that He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow (See: Hebrews 13:8).

THE 20 MINUTE PLAN

Do the 10 Minute Plan, then answer the following questions and read through the rest of the Day 18 pages:

1) When Jesus speaks of the temple being destroyed, the disciples fate (as His followers), and the subsequent "*end times*", what do you make of all that? _____

2) Do you think a lot about (and possibly worry) about the end times? If so, what stirs you the most? _____

3) Is there anything in this passage that may change the way you deal with the day-to-day stress or anxiety of life? If so, what? _____

4) In Luke 21:34-38, Jesus warns about being "*weighed down*" with the cares of life. Take a moment and write down the 3 things that worry you the most:

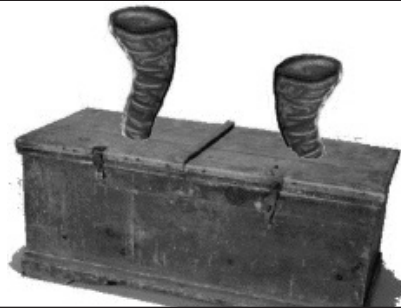
a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

Have you taken the time to really sit down and ask God for help in these areas...and do you feel like He's showing you some next steps?

THE WIDOW'S OFFERING: SOUNDING THE TRUMPET



According to the Talmud (Middoth 2,5) the Women's Court in the temple was just over 200 feet square between bounding lines. The colonnade ran around the court, and within it, the 13 Chests, or '*trumpets*,' for charitable contributions were placed. These 13 Chests were narrow at the mouth and wide at the bottom, shaped like trumpets (See: Left). It is probably in ironical allusion to the form and name of these treasure-chests that Jesus, making use of the word '*trumpet*,' describes the conduct of those who, in their giving, sought glory from men as '*sounding a trumpet*' before them. (READ: Matthew 6:2)

(Source: Bible-history.com)

**FIND MORE
DAY 18**



NEXT PAGE

DAY 18 ...MORE

THE FIG TREE

Growing to nearly 20 ft high and with large leaves, the fig tree provides pleasant shade. Minute wasps cultivate these trees, and the fig is produced before the leaves emerge.



Jesus cursed a fruitless fig tree along the road to Jerusalem and used the production of figs as an example that actions and words flow from the heart of a person (Luke 6:42-44).

Because the fig tree is the last tree to produce leaves and it does so right before summer, Jesus used it as an example of knowing that the end of the age was near when the signs came (See: Matt 24:32; Mark 13:28).

(Source: bibleplaces.com)

FIND MORE
DAY 18



NEXT PAGE

"Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on..." Luke 21:3-4

WIDOWS: IN JESUS DAY

Jesus observed as the widow put her gift into one of the temple's offering boxes. Luke's account (Luke 21:1-4) makes the point that the widow was poor. In fact, he highlights this detail three times in four verses. The narration describes the woman as "a poor widow" (v. 2). Jesus called the disciples' attention to the woman and her offering, describing her as "this poor widow" (v. 3). He followed with His evaluation of her gift's significance by highlighting that she gave "out of her poverty" (v. 4). These three statements about the widow's poverty raises questions about the status of widows in the first century.

- How would a woman's status in first-century culture change after her husband passed away?
- How did widows survive financially...and was poverty typical?
- Did a widow continue to live in the same home?
- How did having children versus having no children affect her life after her husband's death?
- Did widows remarry?



Ancient Traditions

The legal and cultural makeup of the Greco-Roman world into which Jesus came was complex. Greek, Roman, and Jewish practices and laws were not the same. Thus, widows' legal and social status was not necessarily uniform in every place. While generally the New Testament says relatively little about widowhood, Luke-Acts contains a number of references to widows. (See: Luke 4:25-26, 7:11-17 and 20:47). Acts mentions widows in the Jerusalem church (See: Acts 6:1) and in connection with Tabitha (Acts 9:36-42).

Some Bible scholars allow that women mentioned in the Bible independently and without husbands may have been widows. These include Peter's mother-in-law (Luke 4:38-39); Martha (Luke 10:38-42); Mary, the mother of Jesus (John 19:26-27); Lydia (Acts 16:14-15); Mary, the mother of John Mark (Acts 12:12); and Tabitha herself (Acts 9:36). The NT book of 1 Timothy has a major passage related to widows, in which a formal order of widows is said to have had specific guidelines for admission to the order (1 Tim. 5:3-16). These scattered references suggest some widows were poor and without a family support system, while others appear to have had financial independence. Those without family support became beneficiaries of the church's compassion and maintenance. Those who appear to have had resources apart from the church likely engaged in ministries to others.

Financial Status

To assume that all first-century widows were poor and needed community care would be an inaccurate generalization. Usually, the bride's father gave her a dowry. The groom's acceptance of the dowry meant he was taking responsibility of providing and caring for his bride. The dowry provided a woman with a measure of security both while married and in the event of her husband's death. Evidence indicates some women, especially those from wealthier families, managed the family's financial affairs in the husband's absence. In such cases, the wife would continue those responsibilities if her husband died.

Of course, one size did not fit all. Given various socio-economic levels in the 1st century, some widows were poor, especially those who had not borne children. Not all had the options of remarriage or care provided by adult children. Sadly, one option available to younger widows was prostitution. Given Old Testament teachings, Jewish heritage, and Jesus' example of showing compassion, the early church offered support for poor widows that lacked other options for their financial wellbeing (See: Acts 6:1; 1 Tim 5:16).

Remarriage

Widowhood was often a temporary situation in the Greco-Roman world. Widows, especially those of a higher socio-economic status, tended to remarry. This general trend seems to have held true for Jewish widows as well. Long-term widowhood in Jewish culture appears to have been rare. Rabbis of the era had the task of confirming the husband was dead so the widow could marry again.

Standing in the temple that day, Jesus noticed the widow and called attention to her generosity. He understood her situation and financial plight. Showing compassion for widows had its roots in the Old Testament and became the standard for early believers. In its best expressions, New Testament churches lived out a compassionate caring for needy widows, while seeking to be wise and practical in their ministry to widows.

(Source: lovebaptistchurch.com)



DAY 18

...MORE FACTS, ETC.

“...THE MOUNT CALLED OLIVET...”

The *Mount of Olives* today is 2,650 feet above sea level. The ridge is 2 miles long.

Beyond the Mount of Olives is the Judea Wilderness. The OT predicted that the Messiah would come from the east through the wilderness and would enter Jerusalem. Jesus took this route in His triumphal entry.

The Mount of Olives may be the location for His return as well.

Whether this or some other place was the actual location of Gethsemane, the location was definitely on the slope of this mountain. Probably the entire ridge was covered with olives in the 1st century.



(Source: Followtherabbi.org)

“...BUT MY WORDS WILL NOT PASS AWAY.” (LUKE 21:33)

Is the Bible truly God's Word?

Our answer to this question will not only determine how we view the Bible and its importance to our lives, but also it will ultimately have an eternal impact on us. If the Bible is truly God's Word, then we should cherish it, study it, obey it, and fully trust it. If the Bible is the Word of God, then to dismiss it is to dismiss God Himself.

The fact that God gave us the Bible is an evidence and illustration of His love for us. The term “revelation” simply means that God communicated to mankind what He is like and how we can have a right relationship with Him. These are things that we could not have known had God not divinely revealed them to us in the Bible. Although God's revelation of Himself in the Bible was given progressively over approximately 1500 years, it has always contained everything man needs to know about God in order to have a right relationship with Him. If the Bible is truly the Word of God, then it is the final authority for all matters of faith, religious practice, and morals.

The question we must ask ourselves is how can we know that the Bible is the Word of God and not just a good book? What is unique about the Bible that sets it apart from all other religious books ever written? Is there any evidence that the Bible is truly God's Word? These types of questions must be seriously examined if we are to determine the validity of the Bible's claim to be the very Word of God, divinely inspired, and totally sufficient for all matters of faith and practice. There can be no doubt that the Bible does claim to be the very Word of God. This is clearly seen in Paul's commendation to Timothy: “...from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:15-17).

There are both **internal** and **external** evidences that the Bible is truly God's Word. The internal evidences are those things within the Bible that testify of its divine origin. One of the first internal evidences that the Bible is truly God's Word is seen in its unity. Even though it is really 66 individual books, written on 3 continents, in 3 different languages, over a period of approximately 1500 years, by more than 40 authors who came from many walks of life, the Bible remains one unified book from beginning to end without contradiction. This unity is unique from all other books and is evidence of the divine origin of the words which God moved men to record.

Another of the internal evidences that indicates the Bible is truly God's Word is the prophecies contained within its pages. The Bible contains hundreds of detailed prophecies relating to the future of individual nations including Israel, certain cities, and mankind. Other prophecies concern the coming of One who would be the Messiah, the Savior of all who would believe in Him. Unlike the prophecies found in other religious books or those by men such as Nostradamus, biblical prophecies are extremely detailed. There are over 300 prophecies concerning Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. Not only was it foretold where He would be born and His lineage, but also how He would die and that He would rise again. There simply is no logical way to explain the fulfilled prophecies in the Bible other than by divine origin. There is no other religious book with the extent or type of predictive prophecy that the Bible contains.

A third internal evidence of the divine origin of the Bible is its unique authority and power. While this evidence is more subjective than the first two, it is no less a powerful testimony of the divine origin of the Bible. The Bible's authority is unlike any other book ever written. This authority and power are best seen in the way countless lives have been transformed by the supernatural power of God's Word. Drug addicts have been cured by it, homosexuals set free by it, derelicts and deadbeats transformed by it, hardened criminals reformed by it, sinners rebuked by it, and hate turned to love by it. The Bible does possess a dynamic and transforming power that is only possible because it is truly God's Word. (...continued next page)



MORE DAY 18 ON NEXT PAGE...

“...BUT MY WORDS WILL NOT PASS AWAY.” (CONTINUED)

CONTINUED...Is the Bible truly God's Word?

There are also external evidences that indicate the Bible is truly the Word of God. One is the historicity of the Bible. Because the Bible details historical events, its truthfulness and accuracy are subject to verification like any other historical document. Through both archaeological evidences and other writings, the historical accounts of the Bible have been proven time and time again to be accurate and true. In fact, all the archaeological and manuscript evidence supporting the Bible makes it the best-documented book from the ancient world. The fact that the Bible accurately and truthfully records historically verifiable events is a great indication of its truthfulness when dealing with religious subjects and doctrines and helps substantiate its claim to be the very Word of God.

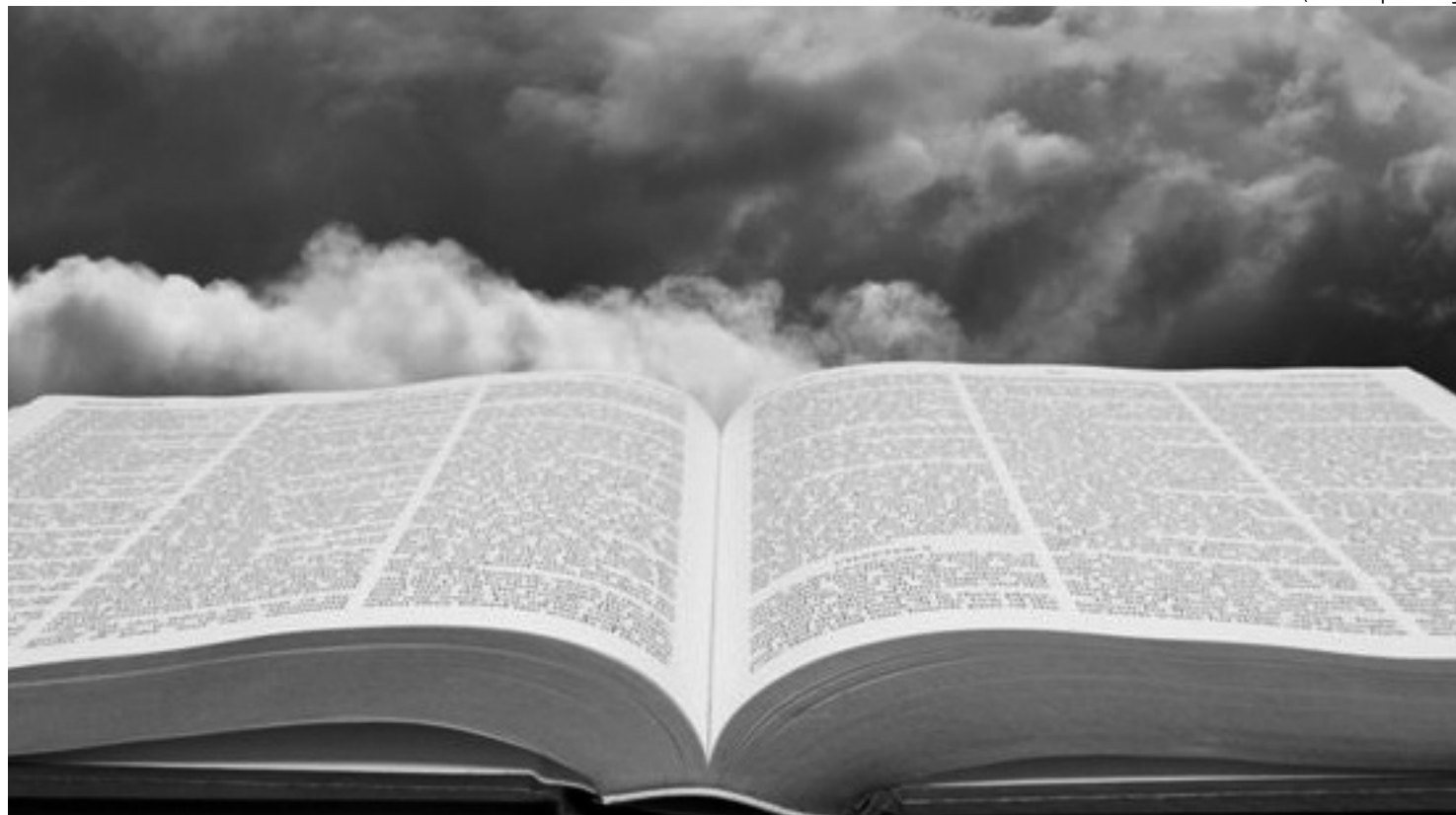
Another external evidence that the Bible is truly God's Word is the integrity of its human authors. As mentioned earlier, God used men from many walks of life to record His words. In studying the lives of these men, we find them to be honest and sincere. The fact that they were willing to die often excruciating deaths for what they believed testifies that these ordinary yet honest men truly believed God had spoken to them. The men who wrote the New Testament and many hundreds of other believers (See: 1 Corinthians 15:6) knew the truth of their message because they had seen and spent time with Jesus Christ after He had risen from the dead. Seeing the risen Christ had a tremendous impact on them. They went from hiding in fear to being willing to die for the message God had revealed to them. Their lives and deaths testify to the fact that the Bible truly is God's Word.

A final external evidence that the Bible is truly God's Word is the indestructibility of the Bible. Because of its importance and its claim to be the very Word of God, the Bible has suffered more vicious attacks and attempts to destroy it than any other book in history. From early Roman Emperors like Diocletian, through communist dictators and on to modern-day atheists and agnostics, the Bible has withstood and outlasted all of its attackers and is still today the most widely published book in the world.

Throughout time, skeptics have regarded the Bible as mythological, but archeology has confirmed it as historical. Opponents have attacked its teaching as primitive and outdated, but its moral and legal concepts and teachings have had a positive influence on societies and cultures throughout the world. It continues to be attacked by pseudo-science, psychology, and political movements, yet it remains just as true and relevant today as it was when it was first written. It is a book that has transformed countless lives and cultures throughout the last 2000 years. No matter how its opponents try to attack, destroy, or discredit it, the Bible remains; its veracity and impact on lives is unmistakable. The accuracy which has been preserved despite every attempt to corrupt, attack, or destroy it is clear testimony to the fact that the Bible is truly God's Word and is supernaturally protected by Him. It should not surprise us that, no matter how the Bible is attacked, it always comes out unchanged and unscathed. After all, Jesus said, *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away”* (Luke 21:33).

After looking at the evidence, one can say without a doubt that, yes, the Bible is truly God's Word.

(Source: Gotquestions.org)



DAY 19

READ LUKE 22 & 23

TODAY'S READING: Jesus' time has come. He celebrates Passover with His closest disciples--and institutes the Lord's Supper. After praying on the Mount of Olives, Jesus is betrayed by Judas, arrested, tried and crucified. All seems lost as Jesus dies and is buried in a tomb.

THE 10 MINUTE PLAN...IF ALL YOU HAVE IS 10 MINUTES TO SPARE TODAY

Read today's Bible passage (Luke 22 & 23) and answer the following questions:

1) Jesus tells Peter that he will deny Him (Ch. 22:31-34), but Peter can't believe it, but eventually Peter does (Ch. 22:54-62). Why do you think Peter's boldness shifted to fear so quickly? _____

2) What are some ways we (as followers of Jesus) deny Him today? _____

Take a couple of minutes to pray and Jesus to forgive you for denying Him and ask Him for the strength and the faith to follow when life doesn't (or hasn't) turned out the way you hoped, expected and prayed to happen.

THE 20 MINUTE PLAN

Do the 10 Minute Plan, then answer the following questions and read through the rest of the Day 19 pages:

1) What do you think it means in Luke 22:3 that "*Satan entered into Judas*"? _____

2) Do you think that anything like that could happen to you? _____

3) Jesus tells the disciples to pray more than once (Luke 22:40, 46). What does He tell them to pray for? _____

4) What do you think that means to you today? _____

5) How would you answer this question: *Why did Jesus have to die?* _____

WHAT IS THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD?



The year that Jesus died, Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, was also the day on which the Jews celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This feast reminded the Jews of the bread that God provided for the Israelites when they left Egypt. Consider the significant parallels between this feast and Jesus' death:

First, wheat seeds must die in order to bring forth crop. Similarly, Jesus had to die and be buried in order to accomplish His ministry and be raised to a new life. Second, unleavened bread was made without yeast, because yeast represented sin (1 Cor. 5:7-8). In the same way, Jesus, the Lamb of God, was sinless.

(Source: Followtherabbi.com)

**FIND MORE
DAY 19**



NEXT PAGE

**ON THE
TABLE**

What exactly did Jesus and His disciples eat during the Last Supper?

There's no definitive answer, but likely menu items can be possibly gleaned from other historical record.

The Gospels, of course, tell us: bread (unleavened) and wine were present. Jesus passed both around the table.

What else could have been part of the menu?

For that we can look to what was typically eaten in mid-spring Israel.

Out of these items: Wheat and barley might have been on the table. Grapes were not yet in season. Dried figs, olive oil and honey.



(Source: Delish.com)

**FIND MORE
DAY 19 ON
THE NEXT
PAGE**



***"This is my body, which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."***

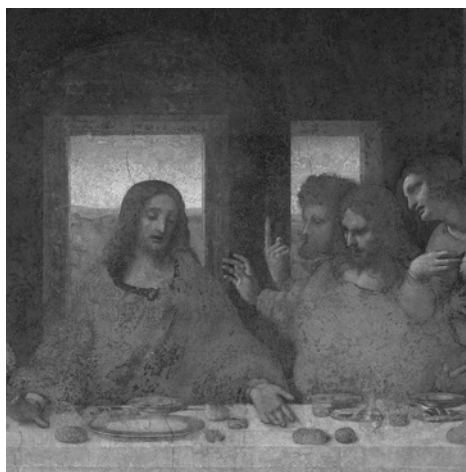
Luke 22:19

EVER HEARD OF "MAUNDAY THURSDAY"?

Maundy Thursday is observed on the Thursday before Easter. Also referred to as "*Holy Thursday*" or "*Great Thursday*" in some Christian denominations, Maundy Thursday commemorates the Last Supper when Jesus shared the Passover meal with His disciples on the night before He was crucified.

In contrast to joyful Easter celebrations, Maundy Thursday events are typically more solemn occasions, marked by the shadow of Jesus' betrayal. While different denominations observe Maundy Thursday in their own distinct ways, two important biblical events are the primary focus of Maundy Thursday solemnizations:

Before the Passover meal, Jesus washed the feet of His disciples. By performing this lowly act of service, the Bible says in John 13:1 that Jesus "*showed them the full extent of his love.*" By His example, Jesus demonstrated how Christians are to love one another through humble service. For this reason, many churches practice foot-washing ceremonies as a part of their Maundy Thursday services.



During the Passover meal, Jesus took bread and wine and asked His Father to bless it. He broke the bread into pieces, giving it to His disciples and said, "*This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.*" Then He took the cup of wine, shared it with His disciples and said, "*This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.*" These events recorded in Luke 22:19-20 describe the Last Supper and form the biblical basis for the practice of Communion. For this reason, many churches hold special Communion services as a part of their Maundy Thursday celebrations. Likewise, many congregations observe a traditional Passover Seder meal.

What Does "Maundy" mean? Derived from the Latin word *mandatum*, meaning "commandment," Maundy refers to the commands Jesus gave His disciples at the Last Supper: to love with humility by serving one another and to remember His sacrifice.

(Source: christianity.about.com)

"THIS CUP THAT IS POURED OUT FOR YOU..."

THE MARRIAGE CUP:

During Biblical times, a young man who wanted to marry would go with his father to the chosen woman's house to meet her and her father. They'd negotiate a steep "bride price," the money or physical items that the woman's father would ask for in exchange for giving up his valuable daughter. Then, the young man's father would hand his son a cup of wine. The son, in turn, would offer it to the woman and say, "*This cup I offer to you.*" In effect he was saying, "*I love you and I offer you my life. Will you marry me?*" If she drank it (sealing their engagement), she accepted his life and gave him hers. If not, she simply declined.

THE PASSOVER CUP:

During the Passover liturgy of Jesus' day, participants would drink from four cups of wine at different times. The third cup was called the Cup of Salvation. While celebrating the Passover with His disciples in the Upper Room, Jesus offered them the cup of salvation and said, "*This cup is a new covenant in my blood.*" He was saying, in effect, "*I love you. I give you my life. Will you marry me?*"

When we take communion and remember the words, "*This cup is a new covenant of my blood,*" God is saying to us, "*I love you. I invite you to be my spiritual bride.*" And every time we drink it, we are in effect saying to Him, "*I accept your gift, and I give you my life in return.*"



(Source: http://Followtherabbi.com)

DAY 19

...MORE FACTS, ETC.

“...CUT OFF HIS RIGHT EAR...”



Malchus was the name of the servant of the high priest (Caiaphas) whose right ear was cut off by Peter at the arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (See: Jn 18:10 and Mt 26:51; Mk 14:47; Lk 22:50).

It is noteworthy that Luke “the physician” alone gives an account of the healing of the wound. As Jesus “touched his ear, and healed him,” the ear was not entirely severed from the head.

(Source: Bible-history.com)

BETRAYED!

A quick look at Judas Iscariot:

Judas Iscariot or Judas of Kerioth — or sometimes called “the son of Simon” (See: John 6:71 ; John 13:2 John 13:26). The name Iscariot has received many interpretations more or less conjectural. The most probable is from Ish Kerioth, i.e. “man of Kerioth,” a town in the tribe of Judah (See: Joshua 15:25).

Before the appearance of Judas’ name in the lists of the apostles we know absolutely nothing. What that appearance implies, however, is that he had previously declared himself a disciple. He was drawn, as the others were, by the preaching of the Baptist, or his own Messianic hopes, or the “gracious words” of the new Teacher, to leave his former life, and to obey the call of the Rabbi of Nazareth. The choice was not made, we must remember, without a provision of its issue (See: John 6:64).

The germs of the evil, in all likelihood, unfolded themselves gradually. The rules to which the 12 disciples were subject in their first journey, (See: Matthew 10:9 Matthew 10:10) sheltered him from the temptation that would have been most dangerous to him. The new form of life, of which we find the first traces in (See: Luke 8:3) brought that temptation with it. As soon as the 12 were recognized as a body, traveling around Judea and Galilee with their Master, receiving money and other offerings, and redistributing what they received to the poor, it became necessary that some one should act as the steward of the givings, and this fell to Judas (See: John 12:6 ; 13:29). Judas soon found himself entrusted with larger sums of money than before, and with this there came covetousness, unfaithfulness, embezzlement. Several times he showed his tendency to avarice and selfishness. This, even under the best of influences, grew worse and worse, till he betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver.

Why was Judas chosen to be one of the 12 disciples?

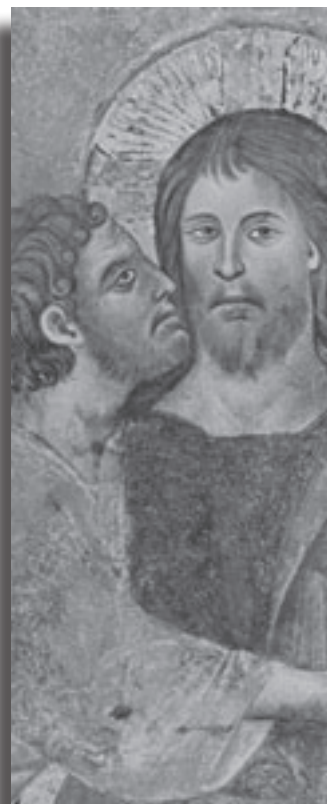
- (1) There was needed among the disciples, as in every church today, a man of just such talents as Judas possessed, —the talent for managing business affairs.
- (2) Though he probably followed Jesus at first from mixed motives, as did the other disciples, he had the opportunity of becoming a good and useful man.
- (3) It obviously included in God’s plans that there should be a standing argument for the truth and honesty of the Gospel; for if any wrong or trickery had been concealed, it would have been revealed by the traitor in self-defence.
- (4) Perhaps to teach us that God can bless, and the gospel can succeed, even though some bad men may creep in.

The end of Judas:

- (1) Judas, when he saw the results of his betrayal, “repented himself” (See: Matthew 27:3-10). He saw his sin in a new light, and “changed his mind.”
- (2) He made ineffectual struggles to escape, by attempting to return the reward to the Pharisees, and when they would not receive it, he cast it down at their feet and left it (See: Matthew 27:5).
- (3) The money was used to buy a burial-field for poor strangers (See: Matthew 27:6-10).
- (4) Judas himself, in his despair, went out and hanged himself (See: Matthew 27:5) at Aceldama, on the southern slope of the valley of Hinnom, near Jerusalem, and in the act he fell down a precipice and was dashed into pieces (See: Acts 1:18).

Judas’ betrayal is contrasted with that of Peter. Judas proved his repentance to be false by immediately committing another sin, suicide. Peter proved his to be true by serving the Lord faithfully ever after.

(Source: Smith’s Bible Dictionary)



“...LIKE GREAT DROPS OF BLOOD...”



Only Luke referred to Jesus’ sweat and only Luke referred to Jesus’ sweat as consisting of *great drops of blood*. We can conclude quite justifiably that the terminology used by Luke to refer to the severe mental distress experienced by Jesus was intended to be taken literally—i.e., that the sweat of Jesus became bloody. A thorough search of the medical literature demonstrates that such a condition, while admittedly rare, does occur in humans. Commonly referred to as *hematidrosis* or *hemohidrosis* (Allen, 1967, pp. 745-747), this condition results in the excretion of blood or blood pigment in the sweat. Under conditions of great emotional stress, tiny capillaries in the sweat glands can rupture (Lumpkin, 1978), thus mixing blood with perspiration. This condition has been reported in extreme instances of stress (see Sutton, 1956, pp. 1393-1394). It is evident that even before Jesus endured the torture of the cross, He suffered far beyond what most of us will ever suffer.

(Source: apologeticspress.org)

MORE
DAY 19
ON THE



NEXT PAGE

DAY 19

...MORE
FACTS,
ETC.

MEDICAL ASPECTS OF CRUCIFIXION



With a knowledge of the anatomy we can reconstruct the probable medical aspects of crucifixion:

The scourging served to weaken the victim and, if blood loss was considerable, to produce *orthostatic hypotension* and possible shock.

When the victim was thrown to the ground for transfixion of the hands, his scourging wounds most likely tear open and be contaminated with dirt.

With each respiration, the wounds would be scraped against the wood stipes, resulting in blood loss throughout the crucifixion.

(Continued in Sidebar on Next Page)

CRUCIFIXION: THE MOST DISGRACEFUL AND CRUEL METHODS OF EXECUTION

Crucifixion probably first began among the Persians. Alexander the Great introduced the practice to Egypt and Carthage, and the Romans appear to have learned of it from the Carthaginians. Although the Romans did not invent crucifixions, they perfected it as a form of torture and capital punishment that was designed to produce a slow death with maximum pain and suffering. It was one of the most disgraceful and cruel methods of execution and usually was reserved only for slaves, foreigners, revolutionaries, and the vilest of criminals.

The crucified victim (in its earliest form in Persia) was either tied to a tree or was tied to or impaled on an upright post, usually to keep the guilty victim's feet from touching holy ground. Only later was a true cross used; it was characterized by an upright post (*stipes*) and a horizontal crossbar (*patibulum*). Although archaeological and historical evidence strongly indicates that the low Tau cross was preferred by the Romans in Palestine at the time of Christ, crucifixion practices often varied in a given geographic region and in accordance with the imagination of the executioners, and the Latin cross and other forms may have been used.

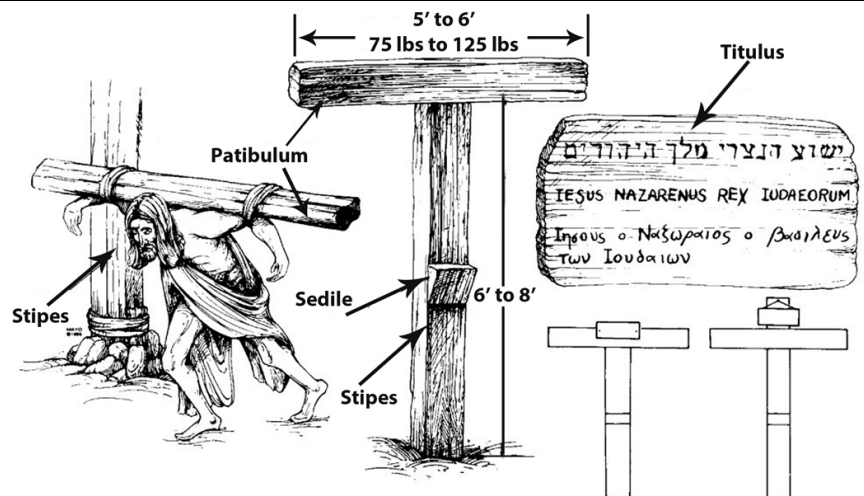
It was customary for the condemned man to carry his own cross from the flogging post to the site of crucifixion outside the city walls. He was usually naked, unless this was prohibited by local customs. Since the weight of the entire cross was probably well over 300 lb. (136 kg), only the crossbar was carried. The *patibulum*, weighing 75 to 125 lb. (34 to 57 kg), was placed across the nape of the victim's neck and balanced along both shoulders. Usually, the outstretched arms were tied to the crossbar. The processional to the site of crucifixion was led by a complete Roman military guard, headed by a centurion. One of the soldiers carried a sign (*titulus*) on which the condemned man's name and crime were displayed. Later, the *titulus* would be attached to the top of the cross. The Roman guard would not leave the victim until they were sure of his death.

CROSS AND TITULUS

Victim carrying crossbar (patibulum) to site of upright post (stipes). center Low Tau cross (crux commissa), commonly used by Romans at time of Jesus.

(Right) Rendition of Jesus' titulus with name and crime Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek.

(Bottom Right) Possible methods for attaching titulus to Tau cross (left) and Latin cross (right).



Outside the city walls was permanently located the heavy upright wooden stipes, on which the patibulum would be secured. In the case of the Tau cross, this was accomplished by means of a mortise and tenon joint, with or without reinforcement by ropes. To prolong the crucifixion process, a horizontal wooden block or plank, serving as a crude seat (*sedile* or *sedulum*), often was attached midway down the stipes. Only very rarely, and probably later than the time of Jesus, was an additional block (*suppedaneum*) employed for transfixion of the feet.

At the site of execution, by law, the victim was given a bitter drink of wine mixed with myrrh (gall) as a mild analgesic. The criminal was then thrown to the ground on his back, with his arms outstretched along the patibulum. The hands could be nailed or tied to the crossbar, but nailing apparently was preferred by the Romans. The archaeological remains of a crucified body, found in an ossuary (burial box) near Jerusalem and dating from the time of Christ, indicate that the nails were tapered iron spikes approximately 5 to 7 in long with a square shaft 3/8 in across. Furthermore, ossuary findings have documented that the nails commonly were driven through the wrists rather than the palms. After both arms were fixed to the crossbar, the patibulum and the victim, together, were lifted onto the stipes. On the low cross, four soldiers could accomplish this relatively easily. However, on the tall cross, the soldiers used either wooden forks or ladders. Next, the feet were fixed to the cross, either by nails or ropes.

(continued on the next page)

MORE ABOUT THE CRUCIFIXION ON THE NEXT PAGE...

DAY 19

...MORE FACTS, ETC.

MEDICAL ASPECTS OF CRUCIFIXION

(Continued)

With arms outstretched, the wrists were nailed to the patibulum. It has been shown that the ligaments and bones of the wrist can support the weight of a body hanging from them, but the palms cannot.



The iron spikes were probably driven between the radius and the carpals, either proximal to or through the strong band like flexor retinaculum and the various intercarpal ligaments.

A nail in either location might pass between the bony elements and produce no fractures, the likelihood of painful periosteal injury would be great. The driven nail would crush or sever the large sensorimotor median nerve.

The stimulated nerve would produce excruciating bolts of fiery pain in both arms.

(Source:frugalsites.com)

CRUCIFIXION (CONTINUED)

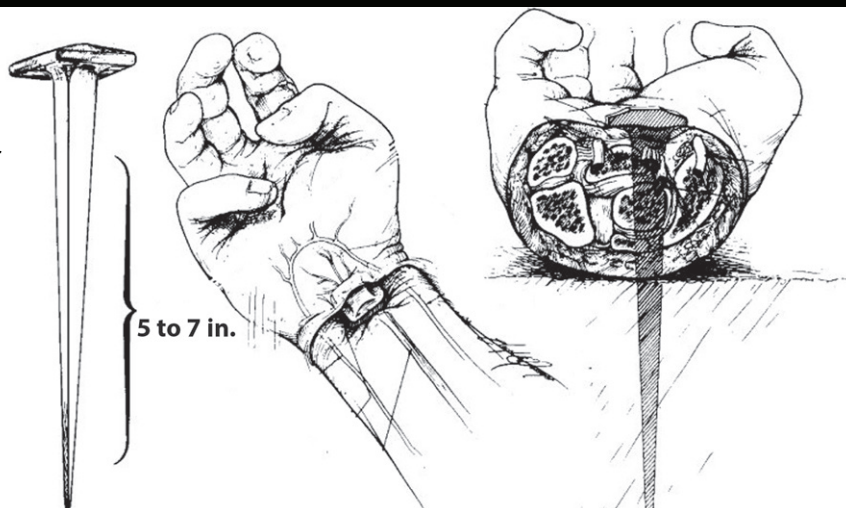
(Continued) Ossuary findings suggest that nailing was the preferred Roman practice. Although the feet could be fixed to the sides of the stipes or to a wooden footrest (suppedaneum), they usually were nailed directly to the front of the stipes. To accomplish this, flexion of the knees may have been quite prominent, and the bent legs may have been rotated laterally.

NAILING THE WRISTS

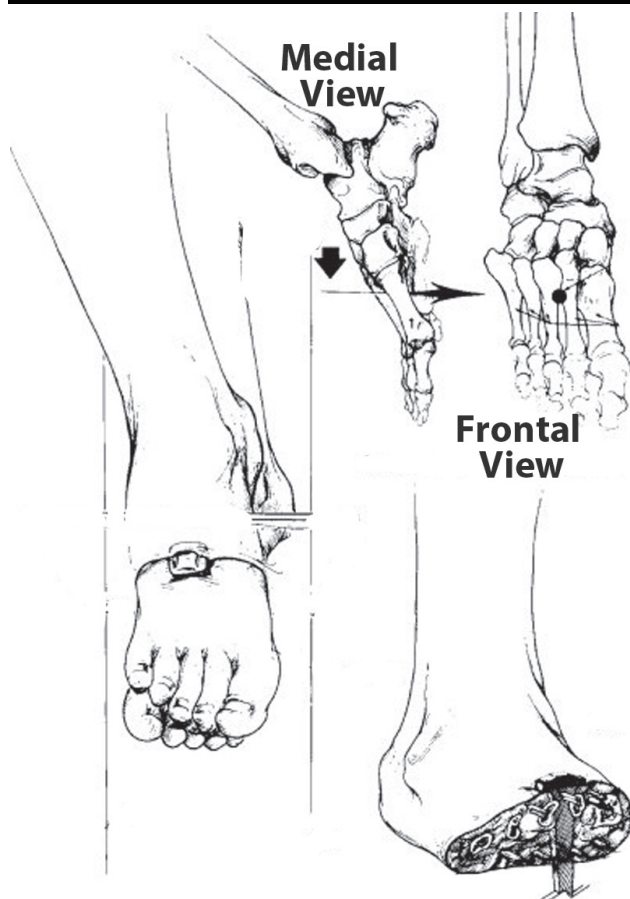
(Left) Size of iron nail.

(Center) Location of nail in wrist, between carpals and radius.

(Right) Cross section of wrist, at level of plane indicated at left, showing path of nail, with probable transection of median nerve and impalement of flexor pollicis longus, but without injury to major arterial trunks and without fractures of bones.



NAILING THE FEET



(Left) Position of feet atop one another and against stipes.

(Upper Right) Location of nail in second inter metatarsal space.

(Lower Right) Cross section of foot, at plane indicated at left, showing path of nail.

When the nailing was completed, the titulus was attached to the cross, by nails or cords, just above the victim's head. The soldiers and the civilian crowd often taunted and jeered the condemned man, and the soldiers customarily divided up his clothes among themselves. The length of survival generally ranged from three or four hours to three or four days and appears to have been inversely related to the severity of the scourging. However, even if the scourging had been relatively mild, the Roman soldiers could hasten death by breaking the legs below the knees (erurifragium or skelokopia).

Not uncommonly, insects would light upon or burrow into the open wounds or the eyes, ears, and nose of the dying and helpless victim, and birds of prey would tear at these sites. Moreover, it was customary to leave the corpse on the cross to be devoured by predatory animals. However, by Roman law, the family of the condemned could take the body for burial, after obtaining permission from the Roman judge.

Traditionally, this had been considered a spear wound to the heart through the right side of the chest -- a fatal wound probably taught to most Roman soldiers. Moreover, the standard infantry spear, which was 5 to 6 ft long, could easily have reached the chest of a man crucified on the customary low cross.

(Source:frugalsites.com)

Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. Luke 23:46

DAY 20

READ LUKE 24

TODAY'S READING: After returning to Jesus' tomb to prepare His body for burial, some women learn that He has risen from the dead. Jesus appears to a couple of His followers on the way out of Jerusalem, and then appears to His disciples before returning to heaven.

THE 10 MINUTE PLAN...IF ALL YOU HAVE IS 10 MINUTES TO SPARE TODAY

Read today's Bible passage (Luke 24) and answer the following questions:

1) Cleopas and a friend are joined by a risen Jesus walking to Emmaus (Ch. 24:13-35). Not knowing it's Jesus, they tell Him their disappointment that Jesus had died and didn't turn out to be who they thought He was (Messiah). What do you think they were expecting of Jesus before He was tried and killed?

2) Have you ever had a moment(s) like this, where Jesus didn't turn out to be -- or do -- what you expected? What were they? _____

Take a couple of minutes to pray and ask God to remind you of the times that (while He didn't do what you hoped and expected) He did exactly what was needed and answered your prayers in a way that far-exceeded what could ever imagine.

THE 20 MINUTE PLAN

Do the 10 Minute Plan, then answer the following questions and read through the rest of the Day 20 pages:

1) Why do you think think the disciples were so slow to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead? _____

2) What do you think Jesus' disciples thought when He said what He did in Luke 24:49? _____

3) How do you think you would have responded to Jesus' death, burial and resurrection back then? _____

A TESTIMONY TO BELIEVE: THE WOMEN AT THE TOMB

If Jesus' disciples had fabricated the account of His resurrection from the dead, they wouldn't have done this: say that women were the first to discover the empty tomb of Christ, and to encounter Him. In fact, each of the four Gospels presents Mary Magdalene as the first person to inform the disciples that Jesus was alive. Why are we sure things actually happened this way? Women, unfortunately, were not considered reliable witnesses in first-century Judaism at the time of Jesus. Consider these quotes:

"Sooner let the words of the Law be burnt than delivered to women." (Talmud, Sotah 19a)

"But let not the testimony of women be admitted, on account of the levity and boldness of their sex. . . since it is probable that they may not speak truth, either out of hope of gain, or fear of punishment." (Josephus, Antiquities 4.8.15)

This sheds light on the Gospel passages that show us that the disciples initially thought the message of Jesus' resurrection was a "tall tale". It's safe to say that, if the disciples wanted to convince their fellow Jews that Jesus is the Messiah, they likely would have said that Peter, or even Joseph of Arimathea, had discovered the empty tomb.

The fact that all four Gospels list the potentially embarrassing detail that women were the primary witnesses of Jesus' resurrection greatly adds to the credibility of their accounts.

(Source: faithexplained.com)

**FIND
MORE
DAY 20**



**NEXT
PAGE**

DAY 20 ...MORE

WHO WERE THE WOMEN AT THE EMPTY TOMB?

Jesus' body had been quickly removed from the cross before sundown and laid in a tomb without having been prepared for burial.

So, a few women made their way to the tomb, grieving over their loss. To them, Jesus had been more than a teacher; He had healed them of their sicknesses, set them free from evil spirits, and given them hope. Each woman had come from a different walk of life.

Mary Magdalene was delivered from 7 demons. Joanna was the wife of King Herod's steward. Mary's son, James, was chosen as one of Jesus' disciples. Mary, the sister of Lazarus, one of Jesus' closest friends, received his kindness and forgiveness.

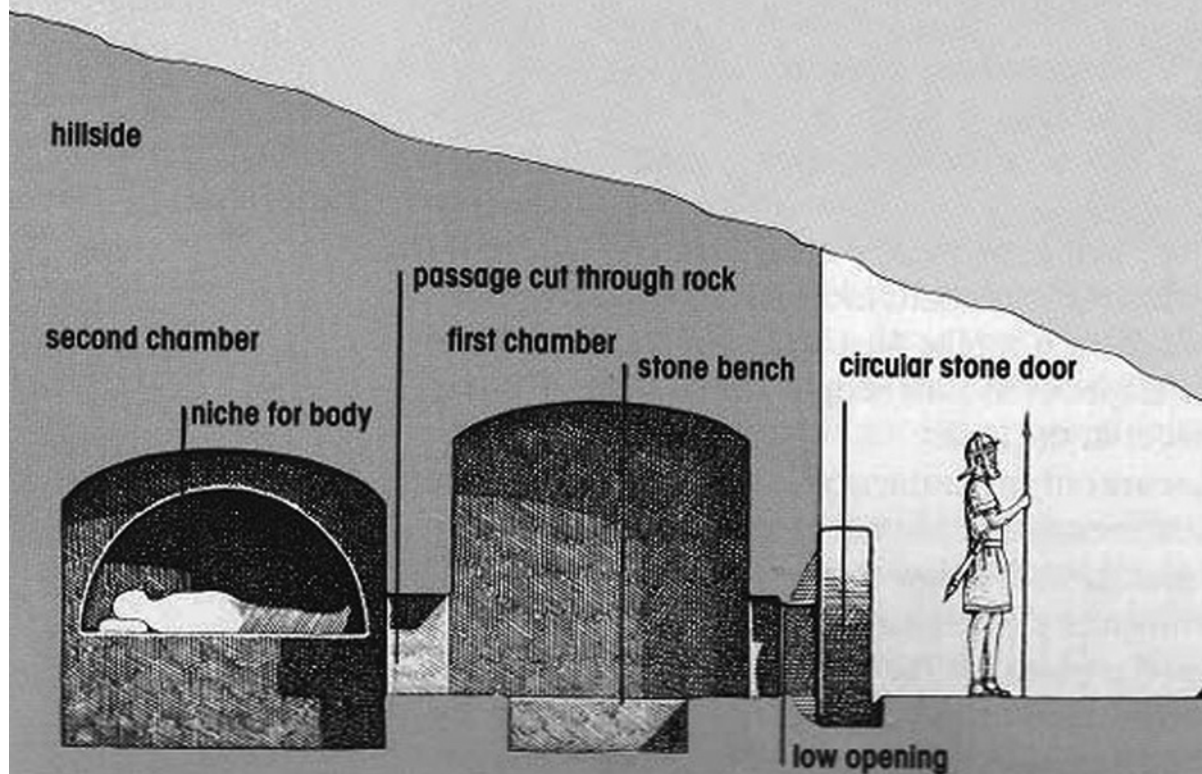
In return, these women dedicated their time and energy to providing for Jesus' needs. Some gave their money. Others provided food and prepared meals. A few had washed His feet.

“AND THEY FOUND THE STONE ROLLED AWAY...”

The picture below is a cross-section of the type of tomb that Jesus was laid in.

Many of the stone tombs in Jesus' day were located at the site of former stone quarries, a natural place to locate rock hewn tombs. Inside the tombs were chambers for storing bones from multiple individuals, often complete families of multiple generations. Into each of these chambers a bone-box called an ossuary would be inserted. Since ossuary burial, in Israel, was only practiced slightly before the time of Jesus and the century that followed, it makes tombs from this time frame very identifiable.

TOMBS IN JESUS' TIME



Even though the bones were to be placed in an ossuary for long term, the body was first laid to rest in a specific area hewn to size in a new tomb. Only after the flesh had decayed would the bones be gathered into the ossuary.

Rolling stone tombs were in fact quite rare during that period. Out of all the period tombs excavated in Jerusalem and area only a handful had a rolling stone, the remainder having rectangular stones that were merely pushed into place. Interestingly all the tombs found with a rolling stone were those of rich or prominent individuals/families. Perhaps this was due to the fact it would have cost more to have a stone shaped to round.

Jesus, of course, was buried in one such tomb because of His friend and follower Joseph of Arimathea. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea and he was waiting for the kingdom of God. Luke writes that he went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Then he took Jesus' body down from the cross, wrapped it in linen cloth (a traditional practice from that time) and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid.

(Source: bibleistrue.com)

WHERE WAS PETER?

Peter, the brave and impetuous disciple who, in a fit of male bravado, had once claimed eternal loyalty to Jesus, now actually denied knowing Him. Hiding out with the other disciples in fear, Peter is the first to run to the tomb to see if Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary, the mother of James were lying, delusional or losing their minds. Thankfully, the story of Peter doesn't stop with his denial. A resurrected Jesus encounters Peter on the beach and --and just as Peter denied Jesus three times a few days before-- Jesus restores Peter by asking him three times, "Do you love me?" (READ: John 21:15-19). We'll read next month in Acts 2 how Peter preached a powerful sermon on the Day of Pentecost, filled with the Holy Spirit, where over 3,000 people came to know Jesus.

FIND
MORE DAY
20



NEXT PAGE

DAY 20

...MORE
FACTS,
ETC.

TAKEN UP

Jesus ascension into heaven signaled the end of His earthly ministry. God the Father had lovingly sent His Son into the world at Bethlehem, and now the Son was returning to the Father.

The ascension...

Signified success in His earthly work. All that He had come to do, He had accomplished. It marked the return of His heavenly glory. Jesus' glory had been veiled during His sojourn on earth, with one brief exception at the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-9).

It indicated the beginning of His new work as High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-16) and Mediator of the New Covenant (Hebrews 9:15).

Currently, Jesus is in heaven. The Bible frequently picture Him at the right hand of the Father—a position of honor and authority (Psalm 110:1; Ephesians 1:20; Hebrews 8:1).

(Source:Gotquestions.org)

THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

The events on the road to Emmaus are discussed in Luke 24. In this final chapter of Luke's Gospel, we read of two disciples (Cleopas and one unnamed) of Jesus who were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus on the day that Jesus rose from the dead. As they traveled, a man joined them—the resurrected Jesus, although they did not recognize Him. The man asked, *"What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?"* (Luke 24:17).

The two disciples were surprised that the man had not heard of the recent events that had Jerusalem in turmoil. They proceeded to tell the stranger of Jesus' crucifixion and the report of His empty tomb. Jesus responded, *"O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*" (Luke 24:25-27).

So, as they walked, Jesus taught what the Old Testament had predicted about Himself. When they arrived in Emmaus that evening, the two disciples stopped to eat, and they asked Jesus to join them. He did, and as He broke the bread and blessed the meal, *"their eyes were opened"* (verse 31), and they recognized Him. Jesus then vanished.

Their response? Luke reports, *"They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, 'It is true! The Lord has risen'"* (verses 33-34).

On the road to Emmaus, Jesus gave a lesson on the prophecies of the Old Testament which were fulfilled in His death and resurrection. What a lesson that would have been! The Author of the Book explains His work, making connections from Scripture to the events they had recently experienced.

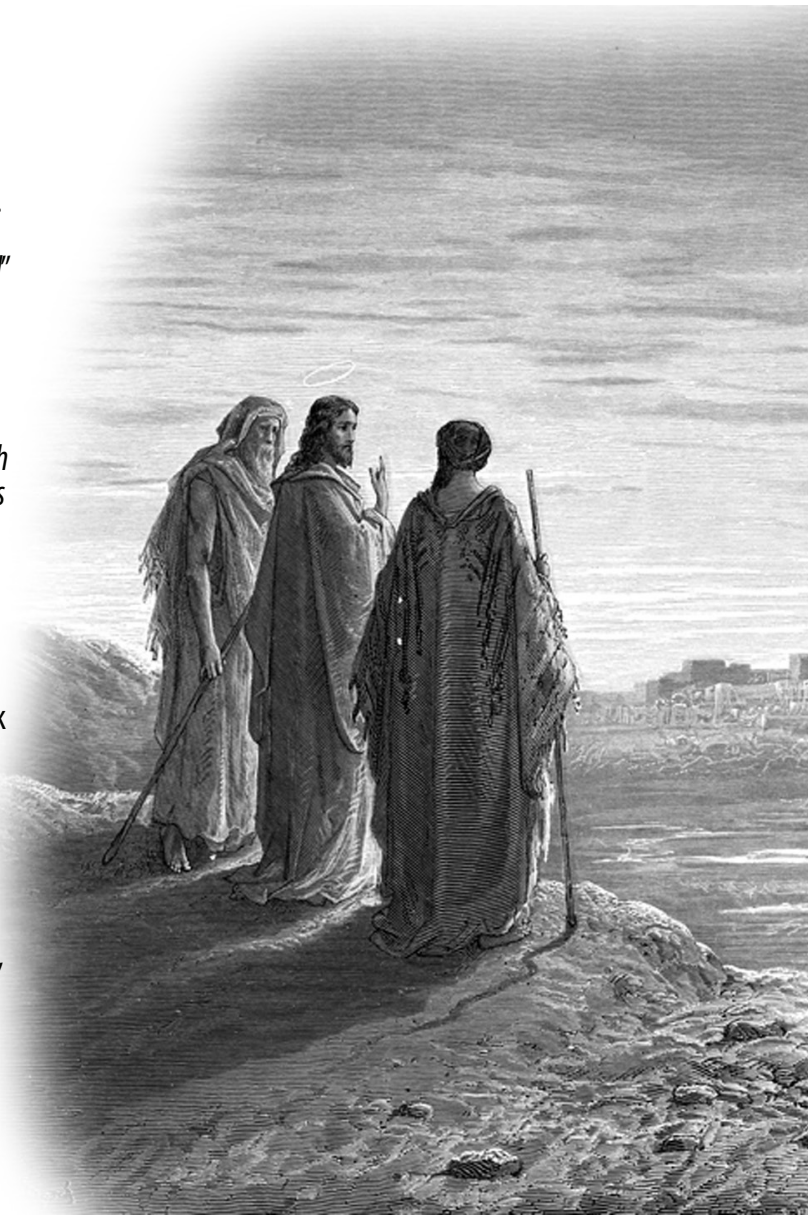
The disciples' reaction to Jesus' lesson was one of deep conviction of the truth of what He was teaching. *"Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked?"* they ask each other (verse 32).

Their physical eyes were blinded to the identity of Jesus, but their eyes of faith were being opened as Jesus opened the Scriptures to them.

Following this account, Jesus appears to His other disciples, removing all doubt that He was alive. Jesus had promised that He would show Himself to those who love Him (John 14:21), and this is exactly what He does on the road to Emmaus.

The story of the disciples on the Emmaus Road is important for many reasons. It provides an emphasis on the Old Testament prophecies related to Jesus, evidence regarding an additional appearance of Jesus, and a connection regarding the many eyewitnesses of the resurrected Jesus. Luke 24 is often seen as a model of the journey that Jesus makes with many of us today, as He opens our eyes, points us to the Word, and reveals Himself along life's walk as the resurrected Savior and Lord.

(Source:rc.Gotquestions.org)



***Find out what's going on in Men's Community
by going to www.flatironchurch.com/mens/!***

WAKE UP CALL: THE CLOSING

Give yourself some time (a day or even a week), then write down some thoughts on your study of Luke

1. Before I studied the Gospel of Luke, I didn't know: _____

2. The thing that surprised me the most in this study was: _____

3. My favorite thing about Jesus from Luke is: _____

4. The thing I struggle(d) with the most about this study of Luke was/is: _____

5. My favorite story Jesus told was _____ because: _____

6. Now that I've finished this, I feel the need to: _____
