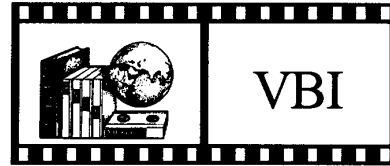
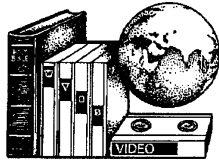


World Video Bible School®

Established 1986



LUKE

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LUKE

∞ Syllabus ∞

I. GENERAL INFORMATION.

- A. Instructor: Steven M. Lloyd.
- B. This course consists of 25 lessons on 9 DVDs.
- C. Each class is approximately 38 minutes long.

II. DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE.

- A. This course is designed to study the text of Luke to demonstrate how it promotes belief in Jesus as the Son of God.
- B. Students will learn the various elements of a narrative text of Scripture and how Luke uses them to influence his readers.

III. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS.

- A. Required.
 - 1. Bible (ASV, KJV or NKJV).
 - 2. 28 video lessons.
 - 3. Course notes.
- B. Optional.
 - 1. *The Life of Christ*, R. C. Foster, College Press.
 - 2. Any good conservative commentary on the book of Luke.

IV. REQUIREMENTS.

- A. Read the entire book of Luke at least once.
- B. View all 28 video lessons in their entirety.
- C. Read the class notes in their entirety.
- D. Complete all memory work (explained below).
- E. Submit a term paper (explained in the first lesson on video).
- F. Take one written test.

- G. Have a combined grade average of at least 70.

V. MEMORY WORK.

- A. Memory verses must be written (or typed) from memory, then mailed to VBI for grading. Verses must come from the ASV, KJV or NKJV, according to what you chose on your enrollment application.
- B. All verses must be written out or typed at one sitting. You may study more and start over if you make a mistake, but you must still start again from the beginning and write all the verses at one sitting.
- C. For this course, the following verses must be memorized:

Luke 6:38
Luke 12:15
Luke 17:20,21
- D. Memory work is due when you mail VBI your written test.
- E. Hint: A good method of memorizing is to write the verses on flash cards that can be easily reviewed throughout the course.

VI. TEST.

- A. There is one written exam at the end of the book of Luke.
- B. When you near the end of the course contact us and request the test.
- C. When you receive the test you have permission to look at it and study it.
- D. However, when you take the test you must do so completely from memory with no help from notes, Bible, textbook, etc.

VII. TERM PAPER.

- A. The paper must fulfill these seven (7) requirements as covered in the first video lesson:
 - 1. Classify the book according to the kind and subject matter.
 - 2. State what the whole book is about with the utmost brevity.
 - 3. Enumerate its major parts in order and relationship and outline these parts as you have outlined the whole.
 - 4. Define the problem or problems the author tries to solve.
 - 5. Come to terms with the author by interpreting hidden key words.
 - 6. Grasp the author's leading propositions by dealing with his most important sentences.

- 7. Know the author's major arguments by finding them in, or constructing them out of, sequences of sentences.
- B. The paper should be typed and double spaced. If handwritten, the paper should be a minimum of six (6) pages, single spaced.
- C. The paper is due when you mail VBI your final test and memory work.

VIII. GRADING.

- A. Memory work, term paper and test will be graded separately.
- B. Final grade is based on an average of all assigned work with the term paper counting twice.
- C. You may request that a grade be explained or reconsidered, but in any case VBI will have the final say.

IX. CREDIT.

- A. Credit will be issued, including a certificate, only after all work has been successfully completed, tapes have been returned (if rented) and all fees for this particular course have been paid in full.
- B. May God richly bless your study of His inspired word!

The Birth of Jesus

Chapters 1 & 2

INTRODUCTION:

- A. The Gospel according to Luke, like Matthew, Mark and John, has as the center of its attention the nature and character of Jesus.
 - 1. John really expressed the general purpose of all four accounts in John 20:30,31. What he wrote was written that you might believe.
 - 2. Luke expresses his purpose for writing in 1:1-4.
- B. No one of these four accounts was written to merely chronicle the life of Christ. That is why the life of Christ from ages twelve years to thirty years is not recorded.
 - 1. Luke sums up those eighteen years by writing: "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man" (2:52).
 - 2. These four accounts are not technically biographies.
 - 3. They focus only on what is necessary to persuade their audience that Jesus is the Christ. They focus on whatever pertains to the good news - the Gospel.
 - 4. Their content may vary a little. This is a reflection of the audience they seek to reach. But all four complement one another.
 - 5. The primary focus of all four Gospel accounts can be seen in where the bulk of attention is focused.
 - a. 29% of Matthew's account focuses on the death, burial and resurrection of Christ,
 - b. 38% of Mark,
 - c. 25% of Luke and
 - d. 38 % of John.
 - e. "Obviously, this is what the Gospel writers regarded as most important in their stories" (p. 40, *Words of Life*).
- C. The Gospel according to Luke is the first volume in a two volume set, the second volume being the book of Acts. (I will have more to say about the relationship between these two books later in the series.)
 - 1. Acts is also addressed to Theophilus. In it he begins, "The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to

teach, until the day in which he was received up” (Acts 1:1,2), summarizing “The Gospel according to Luke” as the first (former) treatise.

2. These two books combined make up 28% of the New Testament. This is the most any writer contributed to the New Testament.
 - a. Luke is the longest book in the New Testament and “is the most comprehensive and precise of the Gospels” (*Talk Thru the Bible*, p. 328).

LUKE’S INTRODUCTION:

- A. The first two chapters of Luke provide us with an announcement of the birth of Christ, His birth and the early years.
 1. They begin with an awesome announcement from the angel Gabriel that John the baptizer will be born to Zacharias, who was a priest, and his wife Elizabeth (1:5-25).
 2. They proceed to an angelic announcement from Gabriel that the Savior of the world will be born of Mary, a woman highly favored by the Lord (1:26-38).
 3. We then read of Mary’s visit to Elizabeth (1:39-56).
 4. The birth of John (1:57-80).
 5. Then the birth of Jesus (2:1-7).
 - a. And surrounding the birth of Christ is:
 - 1) An angelic birth announcement to some shepherds in a field (2:8-20),
 - 2) His circumcision (2:21) and
 - 3) Joseph and Mary’s visit to the temple to present Jesus to the Lord, as it was written in the Law.
 - b. Chapter 2 ends with Jesus’ visit to the temple at the age of twelve years and a survey of His advancements from age twelve years to thirty years.
- B. There are several things of interest to note in these two chapters.
 1. The fear that characterized each divine announcement.
 - a. When Gabriel appeared to Zacharias in the temple Zacharias was troubled and fear fell on him (1:12).

- b. When Gabriel appeared to Mary, Luke tells us, “she was greatly troubled” and that the angel said to her, “Fear not, Mary for thou hast found favor with God” (1:29,30).
 - c. When an angel appeared to the shepherds in the field to announce the birth of Christ they were “sore afraid” and the angel said, “Be not afraid: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy” (2:8-10).
- 2. Another point of interest is that the birth of Christ was an occasion for great joy, hope, expectation, fulfillment and salvation.
 - a. When Gabriel brought his announcement to Mary he characterized the child she would carry with these words: “He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever: and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (1:32,33).
 - b. When Mary visited Elizabeth, Elizabeth said, “Blessed art thou, among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb” (1:42).
 - c. Look at Zacharias’ statement at the birth of his son John (Lk 1:68-79).
 - d. Simeon was a righteous and devout man who was looking for the consolation of Israel.
 - e. When Anna, the prophetess, came to the temple that very hour to pray she spoke of him to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem (2:38).
 - f. Generally speaking, news of being with child is an occasion for rejoicing.
 - 1) I can remember my wife breaking the news to me that our children were on the way. Those of you who have experienced the same thing know how that kind of news fills you with joy and expectation. It is indescribable!
 - 2) However, for Mary it was joy of a different kind.
 - a) Not only could she rejoice in bringing life into this world, it was life miraculously conceived by God.
 - b) And the child she would carry would not only benefit her and her family on a temporal level, His birth would be the most significant birth in history and carried with it great theological significance. Through Him would all the nations of the earth be blessed.
 - g. The Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world would be born of Mary. The hope of Israel was coming.

- 1) Israel existed as a special nation in God's scheme of things for one primary purpose - to bring the savior into the world.
 - 2) The history of Israel is the history of God's preservation of the seed of Abraham, for through that seed would come the blessing.
 - 3) The law and prophets of the Old Testament all spoke of His coming.
 - a) In Peter's sermon at Solomon's porch he said, "Yea and all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days" (Acts 3:24).
 - b) The law, the prophets and psalms all spoke of His coming and His purpose (Lk 24:44).
- h. Luke paints a picture of certain ones living in the hope of the coming of Israel's redeemer.
- 1) Simeon was told by the Lord that he would not see death before he saw the Lord's Christ (2:26).
 - 2) Anna spoke of Jesus "to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem" (2:38).
- i. Robert Tannehill suggests that readers of Luke would benefit greatly if they note what reliable characters say about God's purpose and the meaning they ascribe to the events being recorded.
- 1) There are five reliable characters who speak of God's purposes in the events surrounding the birth of Jesus (and John) - Elizabeth, Mary, Zacharias, Simeon and Anna.
 - 2) Why are they reliable? Two reasons:
 - a) First, they are models of faith in Israel.
 - b) Second, they all spoke by the Holy Spirit when characterizing God's purpose in the events.
 - c) Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit when she made her claims concerning the fruit of Mary's womb (1:41,42).
 - d) When Zacharias spoke, Luke tells us he "was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied" (1:67).
 - e) It was the Holy Spirit that revealed to Simeon the fact that he would not die till he saw the Christ and it was "in the Spirit" that he came into the temple.

- f) Anna was a prophetess (2:36) (2 Pet 1:20f).
- 3. There are also the messages which came from Gabriel – the one who stands in the presence of God.
- C. There is one final note I would like to introduce you to as we begin our journey through Luke.
 - 1. The wonderful air of expectancy, joy, hope and salvation that fill these two chapters serve a sad purpose. They stand in stark contrast to the tragic rejection of Jesus by Israel in general.
 - a. Gabriel characterized the child to be born as “the Son of the Most High” and as the One Israel awaited who would sit on David’s throne (1:32f).
 - b. As she reflected on the fruit of her womb and on how God so favored her to bring His Son into the world, Mary said:

“God hath given help to Israel his servant,
That he might remember mercy” (1:54).
 - c. Zacharias said God had “visited and wrought redemption for his people. He hath raised up a horn of salvation for us, in the house of his servant David” (1:68,69).
 - d. When he saw the Christ, Simeon said, “mine eyes have seen thy salvation” (2:30). “A light for revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel” (2:32).
 - 2. The glory and hope of Israel had finally come.
 - a. The One who gave Israel their purpose for existing as the chosen people of God had finally arrived.
 - b. The law and prophets had all instilled in Israel this expectant hope.
 - c. Why then, when the promised Messiah finally arrived, did they desire nothing less than to kill Him?
 - d. Israel’s rejection of Christ is what makes the combined value of Luke and Acts a tragedy. We will explore the nature of tragedy as we progress through the book of Luke.
 - e. John began his account of the Gospel by saying, “He came unto his own and they that were his own received him not” (Jn 1:11).
 - 3. Simeon said, “Behold, this child is set for the falling and the rising of many in Israel” (2:34).

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

- A. The air of joy, hope and salvation created in chapters 1 and 2 of Luke still exists for those who receive Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.
 - 1. The story becomes tragic only when people reject God's purpose in Christ and
 - 2. The nation of Israel is not the only thing which turns this otherwise joyful story into a tragedy. Anyone today who joins their ranks in unbelief also help to turn the story into a tragedy.
 - 3. Why did the Jews reject Christ?
 - a. The Bible expresses it in several ways, but it is summed up as "unbelief" by Paul in Romans 11 (Esp. vvs. 30-32).
 - b. Rejecting Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God does not make sense - it goes against reason.
- B. Where do you stand in relationship to Him today?

Preparing the Way

Luke 3:1-22

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Luke begins his account of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by introducing us to a couple named Zacharias and Elizabeth.
 - 1. He characterizes them as being righteous before God. He defines them as “walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless” (1:6).
 - 2. Luke, the physician, also tells us that “Elizabeth was barren and they both were now well stricken in years” (1:7).
 - a. They had two physical deterrents.
 - 1) A barren womb and
 - 2) Age.
 - b. Does this remind you of anyone else?
 - 1) Sarah, Abraham’s wife, is first introduced to us in the Bible as being “barren; she had no child” (Gen 11:30).
 - 2) She was about ninety years old when it was said, “Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women” (Gen 18:11).
 - c. Hannah’s womb was barren.
 - d. So, like so many important women of the Bible, Elizabeth is initially described as barren and well stricken with years.
- B. While Zacharias was about his priestly duties an angel of the Lord appeared to him. Zacharias was troubled and fear fell upon him.
 - 1. The angel said, “Fear not, Zacharias.”
 - 2. Apparently he and Elizabeth prayed for a child because the angel said, “. . . thy supplication is heard and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son and thou shalt call his name John” (1:13).
 - 3. The angel previews for us the purpose God has for the child’s life:
 - a. He shall drink no wine nor strong drink.
 - b. He shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb.

- c. He shall go before the face of the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah,
 - 1) To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,
 - 2) And the disobedient to walk with the wisdom of the just,
 - 3) To make ready for the Lord a people prepared for Him.
- 4. Zacharias could hardly believe his ears and asked the angel, "Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man and my wife well stricken in years" (1:18).
 - a. The first thing the angel did to persuade Zacharias was to give him his credentials. "I am Gabriel, that stands in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak unto thee and to bring thee these good tidings" (1:19).
 - b. The second thing Gabriel did was to take away Zacharias' ability to speak until everything he spoke of was fulfilled concerning the birth of his son.
- 5. "And it came to pass, when the days of his ministration were fulfilled, he departed unto his home. And after these days Elizabeth his wife conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, "Thus hath the Lord done unto me in the days wherein he looked upon me, to take away my reproach among men" (1:23-25).
 - a. Childbearing is so associated with the design of a woman's body that to be barren brought a woman reproach among men.
 - b. Speaking of the role of women Paul wrote, ". . . but she shall be saved through her childbearing, if she continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety" (1 Tim 2:15).
- C. When John was born the tongue of his father was loosed, and being filled with the Holy Spirit, he prophesied.
 - 1. He spoke of the Christ who would bring salvation and mercy to the covenant people of God.
 - 2. He spoke of his own son's role in God's scheme of redemption.
 - 3. Then Luke summarizes the child's early years (1:80).

JOHN:

- A. Setting:
 - 1. Luke introduces John's work by giving us his historical setting.

- a. F. F. Bruce: "Of all the N.T. writers, he is the only one who so much as names a Roman emperor. Three emperors (Augustus, Tiberius and Claudius) are mentioned by name, the Emperor Nero is also referred to, but not by his personal name - he is the 'Caesar' to whom Paul appealed. The birth of Jesus is fixed in the reign of the Emperor Augustus, when Herod the Great was king of Judaea, and Quirinius governor of Syria. The commencement of the public ministry of John the Baptist, with which the 'Kerygma' proper begins, is elaborately dated by a series of synchronisms in the Greek historical manner, reminding the classical student of the synchronisms with which, for example, Thucydides dates the formal outbreak of the Peloponnesian War in the beginning of the second book of his *History*" (*The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*, p. 81).
 - 1) Tiberius is Caesar.
 - 2) Pontius Pilate, governor of Judaea.
 - 3) Herod, Tetrarch of Galilee.
 - 4) Philip (Herod's brother), tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis.
 - 5) Lysanius, tetrarch of Abilene.
 - 6) Anna and Caiaphas, in the high priesthood.
- b. It was in these days that "the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness" (3:2).
2. We are also told something of the geographical setting. "He came into all the region round about the Jordan" (3:3).
3. And a theological setting is also given.
 - a. We are told that he came "preaching the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins" (3:3).
 - b. Luke also announces John's work with a reference from the Old Testament saying, ". . . as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet."
 - c. Taking note of the scriptural references helps us to focus on what the divine purpose for characters or actions is.
- B. The boldness of John as a preacher is depicted for us in 3:7-14.
- C. Because the people were living in expectation of the Christ, when John came preparing the way for the Lord they wondered whether perhaps he might not be the Christ (3:15-17).

1. John denied being the Christ.
 2. In fact, he said that he was not worthy to unloose the latchet of the Christ's sandals.
 3. He exalted the Christ to come as mightier than he.
- D. John's purpose for preaching good tidings in the wilderness was:
1. To baptize people unto remission of sins (3:3),
 2. To prepare the way for the Lord and
 3. To identify the Christ.
 4. I am personally persuaded that the Gospel accounts are predominantly apologetic in nature. They are written to convince the reader of the nature and identity of Christ.
 5. We have a tremendous amount of information already given in the first three chapters of Luke:
 - a. Angelic announcements by Gabriel of the births of John and Jesus.
 - b. Angelic announcement to the shepherds in the field of Jesus' birth.
 - c. Inspired proclamation and praise from Elizabeth, Zacharias and, perhaps, Mary.
 - d. Inspired statements by Simeon and Anna, the prophetess, in the temple.
 - e. Luke's inspired proclamation that John's work as forerunner was "as it is written in the book of the word of Isaiah the prophet."
 3. As if that were not enough, we also have the amazing happenings at the baptism of Jesus.
 - a. Remember, John has already denied being the Christ and exalts that Christ as being mightier than he, so much so that he is not worthy of unloosing the latchets from his sandals.
 - b. At the baptism of Jesus three things happen (3:21,22).
 - 1) The heaven was opened,
 - 2) The Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form, as a dove and
 - 3) A voice came out of heaven saying, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."

- c. You can probably count on one hand the number of times the Bible tells us the heaven was opened.
 - 1) Stephen saw the heavens open, saw the glory of God and saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God (Acts 7:56).
 - 2) The heaven opened for Peter while he was praying on the housetop (Acts 10:11).
 - 3) John "saw the heaven opened" where he saw "a white horse and he that sat thereon called Faithful and True" (Rev 19:11).
 - 4) The heavens opened for Ezekiel while among the captives by the river of Chebar (Ezek 1:1).
 - a) Mark describes the scene at Jesus' baptism saying, "the heavens were rent asunder" (Mk 1:10).
 - 5) The Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form, as a dove.
 - a) To this day the dove is used by some religious people to represent the Holy Spirit.
 - 6) And then there is the divine attestation of the Sonship of Jesus to God by the voice from heaven "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."
- d. If an individual accepts the Bible as the word of God, what more would one need to conclude that Jesus is the Christ?
 - 1) In fact, the knowledge concerning the identity of Christ, provided so early in the book for the readers, sets up characters in the book for irony. We as readers know - before the characters in the book who encounter Jesus know - who He is before they do, which makes for interesting reading.
 - 2) I.e., when Jesus preaches in His home town of Nazareth, He is rejected as being no one other than "Joseph's son," and they attempt to bring Him to the highest cliff in town to throw Him off.
- 4. John, the apostle, in his book tells us why John, the baptizer, came baptizing.
- 5. His purpose, as forerunner, was to make ready the way of the Lord;
 - a. To fill the valleys,
 - b. To level the mountains and hills,
 - c. To straighten the crooked and

- d. To smooth the rough.
6. Jesus said of him: "Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptizer: yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Mt 11:11).

The Temptation of Jesus

Luke 4:1-12

INTRODUCTION:

- A. The Holy Spirit's role in identifying Jesus in the opening chapters of Luke is very significant.
 - 1. Not only do various characters testify by means of the Holy Spirit to His divine nature, we are also told that:
 - a. Jesus was begotten by the Holy Spirit.
 - 1) In Luke 1:32, "He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High."
 - 2) In 1:35 Mary is told, "the Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God."
 - 3) At His baptism "the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form, as a dove" (Lk 3:22).
 - a) John informs us that God gave Jesus the Spirit without measure (Jn 3:34).
 - b) In fact, it was by the Spirit that Jesus performed His wonders.
- B. After his baptism we are informed that "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led in the Spirit in the wilderness during forty days, being tempted of the devil" (Lk 4:1,2).
 - 1. Apparently He was tempted during that forty days.
 - 2. But when the forty days were completed, Jesus hungered.
 - a. Enter the devil saying, "If thou art the Son of God, command this stone that it become bread" (4:3).
 - b. Jesus answered him, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone."
 - 1) Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3 where Moses reminds the children of Israel of their forty years in the wilderness "to prove them, to know what was in (their) heart, whether (they) would keep his commandments or not" (8:2).

- 2) God permitted them to hunger so that they might know that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (8:3).
3. Then the devil led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment (Lk 4:5).
 - a. The devil said, "To thee will I give all this authority and the glory of them: for it hath been delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship before me, it shall all be thine" (4:7).
 - 1) In what sense had all the kingdoms of the earth been delivered to the devil?
 - a) Perhaps in the same sense that the young man who had his father's wife was delivered unto Satan (1 Cor 5).
 - b) Perhaps in the same sense that Hymenaeus and Alexander had been delivered to Satan for making shipwreck the faith of some (1 Tim 1:19,20).
 - c) Perhaps in the same way that the impenitent are delivered to him today.
 - 2) Jesus came to seek and to save the lost (Lk 19:10).
 - b. The devil is offering Jesus the authority and glory the devil is given by the kingdoms of the world.
 - c. Jesus said, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve" (4:8) (Deut 6:13).
 - 1) Principle Oriented Response:
 - a) Jesus was offered that for which He came - minus the cross.
 - b) But it would have involved the violation of a principle to do it.
 - c) God is the only one worthy of our worship. This would have been a case of the creator (Jesus) worshipping the created (Satan).
4. The devil then led Jesus to Jerusalem and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to Him, "If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: for it is written:
 - a. 'He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, to guard thee,' and

- b. 'On their hands they shall bear thee up, Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone'" (4:10,11) (Psa 91:11,12).
- c. Jesus responded by saying, "It is said, 'Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God'" (4:12; Deut 6:16).

OBSERVATIONS:

- A. This episode follows on the heels of Jesus' baptism where the Father said, "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased" (Lk 3:22).
 - 1. Satan is putting this claim to the test.
 - 2. Twice the devil says, "If you are the Son of God . . ." (1st and 3rd temptations).
 - a. The translators of our Bibles use the word "If" at the beginning of the sentence because they want to identify the conditional nature of the sentence. But it should be translated "*Since* thou art the Son of God . . ."
 - b. Satan knew who He was. Why would he be so ignorant of the identity of Christ when his agents, the demons, knew?
- B. Notice also that all three quotations Jesus mustered to His defense in the temptations are from Deuteronomy 6 and 8.
 - 1. All three quotations are drawn from observations Moses made concerning Israel's wilderness wanderings.
 - a. "Man shall not live by bread alone."
 - b. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve."
 - c. "Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God."
 - 2. Consider these parallels:
 - a. Jesus was in the desert forty days,
 - b. Israel was in the desert forty years,
 - c. Israel was tested and found wanting and
 - d. Jesus was tested and found faithful.
- C. Nature of the temptations:
 - 1. Each temptation, if succumbed to, would have put a bad light on the sufficiency of God to care for all of our needs.

- a. The first temptation tested Jesus' faith in God to supply Him with His needs.
- b. The second temptation tempted Jesus to bypass the cross; the problem was in the conditions.
 - 1) The devil said, "If thou wilt fall down and worship me."
 - 2) Here Jesus responded by saying, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve" (Deut 6:13).
- c. The third temptation, if succumbed to would have unnecessarily tempted the Lord God.
 - 1) The original context from which Jesus quotes to combat Satan points to the Israelite experience in the wilderness.
 - 2) Israel had tempted God by questioning His ability to supply their needs, so they called the place "Massah," which means "proof."
 - 3) Jack P. Lewis: "Jesus refused to throw himself into uncommanded danger while expecting God to deliver him even as he also later refrained from calling on angelic aid to deliver himself from the cross" (Mt 26:53 ff, *The Living Way Commentary*, p. 70).
 - 4) To have done so, would have been to test God and, as it is written, "Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God."

D. Notice also the use of Scripture by Satan.

- 1. In the first temptation the devil insisted on Jesus' performing a sign to satisfy His hunger and to demonstrate his Sonship to God.
- 2. In the second temptation the devil asked for His allegiance.
- 3. In the third temptation the devil quoted Psalm 91:11,12:
 - a. He shall give his angels charge concerning thee and
 - b. On their hands they shall bear thee up, Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.
 - c. Brethren, even the devil quoted Scripture, but he quoted it *out of its intended context*.
 - d. This is surely an accurate quotation from the Old Testament, but it does not express the actual sentiment of God.

- 1) One does not need to test the word of God to see that it is true.
- 2) What I mean by that is expressed better in Romans 10:5-10.
- 3) The desire to test God comes from an unbelieving heart. For Jesus, the Father's word did not need testing, even when challenged to do so.
- 4) Let us not let the world set our agenda for us!

E. Notice the connection between each temptation and Jesus' statement of reliance on God. With each temptation, Jesus pointed to the all-sufficiency of God to care for Him and to accomplish His will.

1. When tempted to turn the stones to bread, Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone." (Matthew adds, ". . . but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.")
2. When tempted to bow down and worship and serve Satan, Jesus again pointed to God as the only one worthy of our worship.
3. And when tempted to cast Himself off the pinnacle, Jesus said to do so would be to unnecessarily tempt God's promises.
4. All sin is against God. It is a violation of the will of God.
 - a. We would all do well to see how giving in to temptation would adversely affect our relationship with God and what it would imply.
 - b. We imply:
 - 1) God is not sufficient to meet my needs (even though He said He would care for us if we sought His kingdom and righteousness first) and
 - 2) That God does not know what is best for us.
 - c. Each temptation adversely implies something concerning our attitude toward God or our faith in Him.

F. It was noted by one author that there are three kinds of tempting:

1. Satan tempts people, i.e., lures them to do evil.
2. People may tempt (test) God in the sense of provoking Him through unreasonable demands contrary to faith. This is what Israel did in the desert and what is probably referred to in Jesus' quotation of Deuteronomy 6:16.
3. God tests (but does not tempt) His people, as He did in the desert (Deut 8:2) .

“All three kinds of testing are involved in the parallels between the desert experiences of Israel and Jesus” (Walter Liefeld, p. 863, *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol 8, Luke).

G. Concluding remarks:

1. The writers of Hebrews encourages us with these words: “Having then a great high priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help us in time of need” (Heb 4:14-16).
2. Peter wrote, “For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously” (1 Pet 2:21-23).

H. Let us honor God by trusting Him in every area of life.

Rejected in Nazareth

Luke 4:16-30

INTRODUCTION:

- A. “No prophet is acceptable in his own country” (Lk 4:24). “A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country and among his own kin and in his own house” (Mk 6:4).
 - 1. Some of you may be familiar with this sentiment, even if you are not that familiar with the Bible.
 - 2. But it is a statement found in our text - in fact, at the very heart of our text.
- B. Background:
 - 1. In the opening chapters of Luke, the reader is filled with a joyous note of expectation and hope, anticipation and salvation.
 - a. Angelic birth announcement.
 - b. John preparing the way.
 - 2. In the scene preceding our text (4:16-44) the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.
 - a. In all three phases Jesus appealed to God’s sufficiency.
 - 1) “Man shall not live by bread alone.”
 - 2) “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve.”
 - 3) “Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God.”
 - 3. In this lesson, Luke adds an additional preview to Israel’s tragic rejection of Christ.
 - a. Remember Simeon’s statement concerning Christ: “Behold, this child is set for the falling and the rising of many in Israel” (2:34).
 - b. In 4:16-30, He is rejected by His own home town of Nazareth.

WITHOUT HONOR:

- A. Immediately after the temptation account, Luke inform us that Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee and taught in their synagogues, “. . . being glorified of all.”
 - 1. When he came to Nazareth, His home town in Galilee, He entered the synagogue on the sabbath day as was His custom and stood up to read.

2. He read from Isaiah.
 - a. He closed the book, gave it to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on Him.
 - 1) Note first of all that being seated was the posture taken when teaching.
 - a) In the sermon on the mount, Matthew tells us that Jesus “went up into the mountain and when he had sat down his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth and taught them” (Mt 5:1,2).
 - b) Before delivering His parables we are told that “he entered into a boat and sat” (Mt 13:2).
 - c) Also see Mt 15:29; 24:3; 26:55.
 - d) Barclay, *The Beatitudes*, “Often a Jewish Rabbi would talk to his disciples when he was walking along the road with them. . . , but when he was teaching, as we might put it, officially, he always sat to do so. This was the Jewish attitude of official teaching” (p. 11).
 - 2) “And the eyes of all were fastened on him.”
3. Jesus said, “Today hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears.”
 - a. By saying this Jesus was implying that He had been anointed by the Lord:
 - 1) To preach good tidings to the poor,
 - 2) To proclaim release to the captive,
 - 3) To recover the sight of the blind,
 - 4) To set at liberty them that are bruised and
 - 5) To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.
 - b. They viewed His message as “words of grace” (4:22) and wondered at it and then said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?”
 - 1) This would be the equivalent of scratching your head in unbelief.
4. He then said, “Doubtless ye will say unto me this parable, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done at Capernaum, do also now in thine own country” (4:23).
 - a. This probably reflects Jesus’ knowledge of their heart.

- b. Let us think about the proverb he mentions: "Physician, heal thyself."
 - 1) It could mean, if a physician is a genuine physician, let him prove it by healing himself.
 - 2) Jamison-Fawcett-Brown: "not unlike our proverb, 'charity begins at home;'" (p. 238, Vol 3).
 - 3) The point being, the proof is in the pudding - put up or shut up.
 - c. He anticipated their challenges for Him to do the miracles He was known for in Capernaum.
 - 5. He then said, "Verily I say unto you, No prophet is acceptable in his own country" (4:24).
 - a. This does not carry over in our English translations well, but His words in the original are very emphatic.
 - b. In the Greek, AMEN LEGO HUMIN expresses the authority with which Jesus spoke.
 - c. And what He says is the main point of the text - "No prophet is acceptable in his own country."
- B. From here Jesus proceeds with words of judgment.
 - 1. The theme is still that of a prophet being without honor save in his own country.
 - 2. And to drive His point home, He draws from two highly respected prophets of Israel's past - Elijah and Elisha.
 - a. Elijah - 4:25,26.
 - 1) Jamison, Fawcett, Brown states the case well: "Passing by all the famishing widows in Israel, the prophet was sent to one who was not an Israelite at all" (p. 239, Vol III).
 - 2) Elisha - 4:27.
 - a) Both prophets passed by those who may have thought to have claim on them and expended their efforts on those at a distance - on heathens (Jamison, Fawcett, Brown).
- C. REACTION? "And they were all filled with wrath in the synagogues, as they heard these things; and they rose up and cast him forth out of the city and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong" (4:28,29).

1. "Behold, this child is set for the falling and rising of many in Israel" (2:34).
 2. Luke begins with a note of great expectation and joy.
 3. He records the wonderful birth of Christ and angelic announcements of it.
 4. He speaks of John who came to prepare the way and
 5. Of Jesus' temptations in the wilderness. He was tried and found faithful.
 6. But when He came to His brethren anointed by God to preach the good messages, they sought to murder Him.
- D. In contrast with this episode in Nazareth, are three additional snapshots in the rest of the chapter.
1. 4:31-37.
 - a. In Capernaum, the people "were astonished at His teachings" for his word was with authority."
 - b. And while in the synagogue on the sabbath day He healed a man with an unclean spirit.
 - c. Even the unclean spirit acknowledged who He was: "Ah! what have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Nazarene? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God."
 - 1) Isn't that amazing! Take note of what the demon affirmed.
 - a) It affirmed that He was from Nazareth.
 - b) It affirmed that He was the Holy One of God.
 - 2) Unclean spirit acknowledged what His own home town would not!
 2. 4:38,39.
 - a. He rebukes a great fever in the healing Peter's wife's mother.
 3. 4:40,41.
 4. Summarily we are told: "And he was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee" (4:44).

OBSERVATIONS:

- A. Who was it Jesus' own home town did not receive?
1. Luke has already informed the reader:

- a. "The son of the Most High" (1:32) - Gabriel.
 - b. "Christ the Lord" (2:11) - angelic birth announcement.
 - c. "The Son of God" (4:3,9) - Satan.
- 2. And, in Capernaum, the unclean spirit referred to Him as "the Holy One of God" (4:34).
- B. Why did they reject Him?
 - 1. In a word, "unbelief!" He was Joseph's son (4:22).
 - 2. And He indicted them with the implication that they were like Israel in the days of Elijah and Elisha and that He would pass them by for the Gentiles.
- C. Why did Jesus perform signs for others, but refuse to prove Himself in Nazareth?
 - 1. I see a very important point here.
 - a. While in the synagogue in Nazareth, His hometown brethren, folded their arms (so to speak), sat back in unbelief and said, "Prove it!"
 - b. Notice what is recorded in contrast with this in the following brief cameos:
 - 1) A demon possessed man was in the synagogue in Capernaum and began questioning Jesus, "Ah, what have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Nazarene."
 - a) Here was a man in need - possessed by a demon.
 - b) Jesus set him free.
 - 2) Simon brought Jesus to his mother-in-law.
 - a) Again, a legitimate need and Jesus' help is solicited, in faith.
 - 3) And when the sun was going down "all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him: and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them."
 - 2. In Nazareth, no need presented itself, much less in faith. They simply wanted Jesus to prove Himself.
 - a. Does this sound familiar? "If thou art the Son of God, command this stone that it become bread" (4:3).
 - 1) Unbelieving Nazareth wants proof.

- 2) Others wanted help and the help He provided produced proof.
- b. In a similar vein, Nazareth was saying, "If thou art anointed by God, do what you did in Capernaum."
 - c. Jesus compared them with the Israelites in the days of Elijah and Elisha.
- D. These characters are intended for us to examine ourselves to see what we have done concerning Jesus - to see what decision we have made concerning His identity. What have you decided?

His Work in Galilee

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Luke's account of the Gospel can be broken down in a number of ways. All you need to do is consult the various commentaries, dictionaries and encyclopedias to see this.
1. One simple way to break the book down into manageable sections is by geography.
 - a. 1-2 Introduction.
 - b. 3-4:13 Baptism and Temptation.
 - c. 4:14-9:50 Ministry in Galilee.
 - d. 9:51-19:28 Ministry in Perea.
 - e. 19:28-22:38 Ministry in Judea.
 - f. 22:39-24:53 Arrest, Trials, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension.
 2. Our study has brought us to His ministry in Galilee (4:14-9:50).
 - a. It is filled with evidence of Jesus' power and authority over every aspect of life. It shows us His power:
 - 1) Over nature (calming the storm),
 - 2) Over disease (cleansing lepers, healing the sick),
 - 3) Over death (raising the dead son of the widow of Nain and Jairus' daughter),
 - 4) Over the spirit realm (casting out demons),
 - 5) Over the natural world (feeding 5,000) and
 - 6) Over sin (forgiving sins).
 - b. Such a display of power is never met with mere complacency. It arouses intense feelings one way or the other. To the power and authority displayed in these six chapters, we see a variety of responses.
 - 1) The more usual response is fear.
 - a) When Peter put out to sea and dropped his nets at the Lord's command, we are told that Peter fell down

at Jesus' knees saying, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (5:8).

- (1) Luke tells us that Peter was amazed at the draught of fishes which they had taken.
 - (2) You see, he and the others had tried all night and took nothing.
 - (3) Jesus told him, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men" (lit. "take alive men").
 - b) When He healed the palsied man and forgave him of his sins, Luke tells us that "amazement took hold on all and they glorified God: and they were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things today" (5:26).
 - c) When Jesus raised from the dead the only son of a widow, ". . . fear took hold on all: and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet is among us: and God hath visited his people" (7:16).
 - d) There was a man in the country of the Gerasenes who had demons who called themselves "Legion."
 - (1) The people tried to keep him bound in fetters and chains, but he would break them in two.
 - (2) Jesus delivered the man from his tormentors and "all the people of the country of the Gerasenes round about asked him to depart from them; for they were holden with great fear" (8:37).
- 2) However, His power and authority also stirred up the anger of the Scribes and Pharisees. (This is only the beginning of this agitation.)
- a) When He healed the man with a withered hand on the sabbath, ". . . they were filled with madness and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus" (6:11).
 - b) When Jesus forgave the palsied man of his sin, they accused Jesus of blasphemy (5:21).
 - c) They questioned His judgment in eating with publicans and sinners (5:30).
 - d) They wanted to know why His disciples did not fast often like John's and the Pharisees' disciples (5:33).

- e) They questioned Him concerning His disciples plucking grain and eating it on the sabbath (6:2).
 - f) When the character of John was extolled by our Lord, Luke tells us that “the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him” (7:30). This was said in contrast with those who were glorifying God and being baptized of John’s baptism (7:29).
 - c. Sprinkled here and there are hints of Jesus’ fate in Jerusalem at the hands of lawless men.
 - 1) When Mary and Joseph brought the infant Jesus to the temple Simeon told Mary, “Behold, this child is set for the falling and the rising of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against you and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul” (2:34,35).
 - 2) Having preached the good news of the kingdom of Galilee, He begins telling His disciples what He must do.
 - a) After hearing Peter’s confession concerning His identity, He commands them to tell no one saying, “The Son of man must suffer many things and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and the third day be raised up” (9:22).
 - b) After delivering the young boy from his oppression by demons and while his disciples were still marveling at what He had done, Jesus said, “Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of man shall be delivered up into the hands of men” (9:44).
 - c) Luke tells us at the transition from Galilee to Perea, “And it came to pass, when the days were well-nigh come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem” (9:51).
 - 3) The entire narrative is rushing the reader toward the focal point of the Book - Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection.
 - a) Remember that 25% of Luke’s book focuses on this and surrounding events.
- B. In an earlier lesson, I suggested to you that the combination of both books by Luke (Luke and Acts) make up a tragic story of the nation of Israel - tragic because of its rejection of Jesus as the Christ.
 - 1. Because of Israel’s rejection of Christ, the Gospel is preached to the Gentiles.

- a. An example of this is found in Acts 13:46.
 - b. Paul even argues that the fall of Israel became the world's riches in that the was first presented to the Jews, then the Gentiles (Rom 11).
- 2. We saw a hint of this in Jesus' judgment against those in His own home town of Nazareth.
 - a. Because He was not greeted with honour from them, He spoke of Elijah and Elisha.
 - b. Both prophets passed by their Israelite brethren to benefit foreigners.
 - 1) There were many famishing widows in Elijah's day, but his help went to the widow of Zarephath.
 - 2) There were many lepers among the Israelites in the days of Elisha, but only a Syrian leper - Naaman - was cleansed.
 - c. And at this message His brethren, rather than repent, were enraged and sought to cast Him headlong off the brow of the hill on which the city had been built.
- 3. In the section of scripture under discussion (4:14-9:50) there is another sampling of Jesus' contact with the Gentiles.
 - a. A centurion was a Roman army official in charge of one hundred men. (Cornelius, Acts 10, was a centurion).
 - 1) The nameless centurion of Luke 7 sent the elders of the Jews to Jesus petitioning Him on behalf of a servant of his who was dear to him.
 - 2) The elders of the Jews urged Jesus to come because the centurion loved the Jewish nation. He had even built a synagogue for them.
 - b. Jesus went with them. "And when He was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof" (7:6).
 - 1) Notice the humility of this man!
 - 2) About twenty-five verses later we would read of a Pharisee named Simon who probably thought he was doing Jesus a favor by asking him to eat with him (7:36-50).

- 3) Simon is shown for the real man he was when contrasted with the humility of the sinful woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears and anointed them with oil.
- c. To the multitudes of Jews that followed Him, Jesus said of this Roman centurion, "I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel" (7:9).
- 1) Though it is not necessary to get Luke's point across, Matthew adds these words, "And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven: but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth unto outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth" (Mt 8:11,12).
 - 2) Lack of faith that characterized Israel is what provoked them to crucify our Lord and, as a nation, to reject Him to their own demise.

C. The characteristics of a tragedy:

1. Characteristics:

- a. Dilemma (a situation demanding or eliciting a choice).
- b. Choice (caught in a difficult position, the hero makes a choice).
- c. Catastrophe (the choice places the hero and his world into . . .).
- d. Suffering (catastrophe acquired by suffering).
- e. Perception (comes near the end).
- f. Death .
- g. Ryken: "The one common denominator in all tragedies is the downward movement of the plot from positive experiences to catastrophe" (p. 145, *Delight*).
- h. This accurately describes the history of the nation of Israel in its rejection of Jesus Christ.
 - 1) The situation Israel found itself in was determining what they were going to do with Jesus, Joseph's son.
 - 2) In the opening chapters of Luke, as in the other three accounts, we see evidence of rejection.
 - 3) Their rejection of Christ is highlighted by the faith of such characters as the centurion.

D. How will your life be characterized?

The Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-37

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In our last lesson, we surveyed one of the major sections of Luke and titled it, "Jesus Ministry in Galilee." It was predominantly characterized by the many signs and wonders recorded there.
- B. The next major section has been called "His Ministry in Perea" (9:51-19:28).
 - 1. This section is characterized predominantly by the amount of teaching recorded.
 - a. It is devoted to recording some of His dissertations and
 - b. According to my count, there are thirteen parables scattered throughout.
 - 1) Some are clustered together (i.e., Lk 15).
 - 2) Some writers include others sayings as parables that I have not included in this count.
 - 3) I have primarily restricted my numbering to the parables of the short story type.
 - 2. If you were to compare this section of Luke with the preceding section in a "red letter edition," you would find more wording in red in this section.
- C. Luke's record of Jesus' ministry in Perea begins with these words: "And it came to pass, when the days were well-nigh come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem" (9:51).
 - 1. Having done so, Jesus sent messengers ahead to a village of the Samaritans to get things ready for Him, but the people there did not welcome Him because He was headed for Jerusalem.
 - 2. James and John knew what to do: "Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" (9:54).
 - a. ASV footnote adds: "even as Elijah did." (Many ancient authorities add this.)
 - b. Twice in 2 Kings 1:9-16 Elijah called on God to destroy his adversaries with fire from heaven and fire did come down, consuming fifty men each time.
 - 3. But Jesus rebuked them.

- D. We are making our way to Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan, but before we do, I think it is important for us to understand the relationship the Jews had with the Samaritans.
1. That relationship is hinted at in Luke 9:51-56.
 - a. When they made no preparation to welcome Him, James and John wanted to call fire down from heaven to consume them.
 - b. When Elijah did this, he feared for his life.
 - c. In contrast, the Samaritans simply did not welcome Him, which was impolite, but inhospitality was not punishable by death.
 - d. What ever happened to the "eye-for-an-eye" principle?
 2. Why were James and John so quick to wish for their destruction?
- E. Samaria was not a likely place to find a Jew.
1. There was a centuries old feud/rivalry between the Jews and the Samaritans that is identified in John 4:9: "For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans."
 2. A brief, but excellent, survey of the beginnings of that feud can be studied in 2 Kings 17.
 - a. Once Israel (the ten northern tribes) had been stripped off the promised land by Shalmanezar, king of Assyria, he replaced them with people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim.
 - 1) These foreigners were settled in the towns of Samaria in Israel's stead and
 - 2) These foreigners practiced all kinds of religious rites that were an abomination to the Lord, i.e., idolatry including sacrificing their children to their own gods.
 - b. However, lions came into Samaria killing many, which led them to believe the god of that land was upset with them.
 - 1) Because of this, Shalmanezar sent one of the Israelite priests back to instruct the people concerning God and they began worshiping Jehovah along with their own god.
 - 2) They persisted in their former practices (2 Kings 17:40) and their children and grandchildren did the same.
 - c. Much later in history we are told there was a reformation that took place - perhaps around the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.
 - 1) But even with reformation, it left them at odds with the Jews.

- 2) Everett Ferguson, in his book *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, lists characteristic beliefs the Samaritans held in common with the Jews.
 - a) An uncompromising belief in and worship of the one God.
 - b) Avoidance of idols.
 - c) Loyalty to the law given by Moses (Gen-Deut).
 - (1) Rigid observance of the Sabbath.
 - (2) Circumcision.
 - (3) Festivals.
 - d) A sense of being the chosen people with attachment to the land given to their fathers.
 - e) Expectations of a glorious destiny.
- 3) There were also some differences:
 - a) They preserved their own version of the Pentateuch.
 - b) They accepted only Genesis through Deuteronomy (a view shared by the Sadducees).
 - c) They rejected the idea of resurrection.
- 4) But . . . “the most obvious point of difference between the Samaritans and the Jews and one that went right to the heart of religious unity, was the adherence to a rival sanctuary on Mt. Gerizim” (Ferguson, P. 424).

THE GOOD SAMARITAN:

- A. Consider, first of all, the character of the lawyer in this account.
 1. Luke tells us that the question the lawyer asked was intended to make trial of Jesus: “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (10:25).
 - a. Jesus asked him, “What is written in the law? how readest thou?”
 - b. The lawyer said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.”
 - c. Jesus commended him for giving the right answer, but said, “This do and thou shalt live” (10:28).

2. But then Luke tells us this about the lawyer: "But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, and who is my neighbor?" (10:29).
 - a. On occasions like this one, people only try to justify themselves for falling short of the law's demands.
 - b. The lawyer sought to excuse himself for not complying with the law by putting the obligation to define "neighbor" on Jesus.
 - c. Remember who was asking the question - a lawyer, an expert on the law.
 - 1) The law contained plenty of teaching on caring for strangers.
 - a) Deut 10:16-19.
 - b) Lev 19:33,34: "And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not do him wrong. The stranger that sojourneth with you shall be unto you as the home-born among you and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt: I am Jehovah your God."
 - 2) One commentator argues that "the Jews interpreted the neighbor idea very narrowly and technically, as excluding Samaritans and Gentiles" (Jamison, Fawcett, Brown quotes Alford).

B. It is at this point Jesus indicts the lawyer by telling him this story.

1. We are introduced to a certain man with no reference to his nationality or identify except to say that he fell among robbers who stripped him, beat him and left him half dead.
2. The other three characters represent various responses to the unfortunate man.
 - a. The first character is a priest. When he sees the roadside victim, he passes by on the other side.
 - b. The second character is a Levite. When he saw the roadside victim, he passes by the other side.
 - c. When the Samaritan sees him, he:
 - 1) Is moved with compassion,
 - 2) Binds the man's wounds, pouring oil and wine on them,
 - 3) Sets him on his own beast,
 - 4) Brings him to an inn and takes care of him.

- 5) He even makes arrangements for the inn to care for him (because he must leave) and makes arrangement to pay for their service.
3. The priest and Levite represent the religious elite in Israel.
 - a. Why did they pass by the man in need?
 - b. We are left only to speculate, but they probably represent the lawyer and those like him who endeavor to justify themselves for not loving their neighbor as themselves.
 4. Jesus asked the lawyer, "Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?"
 - a. The lawyer was right: "He that showed mercy to him."
 - b. The lawyer did not say, "The Samaritan," but, "He that showed mercy to him."
 - c. This may be a further reflection of the Jews' hatred for the Samaritans.
- C. Why did Jesus select a Samaritan to be the hero of the story?
1. The question the parable asks is, "Who is my neighbor?"
 2. "Jesus turns the entire situation around by shifting the focus from defining who the lawyer's neighbor is to the more personal question of how to be a neighbor" (Ryken, p. 71, *Words of Life*).
 3. By making the Samaritan the hero of the story, Jesus subtly attacks the religious elite of Jesus' day - the Levites, the priests and the lawyer by implication, again adding to the tragic nature of Luke and Acts.

The Pharisees

Luke 11:33-36

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Jesus had some profound things to say in His ministry (this is an understatement). Let us notice one in particular.
- B. In Luke 11:33-36 he spoke of a man's life and his receptivity to spiritual truth under the metaphor of the eye and light.
 - 1. With reference to a man's eye, He said that if there is something wrong with it, no matter how much light surrounds him, he will not see it.
 - a. When the eye is single, the whole body is full of light (the lamp of the body is the eye).
 - b. When the eye is evil, the body is full of darkness.
 - 2. *New International Critical Commentary*: "When the eye is sound and right and light is shining, the eye enables you to make full use of the light - you can see where you are, how to walk and how to make full use of the light. But when there is something wrong with your eye you cannot make use of the light even when you are irradiated by the brightest light" (p. 337,338).
 - 3. 11:36 "If therefore thy whole body be full of light, having no part dark, it shall be wholly full of light, as when the lamp with its bright shining doth give the light."
- C. He introduced this metaphor by saying, "No man, when he hath lighted a lamp, putteth it in a cellar, neither under the bushel, but on the stand, that they which enter may see the light" (11:33).
 - 1. What did Jesus mean to say by this?
 - 2. What He meant is made clear by the context. He is saying that His identity has been clearly manifested by the works He has done before them all and by the words He spoke.
 - a. He is the light of the world and no man, lighting a lamp, puts it under a basket or hides it.
 - b. He spoke these words to the Pharisees as part of His rebuke against their unbelief. They sought signs from Him and He told them no sign would be given them but the sign of Jonah (11:29).
- D. Now let us tie all of this together:
 - 1. The Pharisees sought signs from Jesus.

2. Jesus rebukes them for seeking a sign from Him when all that He had done thus far provided them ample evidence to draw the right conclusion about Him.
3. His rebuke included a metaphorical explanation addressing the issue of why they failed to see the truth.
 - a. Their eye was evil, thus their whole body was full of darkness.
 - b. The eye here represents the spiritual focus of a person. Their intellect, will and emotions were not receptive.
 - c. This is indicative of an evil heart.
 - 1) (*New International Critical Commentary*, p. 337): "Through the similes of candles and light which the Savior used on several occasions in His preaching He here teaches that the fundamental reason why the Jews demand a sign is that their spiritual vision is so obscured through their unbelief and obduracy that they do not see the clear, bright light shed abroad by Him in and through His self-revelation."
 - d. A passage by Paul in 2 Corinthians sums it up well: "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that perish: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the mind of the unbelieving, that the light of the of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them" (4:3,4).

E. Let us fill in the setting more:

SETTING:

- A. Preceding His rebuke against the Pharisees, Jesus had just cast out a demon (11:14-26).
 1. The scribes and Pharisees insultingly accused Him of having done such by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of the demons. Others insisted on further signs from Him.
 2. If you will remember, one of the signs that the kingdom was at hand was that the Messiah would proclaim release to the captors and set at liberty them that were bruised (Lk 4:18,19).
 - a. And remember this, when John sent messengers to Jesus for assurance that He was the Christ, Jesus told John's messengers, "Go and tell John the things which ye have seen and heard" (7:22).
 - b. What had they seen? "In that hour he cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits; and on many that were blind he bestowed sight" (7:21).
 3. Jesus tried reasoning with them:

- a. Look at 12:10, which reflects back on the Pharisees and scribes in their judgment concerning Jesus: “and everyone who shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven.”
 - b. Matthew adds “neither in this world, nor in that which is to come.”
- B. In addressing their evil request for a sign, Jesus said no sign shall be given but the sign of Jonah (11:29) which is an allusion to His resurrection.
 - 1. Jesus indicted them even further when He contrasted their unbelief with the belief that characterized the Ninevites in the days of Jonah and the queen of the south (the queen of Sheba).
 - 2. The sting in this reference is three-fold:
 - a. First, the Ninevites and the queen of Sheba believed *what they heard* from the mouth of Jehovah’s prophets - and without signs.
 - 1) The Ninevites repented of their wickedness *at the preaching* of Jonah.
 - 2) The queen of Sheba was persuaded of the divine nature of Solomon by simply testing him with the questions of her heart.
 - b. Second, the Ninevites and the queen of the south were not Jews - which fits in with other contrasts Jesus makes between believing Gentiles and unbelieving Jews.
 - c. Third, a greater than Jonah and a greater than Solomon was present - the Son of God.
 - 3. Why did the scribes (lawyers) and Pharisees not draw the correct conclusions concerning Jesus? Why did they demand additional signs from Him? Because their eye was evil, thus their whole body was full of darkness.
- C. Luke 11:37-52 provides an enlightening character sketch of two of Jesus’ leading antagonists - the scribes (lawyers and Pharisees).
 - 1. Immediately following his rebuke, a Pharisee invites Jesus to eat with him. In fact, “as he spoke, a Pharisee asketh him to dine with him” (11:37).
 - 2. Jesus accepted his invitation and sat down to eat.
 - 3. The Pharisee marveled that Jesus did not first bathe Himself.
 - 4. And again, Jesus alludes to the essential importance of the inner man.
 - 5. Then Jesus pronounces three woes against the Pharisees’ mind set and three woes against the scribes (lawyers).

6. The response? 11:53,54.
7. Luke concludes this portion of Jesus warfare with the Pharisees and lawyers by warning His disciples to "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" (12:1).
 - a. Hypocrisy is one way of trying to hide one's true self.
 - b. Jesus said, "But there is nothing covered up, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known" (12:2).
 - c. He warns them not to be afraid of these religious hypocrites - those who can kill the body, but rather to fear God - the one who can kill and has the power to cast into hell (12:5).

APPLICATION:

- A. Why is it that some today fail to see the spiritual truths and realities that shine so brightly around them?
 1. I suggest to you that it is due to the existence of spiritual darkness.
 2. It is not the fault of the light of the or because they lack access to the right information.
 3. The problem is within:
 - a. Unbelief,
 - b. Worldly-mindedness,
 - c. Immorality,
 - d. Etc.
 4. "What a tragedy that so many are struggling in darkness while the Gospel light is there all the time to make everything in their life bright and beautiful! As soon as man opens his life to Christ in faith His glorious light streams in" (*New International Critical Commentary*, p. 339).

Where Are Your Treasures?

Luke 12:13-21

INTRODUCTION:

- A. This study in Luke is still in the fourth main section of the book - which focuses on Jesus' ministry in Perea. His face is set to go to Jerusalem (9:51) but He has not yet arrived.
- B. In the last lesson the focus was on the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees (11:33-36).
 - 1. Jesus had just cast out a demon and was asked by the lawyers and Pharisees present to perform another sign.
 - 2. He then contrasts them with Nineveh and the queen of the south (11:29-32) and pronounces three woes against the Pharisees and three woes against the lawyers.
 - 3. He then addressed His disciples, warning them of the leaven of the Pharisees "which is hypocrisy" (12:1) and exhorts them not to be afraid of them.
- C. In the midst of this profound discussion, someone from the multitudes interrupts with this mundane request: "Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me" (12:13).
 - 1. I say "mundane" because this stranger from the crowd was wanting to waste Jesus' time as an arbiter in some worldly affair.
 - 2. But Jesus turns the situation into an occasion to address the real spiritual issue at hand - covetousness.

THE RICH FOOL:

- A. Jesus responded to the intruder by saying, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" (12:14).
 - 1. He then said to them all: "Take heed and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (12:15).
 - 2. He then tells them what has been called the parable of the rich fool.
- B. It is the story of a certain rich man whose crop produced more than he could store.
 - 1. He asked himself the question, "What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruit?" (12:17).
 - 2. He decides to tear down his barns and to build bigger ones.
 - a. Notice the emphasis on this man's possessions in vvs. 17,18.

- 1) My fruit,
- 2) My barns,
- 3) My grain,
- 4) My goods and
- 5) My soul.

b. With all these possessions he concluded: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry."

C. But the man in Jesus' parable had greater concerns to consider than what he was going to do with his excess produce. God said to him, "Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?" (12:20).

1. In his material pursuits, this man left completely unaddressed the spiritual concerns of life and
2. The Lord came requiring his soul. But he was unprepared.
3. Jesus then said, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God" (12:21).
 - a. This man's treasures are all here on earth. He made no deposits for eternity.
 - b. Also notice whom his treasures were for: "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself."
4. Jesus said a lot in this short story concerning the man vexed over his father's inheritance being divided with him.

BE NOT ANXIOUS (12:22-34):

A. Jesus used this occasion to teach his disciples an important lesson: "Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. For the life is more than the food and the body than the raiment" (12:22,23).

1. He then asks them to consider:
 - a. The ravens (12:24-26).
 - 1) The ravens build no barns (storehouses) like the man in Jesus' parable.
 - 2) He had not only *a* barn, but *barns* he tore down to build bigger ones!

- 3) Jesus' exhortation is "be not anxious" concerning the necessities of life. God will provide.
 - 4) He cares for the birds of the heavens. You are of greater value than the birds. So why be anxious?
 - 5) Anxiety is the fear of future loss.
 - 6) Jesus tells his disciples not to fear being cared for on the most basic of human physical needs.
 - 7) Freedom from this kind of anxiety frees the soul to address the more important spiritual matters of life.
 - 8) Bondage to this kind of anxiety paralyzes us from addressing the more important spiritual matters of life.
 - 9) This is all further reflection on the anxious spirit of the man who asked Jesus to bid his brother divide the inheritance with him (12:13).
- b. The lilies (12:27,28).
2. In both cases, Jesus argues from the lesser to the greater.
- a. God cares for the ravens, but He cares for you more.
 - b. God clothes the lilies of the field with splendor that rivals Solomon, but He cares for you more than the lilies of the field.
 - c. Jesus said that being anxious concerning the necessities of life is a faith issue. In fact, He addressed them saying, "O ye of little faith."
3. 12:29-34.
- a. Hence, Jesus identifies what our priorities should be: "Seek ye his kingdom and these things shall be added unto you" (12:31).
 - b. Is it possible for this to apply even to our livelihoods?
 - c. Can a person become so anxious about the material things in life that he allows the more important things in life to suffer?
 - d. I am not saying that work is not important, but there are more important things - like seeking the kingdom of God.
 - e. This is an issue of priorities.
- B. Notice the connection between the parable in 12:13-21 with Jesus dissertation on anxiety (12:22-34).

1. At the close of Jesus admonition not to be anxious, He informs His disciples that the treasures in heaven do not fail.
 - a. They cannot be stolen by thieves and
 - b. They cannot corrode due to rust or be eaten by moths.
 2. He then said, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
 3. He concluded the parable of the rich fool by saying, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God" (12:21).
- C. He concludes His discourse on anxiety and true riches by identifying the blessed servant of the Lord as the one who shall be found watching when the Lord comes.
1. 12:35-40.

RELATED PASSAGES:

- A. A related passage to Jesus' parable of the rich fool and admonition not to be anxious is found in the sermon on the mount (Mt 6:19-34).
1. In speaking of treasure Jesus reduced man's choices of treasures to two - God or mammon.
 - a. "To treasure mammon is to value earthly matters above heavenly matters (i.e., money, houses, land, et al., above God).
 - b. "To treasure God is to value heavenly matters above earthly ones (God above money, houses, land, et al)." (S.S.L. *Sermon on the Mount*, p. 180, Warren)
 2. Jesus does not mean to say that you cannot work for houses, food, etc.
 - a. It is an issue of priorities.
 - b. When someone serves these things and makes them their ultimate goal in life, they have idolized those things.
 - c. When those things are viewed as instruments by which God can be served, they are kept in their proper perspective.
 - d. Consider again the man in Jesus' parable (the rich fool of 12:13-21).
 - 1) All he spoke of was:
 - a) My fruit,
 - b) My barns,
 - c) My grain,

- d) My goods and
 - e) My soul.
- 2) He is characterized in Jesus' parable as "he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God" (12:21).
- 3) His treasure was here on earth, as is expressed in the statement: "Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years: take thine ease eat, drink, be merry."
- 3. Jesus' statement in Matthew 6 fits in well here: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
 - a. Why? "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

- A. The question this text has left for succeeding generations is this: "Where is your treasure?"
 - 1. To ask this question is to focus your attention on where your affections and priorities are.
 - 2. No more important question could be asked!
- B. To set our affections on mammon is to set our affections on what is tentative, uncertain and transient, passing away.
 - 1. Thieves break through and steal,
 - 2. Rust corrodes and
 - 3. Moths eat.
 - 4. Paul wrote Timothy: "Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not highminded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed" (1 Tim 6:17-19).
- C. Here is the advice God has given us:
 - 1. Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness.
 - 2. Do not be anxious concerning the necessities of life. God will provide.
 - 3. Be content with those necessities.

Be Ready

Luke 12:35-40

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In the previous lesson we studied the case of a man who spoke out of the multitude calling on Jesus to serve as arbiter concerning an inheritance his brother had apparently hoarded for himself.
 - 1. Jesus uses this occasion to warn men to keep themselves from covetousness.
 - 2. He then told the parable referred to as "The Rich Fool."
 - 3. He warned His disciples to not be anxious.
 - a. He ended the parable by saying, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God" (12:21).
 - b. He concluded His admonition not to be anxious by saying, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (12:34).
 - 4. But that was not the end of His discourse on that occasion.
- B. The initial setting extends back to the beginning of chapter 11.
 - 1. Jesus had just cast out a demon and the unbelieving Pharisees and lawyers sought from Him *another* sign - as if that would have done anything to convince them otherwise.
 - 2. After rebuking the Pharisees for having an evil eye that blinded them to the message Jesus' wonders should have communicated to them, He pronounced three woes against the Pharisees and three against the lawyers.
 - 3. While warning His disciples of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, someone from the crowd called on Him to bid his brother to divide the inheritance with him.
 - 4. This is where Jesus tells the parable of the man whose land brought forth so plentifully that he had to tear down his barn and build bigger barns.
 - a. The character in Jesus' parable had his focus strictly on the "here and now" as is evidenced in his statement: "Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry" (12:19).
 - b. It is further evidenced by the fact that when God appears in the story requiring the farmer's soul, he is not prepared.
 - c. Jesus said, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God" (12:21).

- C. To elaborate on the lack of readiness pictured in the parable Jesus identifies who the blessed servant is.

1. This is the focus of this lesson.

THE BLESSED SERVANT:

- A. Luke 12:35-40.

1. His message, in essence, is, "Be ready!" like the servants who await the return of their lord.
2. Those who live in anticipation of the Lord's return are heavenly-minded. Their watching and readiness is evidence that their treasure is in heaven.
3. After all, who would have any motivation to watch or stand ready if there was nothing they hoped for in the Lord's return?

- B. The exhortation is this: "Let your loins be girded about and your lamps burning" (12:35).

1. Loins are girded so that men can run to meet the Lord without their garments getting in the way.
2. Lamps are burning so they can light the path and the house to greet the Lord.
3. The blessed servants are ready whether it be the first, second or third watch.
 - a. In other words, they do not know when their lord is coming, but they are prepared no matter when he comes.
 - b. They will not be caught off-guard as in the case when a thief breaks in and steals.

- C. Peter wanted to know if these exhortations of Jesus were for His disciples or for all men.

1. I can see why Peter would ask such a question.
 - a. In the first place, those whom the Lord finds watching will sit down and be served by the lord of the house.
 - b. The picture of a thief breaking in at some unexpected time gives the idea of something being stolen. Someone is going to experience loss at the coming of the thief.
2. Jesus responded by saying that the servant who is found watching and ready will be set over all that the lord of the house has.
3. But notice what will happen to the unprepared servant - 12:45-48.

- a. Consider the following:
 - 1) When men fail to live with the reality that the Lord could come at any time, they become slothful and, sometimes, mean. Notice how Jesus characterizes the man who says in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming." ("While the cat's away the mice will play.")
 - a) He beats the servants and
 - b) Eats and drinks and is drunk. Remember what the rich fool in Jesus' parable said? "Soul, thou hast much goods layed up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry" (12:19).
 - 2) But when the lord of that servant unexpectedly returns, the unprepared man was beaten with many stripes (12:47).
- b. Why was he unprepared?
 - 1) I would like to suggest that in keeping with the context, the context supplies us with some reasons.
 - 2) If watching and readiness for the Lord's return is evidence of one laying up treasures in heaven, what is a lack of readiness and attentiveness evidence of? no treasure in heaven.
 - 3) If a man has no treasure in heaven where is his treasure? It is where his heart is. He has layed up treasure for himself (in his barns) and is not rich toward God.
 - 4) If he is not living in attentiveness and readiness for the Lord what is he doing with his life? He is taking his ease, eating, drinking and being merry (12:19,45).

THE PRINCE OF PEACE BRINGS DIVISION:

- A. This next paragraph is a peculiar one - especially in light of many of the imbalanced and romantic notions some people have of Jesus.
 1. The romantic notion I refer to is that Jesus is only loving and compassionate and would not condemn anyone or ever offend.
 2. Jesus speaks of awaiting a baptism. "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (12:50).
 - a. Generally, students of the Bible have viewed this as the overwhelming suffering He would experience on the cross.
 - b. However, it was a suffering not restricted to the cross. He said, "and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." (NIV: "how distressed I am until it is completed.")

3. His reference to fire in vs. 49 is not clear to me.
 - a. Fire has two effects. It burns things that are combustible and it purifies things not combustible.
 - b. In this context it may be a reference to judgments, or to purifying or to both.
 - c. God's word will condemn some and purify others.
 - d. It may simply refer to conflict and difficulty that will arise because of Him. This can also purify some.
- B. One of the reasons some may find this statement (vvs. 49-53) of Jesus' peculiar is because it seems to run contrary to other things said about Him. It is a "paradox."
1. Isaiah said Jesus would be, among other things, "Prince of Peace," and yet, here He says, "Think ye that I am come to give peace in the earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: for there shall be from henceforth five in one house divided, three against two and two against three."
 2. Families would divide because of the allegiances drawn where Christ is concerned.
 - a. Matthew recorded these words: ". . . brother shall deliver up brother to death and the father his child: and children shall rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my names' sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Mt 10:21,22).
 3. When Isaiah referred to Jesus as the Prince of Peace, he did not mean to say that Jesus would be the Prince of Peace at any price.
 - a. He came to seek and to save the lost (Lk 19:10) thus bringing peace between God and men who put themselves at enmity with God (Rom 5:1).
 - b. He did not come to bring peace among men, some of whom were friends of God, with those who were enemies of the cross.
 - c. Yet Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." But not all are sons of God or at peace with God.
 - d. Hopefully, we are all at peace with those who are at peace with God.
- C. What Jesus is telling His disciples by this (vvs. 49-53) is that while the blessed wait for the coming of Christ and ready themselves, there is going to be trouble.
1. Almost every writer in the New Testament addresses this issue of trouble for Christ's sake.

2. 1 Peter 4:19 "Think it not strange . . ."

SIGNS OF THE TIMES:

- A. Jesus then turns to the multitudes and chastises them for not being able to discern the times.
1. This may be a further reflection on the man who bid Jesus to be an arbiter in the matter of the inheritance.
 2. If he had discerned the time that had come upon them, he would not have bothered himself with mundane concerns of his inheritance.
 3. He tells them that they are able to tell when its going to rain when they see the clouds rising in the west.
 - a. They are able to tell it is going to be a hot day when they see the south wind blowing.
 - b. "Ye hypocrites, ye know how to interpret the face of the earth and heaven; but how is it that ye know not how to interpret this time?" (12:56).
 - c. What was it about "this time" that they should have know what time it was?
 - 1) The blind receive their sight,
 - 2) The lame walk,
 - 3) The lepers are cleansed,
 - 4) The deaf hear,
 - 5) The dead are raised,
 - 6) The poor have good tidings preached to them (7:22) and
 - 7) Scripture was being fulfilled before their very eyes (4:16ff, esp 21).
- B. What time were these things a sign of?
1. That today is the day of salvation and that all men ought to prepare themselves for the eventual reality of their death and judgment - of the coming / return of the Lord.
 2. When Jesus identified the blessed servant as one who is found watching and ready when the Lord comes, He said that this servant is ready *no matter when* the owner of the house returns - whether it be in the second or third watch (12:38).

3. No reference is given to *when* He will come. Only *the reality* of His coming is affirmed.
4. Jesus' message is this: We should live every waking hour preparing ourselves so that when the Lord does return, we will be ready.
 - a. I am afraid to say that many do not show any sign or evidence of this kind of preparedness.
 - b. I know this, when the Lord does return, being prepared will be the most important thing in life to you. Do not be caught unprepared!
 - c. Peter wrote of the end of this material universe and said, "Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet 3:11-13).
 - 1) At the beginning of this chapter (2 Pet 3) Peter also wrote of mockers saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?: for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."
 - 2) Remember the Lord's admonition concerning those slothful servants who say, "My lord delayeth his coming."
 - 3) Such thinking will adversely affect how a servant of the Lord behaves.

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

- A. Do you live life earnestly expecting the return of the Lord?
 1. Peter argued that this kind of expectant living can provoke us to holy and godly living.
 2. Jesus describes the one who says in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming" as being without mercy and a pleasure seeker.
 - a. He beats the servants and
 - b. He eats, drinks and is drunk.
 3. Living life in expectation of the Lord's return can provide us with tremendous power to live right.
- B. Another point Jesus makes in His dissertation is that those who do not live in expectation of the Lord's return probably have nothing to look forward to in His return

because they have layed up for themselves treasures on the earth and are not rich toward God (12:21).

1. Their treasure is in the “here and now.” That is where their heart is (12:34).
2. So, again, the Lord is asking us, “Where is you treasure?” Where you treasure is, there you will find your affections and where your affections lie makes all the difference in the world on how you choose to live your life and what your priorities are.

Call to Repentance

Luke 13:1-9

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In our last lesson we covered the second half of Luke 12. There Jesus is encouraging the multitudes, along with His disciples, to live their lives in readiness and attentiveness where His second coming is concerned.
 - 1. He identified the blessed servant as the one whom the lord will find watching when he comes (12:37).
 - 2. He identified the unprepared servant as one who lived with the belief that his lord had delayed his coming. Consequently he beat the servants, ate, drank and got drunk.
- B. In the past few chapters Luke has addressed such themes as:
 - 1. Unbelief (11:14-32),
 - 2. Spiritual darkness/ blindness (11:33-36),
 - 3. Hypocrisy (of the Pharisees (11:37-12:12),
 - 4. Inattentiveness and unpreparedness where eternity is concerned (12:13-48) and
 - 5. Judgment (12:41-59).
- C. All of this is followed with the theme of repentance.
 - 1. The theme of repentance is expounded on by:
 - a. Exhortations to repent (13:1-5),
 - b. A parable (13:6-9),
 - c. Evidence of unbelief (13:10-17),
 - d. Two more parables on the nature of the kingdom (13:18-21),
 - e. An exhortation to strive to enter the narrow door (13:22-30) and
 - f. Jesus' lament over impenitent Jerusalem (13:31-35).

EXHORTATION TO REPENT:

- A. Some of those who had been present to hear what Jesus said in chapter 12 told Him of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices (13:1).

1. Pilate had the reputation of being an utter brute. One man characterized him as “ruthlessly cruel” (p. 371, *New International Critical Commentary*).
 - a. From Everett Ferguson’s studies, we learn that on one occasion Pilate took money from the sacred temple of the Jews to build an aqueduct into Jerusalem. When the Jews protested Pilate interspersed among the crowd soldiers in civilian dress and armed with cudgels (short heavy clubs). On an agreed signal they began to beat the protestors. A large number of Jews died (from *Backgrounds . . .*, p. 331-333).
 - b. Brother Ferguson also informs us that Pilate’s wrath was not limited to the Jews and cites an example of his cruelty among the Samaritans.
 2. Many sources also agree that the Galilean zealots were zealous for stirring up trouble.
 3. When you combine the ruthless cruelty of Pilate with the troublesome element of Galilean zealots, this makes for an explosive combination.
- B. Today we might not look beyond the death of these Galileans as anything more than news, but as our text implies, those giving the report to Jesus must have thought these Galileans to be more evil than others - “Why, just look at the fate that befell them!”
1. But Jesus corrects their false impression by saying, “Think ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they have suffered these things? I tell you, Nay but, except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish” (13:2,3).
 2. Then Jesus brings up a similar event – one in which eighteen people were killed when the Tower of Siloam fell.
 - a. Jesus said, “Think ye that they were offenders above all the men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (13:4,5).
 3. What happened to the Galileans at the hands of Pilate and to those caught under the fall of the towers of Siloam is not a reminder of their sins.
 - a. Jesus is telling His audience that those who perished in both accounts were neither better nor worse than any others.
 - b. But He is using these events to fill them with a sense of urgency concerning the time - which reflects back on His warnings in Luke 12.
 - c. The generation to which Jesus spoke was heading straight for disaster.
 - d. The advantage they had over the Galileans and those who died at the fall of the tower, is that they were being warned.

- 1) The Galileans and those in Jerusalem had no warning,
- 2) But the people Jesus addressed were warned by John the baptizer and now by Jesus.
- 3) They also had the law and the prophets.

THE PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG TREE (13:6-9):

- A. The parable that follows is designed to demonstrate the longsuffering of God where Israel is concerned.
 1. In it He speaks of a certain man who had a fig tree.
 2. When the owner came seeking fruit, he found none. In fact, for three years he came looking for fruit and found none.
 3. So the owner said, "Cut it down; why doth it also cumber the ground?" (13: 7). It not only aggravated him, it also drew minerals from the ground and gave nothing in return.
 4. But the vinedresser said, "Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it: and if it bear fruit thenceforth, well; but if not, thou shalt cut it down" (vs. 8).
- B. If this parable is a reflection on Israel, as I believe it does, here is what the parable means:
 1. The conflict that arises in this masterful short story is that the fig tree, when expected to bear fruit, is bearing no fruit - for three years in a row.
 - a. If the fig tree is a picture of Israel, and the owner is God, when Jesus appeared on the scene, God expected Israel to bear the fruit of belief and good works.
 - b. But Israel, tended to by God for centuries, was responding the exact opposite way you would expect them to react.
 2. The owner has every legitimate rational right to cut it down - but decides to leave it alone a little while longer.
 - a. If it bears no fruit after being nurtured and fed a little while longer, then it has proven itself to be beyond help.
 - b. Israel was not destroyed, but nurtured by God like this fig tree - in fact, God's longsuffering lasts close to 40 more years (until 70 A.D.).
 - c. But due to their unbelief they were rejected by God (Rom 9-11).
 - d. Perhaps this is a reflection on the words of John when the Pharisees and Sadducees came to see him in the wilderness.

- 1) To them he said, "And even now the axe lieth at the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire" (Mt 3:10).
- 2) Jesus was, in essence, saying the same thing through this parable. The axe lies waiting at the root of the tree.
- 3) And, as history will tell us, Israel, apart from a remnant, rejected Christ and the Lord came in judgment against them and swung His axe in the year 70 A.D.

FURTHER EVIDENCE OF ISRAEL'S REJECTION:

A. Luke informs us of the religious leaders' rejection of Christ through the next account he records.

1. It was on the sabbath while Jesus was teaching in the synagogue.
 - a. This is the last time we find Jesus in a synagogue.
 - b. Opposition against Him became so fierce that He no longer entered the synagogues to do His teaching.
2. A woman was present who had "a spirit of infirmity." In other words, this was an evil-spirit-induced condition.
 - a. Later Jesus will describe her condition saying, "whom Satan had bound, lo, these eighteen years."
 - b. Luke describes her as "bowed together and could in no wise lift herself up" (13:11).
 - 1) NIV: "She was bent over and could not straighten up at all."
3. Jesus saw her and said, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And He laid his hands on her and immediately she was made straight and glorified God."

B. But the ruler of the synagogue was moved with indignation because Jesus healed the woman on the sabbath.

1. Jesus did many things on the sabbath that ran contrary to Jewish tradition. It was not contrary to the law of God, but contrary to the traditions of men. They argued that He had six days in the week that He could heal people.
2. But, as on other occasions where Jesus violated these traditions by healing someone on the sabbath, here is how He reasoned:
 - a. 13:15-17.
 - b. He sets forth the same argument when he heals a man of dropsy (Lk 14:1-6).

- C. Another evidence of Israel's tragic rejection of Jesus as the Christ is in 13:22-30.
1. Someone asks Him the question, "Lord, are they few that are saved?"
 2. His response is in 13:24-30.
 - a. In the last two verses, Jesus is affirming two things:
 - 1) The Israelites would be cast out and
 - 2) The Gentiles - those that come from north, south, east and west will sit down in the kingdom of God.
 - b. Why would this be the case?
 - 1) Paul spends a great deal of time answering this question in Romans 9-11.
 - 2) Notice:
 - a) Rom 9:30-33.
 - b) Rom 11:30-32.
- D. Jesus does not rejoice over the demise of Israel. In fact, He laments their spiritual condition at the close of this chapter - 13:34,35.

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

- A. In chapter 12 we find Jesus exhorting the people to wake up to what time it is.
1. They are to stand alert and ready for the Lord and
 2. He exhorts them to repent.
 3. But, of course, many of them did not repent. They continued in the downward spiral that tragic figures travel to their ultimate demise.
- B. In application, this text holds for us the same message:
1. It is the same time for the world today that it was for the Jews the day Jesus spoke these words.
 2. It is time for us to encourage the world to repent and to help prepare all men for the coming of the master of the house.
- C. It is time for us to repent, if we have not already done so.

The Cost of Discipleship

Luke 14:25-35

INTRODUCTION:

- A. The setting for Luke 14 is the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees.
 - 1. The time, we are told, is a sabbath day.
 - 2. Everyone present is watching Jesus.
- B. There happens to be present a man with dropsy.
 - 1. “Dropsy” is an old medical term for excessive accumulation of watery fluid in any tissue or space of the body (*Baker’s Encyclopedia of the Bible*).
 - a. It is a term that could refer to any number of medical disorders: i.e., heart, kidney or liver disease.
 - b. The term has been replaced with more specific terms.
 - c. What form dropsy took with the man in Luke 14 was, we are not told.
 - 2. Regardless, Jesus, having just healed a woman with a spirit of infirmity that bound her together on an earlier sabbath, asks those present, “Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath or not?” But they held their peace.
 - 3. He then healed the man and used the same defense He used when He healed the woman with a spirit of infirmity (Lk 14:5) (see 13:10-17).
- C. He then spoke a parable concerning humility (14:7-11). We will come back to this when we reach chapter 18.
- D. One of the people at the feast, after having heard Jesus say these things, said, “Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.”
 - 1. This man is numbered in the company of the rulers of the Pharisees and,
 - 2. While what he said was true, it is apparent from Jesus’ response that this man should not have smugly numbered himself with those who would eat bread in the kingdom.
 - a. He was exalting himself to a position of honor that God had not yet exalted him to, the reason being that he had not yet made himself a disciple of Christ.
 - 3. Jesus made an important statement in His sermon recorded in Matthew 5-7, “. . . except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven” (5:20).

- a. A man's righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees by kind.
- b. There are two kinds of righteousness described in Scripture: a God-kind of righteousness and self-righteousness.
 - 1) Paul tells us that Israel was ignorant of God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God (Rom 10:3).
 - 2) Paul wrote of himself saying that he did not have a righteousness of his own, but that he sought a right standing with God through faith in Christ, "the righteousness which is from God by faith" (Phil 3:9).
 - 3) Later on in Luke's account, Jesus spoke a parable to "certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and set all others at naught." It is the parable of the Pharisee and the publican.
- 4. In Luke 14 Jesus tells them a parable of a man who sent servants out to bid people to come, "for all things are now ready."
 - a. But everyone had an excuse for not coming.
 - b. He, then sent messengers out to bid the poor, maimed, blind and lame. Yet there was still room.
 - c. The master, wanting to fill his house, said, "Go out into the byways and hedges and constrain them to come in, that my house may be filled."
- 5. Notice the startling pronouncement at the end of this story: "For I say unto you, that none of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper."

E. Why would men, invited to a feast, refuse to come?

- 1. The feast God invites all men to is eternal fellowship with Him.
- 2. Why would men reject such a wonderful offer? Because of what it costs.

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP (Some points drawn from a lesson by Richard Rogers):

- A. Jesus said there are three classes of people that CANNOT be His disciple (Lk 14: 25-35).
 - 1. The first "cannot" is in vs. 26. "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father and mother, and wife, and children and brothers and sisters, yea his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."
 - a. Mt 10:34 - "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." What does this mean?

- 1) Man versus father,
 - 2) Daughter versus mother,
 - 3) Daughter-in-law versus mother-in-law or
 - 4) A man's foes shall be of his own household.
- b. We are to love Christ even to the extent of loving Him more than father or mother, son or daughter.
- c. Jesus *must*, of necessity, come first! There can be no rivals! We *must* love Him in an unrivaled way.
- 1) The world calls this type of person a "Jesus freak."
 - 2) Matthew 10:37 - "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."
 - 3) Many refuse to become Christians simply because their mothers and fathers were not Christians or mothers held them back. Thus, their affections are more toward parents than Christ.
 - a) Jesus said, "Such are not worthy of me."
- d. Becoming a disciple produces schisms in families. Why?
- 1) Some accept Jesus and some reject Him.
 - 2) Peter expressed a profound principle while before the high priests and council. "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).
 - 3) We must obey God rather than parents, rather than relatives, rather than friends.
2. Such affections are to extend even beyond self to a denial of self (Mt 16:24). "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself."
- a. The disciple of Christ must learn to say, "NO!" to the cravings of his fleshly nature.
- 1) The works of the flesh - fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, etc. (Gal 5:19).
- b. He must learn to say, "No!" to anything and everything that would hinder him from rendering service to Christ.
- 1) Christianity is not a life of convenience, but a life of sacrifice.

3. Thus, a person who cannot be Jesus' disciple is one who loves Jesus to a degree.
- B. The second class of people who cannot follow Jesus is found in vs. 27. "Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."
1. The cross-less person cannot be His disciple.
 - a. "My husband drinks, swears, etc. That's the cross I have to bear."
 - 1) That is not a cross, it is a burden.
 - b. "All of my children have gone over fool's hill; one is a Buddhist, one is a prostitute. That is the cross I have to bear."
 - 1) Those are burdens, but are not crosses.
 2. Crosses are for one purpose; that is, *to kill the person thereon!*
 - a. They are not for discipline,
 - b. They are not to cure anything and
 - c. They are not for chastening.
 - d. Crosses are firing squads, electric chairs, gas chambers. The cross is to die on.
 3. There are some things we all have to die *to*.
 - a. We must die to the self interest that causes us to want self-centered things:
 - 1) Drugs,
 - 2) The girls with whom some are "shacking-up" (living with unmarried),
 - 3) Hobbies, sports or
 - 4) *Anything* that would keep us from serving Christ one hundred percent.
 4. We do not die one time only. Jesus said, "Take up your cross and follow Me." We are to bear that cross everywhere we go.
 - a. We do not die just once to sin at baptism.
 - b. This death is a continual thing.
 - c. When we die each day, that adds up to quite a bit of dying.

- d. Gal 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that liveth, but Christ liveth in me."
 - e. 1 Cor 15:31 "... I die daily."
- 5. Jesus then says consider these things: vvs. 28-32. COUNT THE COST:
 - a. Vs. 28 - "Who begins to build a tower, without first sitting down to count the cost, lest haply he lays a foundation and is not able to finish?"
 - b. Vs. 31 - Or what king encounters another king in war without first sitting down and taking counsel whether he is able to meet the other king?
 - 1) If you send ten thousand men against twenty thousand men without strategy, you are going to lose the battle.
 - c. Jesus is saying, "If you want to be my disciple, you have to count the cost."
- 6. The cross-less person cannot be His disciple.
- 7. It takes unceasing dying to be one of His.
- C. The third "cannot" is found in vs. 33. "So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple."
 - 1. The fellow who says he owns anything cannot be Jesus' disciple.
 - a. We sing the song, "All to Jesus I surrender, All to Him I freely give."
 - 1) Many of us would probably choke on those word if we sang with the understanding.
 - 2) We mean, "All to Jesus I surrender, *except* my bank account, my boat, my cabin, my pride, my job."
 - b. Jesus is here asking for an *unqualified renunciation* of all that we possess.
 - 1) We may think the money in our bank account is ours, but it is not. It belongs to the Lord for His service.
 - 2. Do you remember a certain ruler came to Jesus and asked Him, "Good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Lk 18:18-30).
 - a. Jesus said, "One thing thou lackest yet: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me."

- b. We are told that this ruler became “exceedingly sorrowful,” for he was very rich (vs. 23).
 - 3. What would Jesus have you sell?
 - a. Might it be your time or your possessions?
 - b. Jesus would have you sell anything that would hinder you from serving Him with all your heart.
 - 4. We become like the object of our love.
 - a. If we love money, we become cold and unyielding.
 - b. If we love Jesus, we become like Him.
- D. Are you willing to pay that price?
 - 1. To be one of His, Jesus said it takes:
 - a. Unrivalled love (which addresses the issue of one’s affections).
 - b. Unceasing dying (which addresses the issue of one’s life).
 - c. Unqualified renunciation (which addresses the issue of our possessions).
 - 2. If you are not willing to pay the price, Jesus said, “You are not fit for land nor the dunghill” (vs. 35).
 - a. Salt is good but if it loses its flavor it is not good.
 - b. It is fit neither for the land nor for the dunghill..

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

- A. In the context of Jesus’ remarks, a man who thought of himself as a disciple said, “Blessed is the man who eats bread in the kingdom of God.”
 - 1. Apparently, he thought of himself as blessed and looked forward to the rewards promised but, according to Jesus, he was a man unwilling to pay the price of discipleship.
 - 2. He was unwilling to love the Lord in an unrivalled way, to die daily and/or to renounce all that he had.
 - a. That being the case, he cannot be His disciple.
- B. The words of our Lord in this text are poignant indeed and extremely thought provoking.

1. Jesus did not say it would be difficult for someone to be His disciple if he did not fit the description provided here.
 2. Jesus said, "He cannot be my disciple."
- C. Whatever my circumstance or yours, we must consider the cost of being a disciple.
1. But we must also consider the cost of *not* being a disciple of Jesus Christ and *then* consider what price we are willing to pay.

THE LOST SON

Luke 15:11-32

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Perhaps one of the better known parables in the Bible is that of the prodigal son.
 - 1. Studied in its context I might be more inclined to call it "The Lost Son."
 - 2. In Luke 15 there are three parables having the same basic structure.
 - a. Something/someone was lost.
 - b. Something/someone was found.
 - c. There was rejoicing over what/who was found.
 - 3. The first parable could be titled "The Lost Sheep."
 - a. When the lost sheep was found people were called together to rejoice over its recovery.
 - b. Jesus said, "I say unto you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons who need no repentance" (15:7).
 - 4. The second parable could be titled "The Lost Coin."
 - a. When the woman who lost the coin finds it she rejoices.
 - b. Jesus said, "Even so, I say unto you, there in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."
 - 5. The third parable we could call "The Lost Son" in keeping with the first two titles.
 - a. The lost son has been called the prodigal son for good reason. The word "prodigal" means "recklessly wasteful, extravagant."
 - b. When the younger son took his portion of his father's substance, Jesus said, ". . . he wasted his substance with riotous living" (15:13).
 - c. When the wasteful son returned home his father said, ". . . this my son was dead and is alive again; he was *lost* and is found" (15:24).
 - d. And his having been *found*, the father called his servants to join him in his joy.

SETTING:

- A. Some parables have two settings.

1. If the parable is in story form, there is a setting involved in the parable itself.
2. Then there is the setting in which the parable is told.
3. For example, the setting of the prodigal son is that of a home, a far country and the older brother who is coming in from the field.
4. But the audience to which Jesus addresses the parable is found in 15:1,2.

CHARACTERS:

- A. There are several characters in the parable itself.
 1. Jesus began His parable by saying, "A certain man had two sons." These are the primary characters around which Jesus presents His lesson.
 - a. The younger son says to the father, "Father, give me the portion of the substance that falleth to me."
 - b. And the father divided unto his sons his living.
- B. What the younger son asked for was equivalent to wishing the father was dead. So, his request was both bold and cold.
 1. And for what did his younger boy make such a request? As Jesus tells the parable it was to "waste his substance on riotous living."
 - a. He was a first century "party animal."
 - b. The NIV says he "squandered his wealth in wild living."
 - c. So we have a young man implying his desire for the death of his father in order for his father to finance him in his wild life.
 2. The problems he faced were manifold.
 - a. First of all, he positioned himself far away from home. Jesus said he "took his journey into a far country."
 - b. The second problem was that of depleting his funds. ". . . he wasted his substance."
 - c. Thirdly, as if depleting his funds was not bad enough, they were spent on riotous living. The older son would later accuse him having devoured his father's substance with harlots (15:30).
 - d. The fourth problem he faced was a great famine. Jesus said, "And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want" (15:14).
 - e. To make matters worse, especially for a Jew, the only work he could find was that of feeding loathsome swine in the field.

- f. He was so bad off he would have gladly eaten the slop given to the hogs, but no one gave to him.
- 3. Then there is a curious statement made by our Lord as he characterizes this young man.
 - a. Jesus said that while he was in this condition "he came to himself," as if to say that he finally came to his senses.
 - b. Notice what he said to himself in verses 17-19.
 - c. What he expressed here was genuine repentance.
 - d. And so, he arose and went to his father.
- C. What kind of father did he have? (15:20).
 - 1. Notice the son's confession - 15:21.
 - 2. Notice how the father responded - 15:22-24.
 - 3. The father's forgiveness is not stated in so many words, but rather expressed by embracing his son and putting a robe, ring and shoes on him and killing the fatted calf.
- D. But then there is also the older brother (15:25-32).
 - 1. Jesus painted a very realistic picture of what happens in families.
 - 2. Ryken: "There are feelings of parent toward child, for example, that cannot be put into words but that are actually portrayed in the picture of the father's relationship to both his sons" (p. 73 . . . *Life*).
 - 3. And with the older son, Jesus turns the parable into an attack on the Pharisees and scribes in His audience.
 - a. While the older son should have been rejoicing with his father he was, instead, focusing on things his father had not done for him.
 - b. And, while in some of Jesus' parables He calls for His hearers to make a judgment on the characters in the parable, in this one He leaves them to ponder and to reach their own conclusions. His rebuke of them is by implication.

THEME:

- A. It is hard to pinpoint any one theme as the primary one in this parable.
 - 1. There is the motif of lost and found in the younger son/brother.
 - 2. There is the theme of the forgiveness in the father.

3. There is the theme of jealousy/envy depicted in the older son which points back to the Pharisees and scribes.
 - a. Remember what the setting was in which the parable was told?
 - 1) The publicans and sinners were drawing near to Jesus to hear Him.
 - 2) The scribes and Pharisees murmured, "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them."
 - b. Kenneth Bailey: "In the East today, as in the past, a noble man may feed any number of lesser needy persons as a sign of his generosity, but he does *not* eat with them. However, when guests are 'received' the one receiving the guests eats with them. The meal is a special sign of acceptance. The host affirms this by showering his guests with a long series of compliments to which the guests must respond. Jesus is set forth in the text as engaging in some such social relationship with publicans and sinners. Small wonder the Pharisees were upset" (p. 143).
- B. In essence, there are three themes in the parable; redemption, forgiveness and jealousy brought out by the two responses to the prodigal son.
 1. The father receives him with forgiveness.
 2. The older son is enraged with jealousy and envy and even scolds his father for so openly accepting his younger son home.
 3. As it relates to the setting in which it was told, we have Jesus receiving, and eating with, publicans and sinners.
 - a. Later, Luke records the very purpose for Jesus' ministry. Jesus said, "For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (19:10).
 - b. Is it not ironic that the Pharisees and scribes could probably relate to the joy of finding a lost sheep or lost coin more so than they could a sinner reforming his ways?!

APPLICATION:

- A. Perhaps the application of this parable for us today can be found by examining the ways in which the wayward son was received.
 1. The father: "While he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." (15:20).
 - a. Remember Ryken: "There are feelings of parent toward child, for example, that cannot be put into world but that are actually portrayed in the picture of the father's relationship to both his sons" (p. 73, . . . *Life*).

- b. The challenges of living in a “far country” have taken their toll on him.
 - c. The father had a great deal he could have held against his son, but no evidence of a grudge is to be found.
 - d. In fact, the father dresses his son with the best robe, a ring, shoes and has the fattened calf killed.
 - e. How did the father view his son’s return? “My son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.”
2. In the older son we see a satiric attack on the scribes and Pharisees.
- a. In their pride and arrogance they looked down on the sinners and publicans and in this account they looked down on Jesus for receiving them and eating with them. This made Jesus suspect.

The Unrighteous Steward

Luke 16:1-13

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In the last lesson we surveyed the parable of the lost son (15:11-32).
 - 1. The setting for the trio of parables in Luke 15 was identified in 15:1,2.
 - a. Publicans and sinners were drawing near to hear Him.
 - b. Pharisees and scribes were murmuring, saying, "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them."
 - 2. Immediately following the telling of this parable Luke wrote, "And he said also to his disciples, There was a certain rich man, who had a steward" (16:1).
 - a. In essence, the setting is the same as it was for the things recorded in chapter 15.
 - b. Luke confirms in chapter 16:14 that the Pharisees heard the things Jesus said to His disciples in 16:1-3 and scoffed at Him.
 - 3. So the audience to which Jesus addressed the text of our lesson includes a variety of people - publicans, sinners, Pharisees, scribes and disciples.

THE UNRIGHTEOUS STEWARD:

- A. Jesus tells the story of a man, a manager, whose handling of his master's goods is brought into question.
 - 1. In fact, he is being dismissed for wasting his master's goods.
 - 2. This steward was beside himself. He did not know what to do or what he would do.
 - a. It is apparent that having to give an accounting for how he managed his master's property took him by surprise.
 - b. It took him by surprise much the same way it did the man who tore down his barns to build bigger ones. When he thought it was time to take life easy, God required his soul of him (12:19,20).
 - c. If fired he could not get a job involving manual labor. He had life so easy as a manager or steward, that there was no thought of doing anything that required sweat (16:3).
 - d. And he was too proud to beg (16:3).
 - 3. Then an idea comes to him.

- a. He calls some of his master's debtors to him and tells them to take out their contracts with his master and to reduce the amount owed him.
 - 1) One man reduced one hundred measures of oil owed to fifty measures.
 - 2) Another man was asked to reduce one hundred measures of wheat to eighty measures.
- b. The reason he permitted each one to reduce the amount owed his master in the contract was to make friends of them so that when he was fired he might be received into the houses of the people he had helped.
- c. The man was a lying, cheating scoundrel.
- 4. But notice how his master responds when he finds out. "... his lord commended the unrighteous steward because he had done wisely" (vs. 8a).

B. What is our Lord teaching us by means of this parable?

- 1. The conclusion Jesus draws from the story is this: you need to be more like the lying, cheating scoundrel "for the sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light" (16:8b).
- 2. He then advises His disciples saying, "Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles" (16:9).
- 3. Then He presents an important principle. "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much: and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's who will give you that which is your own?" (16:10-12).
 - a. Contrasts:
 - 1) Sons of this world versus sons of light.
 - 2) Faithful versus unrighteous.
 - 3) Unrighteous mammon versus true riches.
- 4. Is Jesus approving of the actions of this cheating scoundrel?
 - a. Not at all!
 - b. This is a lesson in Christian prudence. Prudence is the appropriate use of wisdom.

- c. What is being commended in the parable is the resourcefulness of the steward in the story.
- d. This parable is more an indictment on the sons of light than it is on the sons of this world.
 - 1) McGarvey: "In verse 8 the Lord himself gives the key to the parable which is that the children of light, in the conduct of their affairs, should emulate the wisdom and prudence of the children of the world in the conduct of their affairs" (*Fourfold Gospel*, p. 506).
 - a) "The child of light is to be equally shrewd and wise in the management of his affairs, using, however, only those means and methods which are permissible in his sphere of action" (ibid).
 - b) To be sure, the steward in the story is judged by Jesus to be unrighteous.
 - 2) Jesus' indictment is this: (as recognized by Trench - quoted by Lightfoot); Christians "bestow less pain to win heaven than 'the children of the world' bestow to win earth - that they are less provident in heavenly things than those are in earthly, - that the world is better served by its servants than God is by his" (p. 35, *Parables*, Lightfoot).
 - 3) Lightfoot: "If Christians were as diligent and resourceful in kingdom business as business men are in worldly business, what a marvelously different world it would be" (p. 35).
 - 4) Just like the unrighteous steward made friends by deceitful methods, so the Christian should make friends by means of the resources God has made available to him - i.e, unrighteous mammon.
 - a) The term "mammon" is found 3 times in our text and only 1 other time in the New Testament - Matthew 6:24 where Jesus said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
 - b) Twice the term is personified as if it were a god to be served.
 - c) The term itself simply refers to "riches, avarice and worldly gain."
 - 5) The reason Jesus refers to it as "unrighteous mammon" is probably because of the dangers normally associated with money.

- a) “The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim 6:10).
 - b) Paul also warned us against being lovers of self, lovers of money and lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God (2 Tim 3:1-5).
- 5. Jesus’ point is this: His disciples should use all the resources they have at their disposal for godly purposes, thus laying up for themselves treasures in heaven.
 - a. Use these resources while you have them before they fail you, so that you may be received into the eternal tabernacles (16:9).
 - b. The warning Jesus gives is this: if you are unfruitful with the material things God has given you, you have not qualified yourself to possess true riches.

THEMES:

- A. The most prominent theme of this parable is that of stewardship. I again refer you to four points made by Wendell Winkler in this matter.
 - 1. He suggests that there are four principles involved in stewardship.
 - a. Divine ownership
 - 1) A steward, as it relates to this parable, is one who manages the possessions and property of another.
 - 2) In this text, as is supported by the rest of the teachings of the Bible, all that we have belongs to God.
 - a) Time and
 - b) Money.
 - 3) It is “given by God, owned by God and to be used for the purposes of God” (Eldred Echols).
 - 4) Perhaps this will shed light on Jesus’ statement, “Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures” (Jas 4:3).
 - b. Human endowment.
 - 1) While it all belongs to God, He has given what we have to us.
 - 2) As in the story Jesus told, the steward did not own what he managed.

c. Faithful administration:

- 1) Paul established a very important principle in 1 Cor 4:2 “. . . it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”
- 2) This is the very point of conflict in the parable. The master of the story brought one of his stewards into question because he was accused of wasting the master's goods.
- 3) See 1 Tim 6:17-19 for an example of how the rich are to manage their money.
- 4) *New International Critical Commentary*: Christians “. . . must be so free from the low, selfish and covetous motives that dominated the unjust steward of the parable that they will use the worldly goods entrusted to them by the Father in a manner that will bring blessings to others and be conducive to their own eternal welfare” (p. 416).

d. Inevitable accounting:

- 1) The unfaithful steward was apparently taken by surprise when called into question.
2. It may very well be that some of us will be taken by surprise when we must give account.
 3. The way we account for our use of unrighteous mammon will determine what master we serve.
 - a. Jesus ends His instruction concerning the unrighteous steward by saying, “No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (16:13).
 - b. The Pharisees are described in the very next verse as “lovers of money,” which means they hated God.

B. Financial matters are spiritual matters:

1. Financial matters point to where our affections lie and they point at whom we serve.
2. And you cannot serve two masters - God and mammon.

C. Conclusion: We should serve God with the resources at our disposal with the same fervency the world uses to obtain its worldly pursuits.

The Rich Man and Lazarus

Luke 16:19-31

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Our study in Luke has the same setting as the past few lessons.
 - 1. The publican and sinners were drawing near to hear Jesus.
 - 2. The scribes and Pharisees were complaining that Jesus receives sinners and eats with them (15:1,2).
 - 3. He began His discourse on this occasion by telling them parables:
 - a. The Lost Sheep (15:3-7).
 - b. The Lost Coin (15:8-10).
 - c. The Lost Son (15:11-32).
 - 4. He then addressed His disciples with the parable of the unrighteous steward (16:1-13).
 - a. The Pharisees heard this parable and scoffed.
 - 1) They are characterized by Luke as being lovers of money, which means they hate God (16:13,14).
 - 2) They are characterized by Jesus as those who justify themselves in the sight of men (16:15).
- B. This lead us to our present study - Luke 16:19-31, the rich man and Lazarus.
 - 1. Most commentators either assume or argue that this text is another of Jesus' many parables.
 - 2. In a rather inconclusive survey I conducted from several of the books I have, the majority of authors view this as a parable.
 - a. Two authors debated this issue in their own work and left the matter inconclusive.
 - b. One author did not include the text at all in his book on the parables.
 - c. Our brethren, among the various lectureships centered around the parables, have avoided including it in their studies.
 - 3. While it is within the realm of possibility, I have not viewed this text as a parable because of the inclusion of names in the text. If it is a parable, it is the only one in which names are used.

4. I have also tried to keep from viewing the text as parabolic because of the tendency of some groups to allegorize the text.
5. But I have come to realize that you can view it as a parable without allegorizing it.
 - a. Jehovah's Witnesses are notorious for allegorizing this text to eliminate the idea of eternal punishment.
 - 1) Rich man = Pharisees.
 - 2) Lazarus = poor people who the Pharisees have kept in ignorance.
6. While it may be a parable, "it is no mere story chosen for its usefulness as an illustration; but a rather sober portrayal of yet unseen realities" (Leifeld, P. 993, E.B.C., Vol 8).

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS:

- A. Characters: there are three primary characters in the story.
 1. The first character we are introduced to is "a certain rich man."
 - a. He is clothed in purple, which means he was wealthy. In fact, some purple dyes were literally worth their weight in gold.
 - b. And he fared sumptuously every day (Fn: "living in mirth and splendor every day").
 - 1) I do not want to prejudice you this early in the lesson, but the rich man is not the only one who lived in mirth (merry-making).
 - 2) Remember the rich fool who said, "Take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry" (12:19).
 - 3) And remember the servants who had convinced themselves that the master of the house had delayed his coming. They beat the servants and became drunk.
 2. Then we are introduced to a man named Lazarus, which is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name Eleazar which means "whom God helps."
 - a. He is identified as a beggar, covered with sores (like Job), who was left at the gate of the rich man.
 - b. His desire was to be fed the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table.
 - c. Only the dogs are moved with compassion for his condition.

- 1) R. C. Trench: "This circumstance seems mentioned to set forth the cruelty of the rich man in its strongest light; that while he remained unmoved, even the pity of the beasts was stirred" (p. 164, *Notes on the Parables of Our Lord*).

CONFLICTS:

- A. 16:22 "And it came to pass, that the beggar died and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom: and the rich man also died and was buried."
 1. The deaths of both men provide us with a significant and profound turn of events. The deaths of both men unveil the real character of each one and the conditions of their souls.
 2. The writer of Hebrews affirms: "... it is appointed unto men once to die and after this cometh judgment" (Heb 9:27) and this is exactly what we see in Jesus' teachings here.
- B. When the beggar died, he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom. What a blessed picture that paints! But the rich man "was buried."
 1. His burial, we could surmise, was probably in keeping with his economical status.
 - a. Trench: "This splendid carrying to the grave is for him what the carrying into Abraham's bosom was for Lazarus" (p165).
 2. Jesus said, "And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments and seeth Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom."
 3. Torment for the rich man consists of the following:
 - a. He sees Lazarus (vs. 23) in comfort (vs. 25) which contrasts his torment.
 - 1) What would go through your mind if you had been the rich man?
 - 2) Whatever we might think, it is too late!
 - b. He is in want of water. None who make the Lord their shepherd will be in want.
 - c. He is in anguish in the flames (vs. 24). Some argue that this depicts a future scene in which death and Hades are cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Rev 20:14).
 - d. For him there are the agonizing memories of his family (vvs. 25,27) and of the way he refused care for Lazarus.
 - e. There is the realization that this state of being for him is eternal, unceasing.

- 1) Trench: "We can believe that for a while all may have seemed as a fearful dream. But when at length he had convinced himself it was no dream, but an awakening . . ." (p. 166).
 - f. His horrible condition was also unchangeable - (great gulf, vs. 26).
 - g. And he was unable to help his brothers (vvs. 27-31).
- C. Lazarus, on the other hand, was found in Abraham's bosom and comforted (vs. 25).
1. When the rich man appealed to Abraham for mercy, Abraham said, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things and Lazarus in like manner evil things: but *now here* he is comforted and thou art in anguish."
 2. We have here depicted by Jesus a great reversal of fortunes.
 - a. The rich man went from riches to rags; Lazarus from rags to riches.
 - b. The rich man became a beggar and the beggar became rich (with true riches).
 - 1) The rich man fared sumptuously but was now begging for a drop of water. The beggar, hoping for crumbs, is now full.
 - 2) In this life the poor man begged for mercy. In the life hereafter, the rich man was begging for mercy.
 - a) The rich man, while trying to save his life, lost it; and Lazarus, whose life was lost in faith, gained it.
 3. Augustine characterized the rich man by saying:
 - a. "The proud man of time, the beggar of hell."
 - b. "He lacked the drop, who denied the crumb."
 4. The rich man's god was his money.
 - a. He laid up treasure for himself and was not rich toward God (12:21).
 - b. He did not make to himself friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness (vs. 9). Consequently, there was not one to greet him in the eternal tabernacles.
 5. What must be implied in the story concerning Lazarus is that he was a man of faith.
 - a. The angels of heaven do not escort people to paradise on the basis of their being poor, just as the rich are not buried and experience torment because they are rich.

- b. *New International Critical Commentary*: “Everything depends on the attitude which a person reveals towards his wealth or towards his poverty - whether he believes in God with a repentant heart and serves Him, whatever his external circumstances may be, or whether he rejects Him - a thing which may be done in poverty as well as in wealth” (p. 427).
 - c. Illustration: Eldred Echol’s illustration, p. 111,112.
- 6. When Lazarus died, he was escorted by the angels of God to the bosom of Abraham. When the rich man died, there were only his friends to escort his body to the grave.

THE FINAL INSULT:

- A. A final insult is spewed out by the rich man.
 - 1. At first glance, it looks like some seed of decency and consideration for others is expressed, but what is implied is an insult to God.
 - 2. When he realized there was no hope for him in his condition he said, “I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house, for I have five brethren that he may testify unto them, lest haply they also come into the place of torment” (vvs.27,28).
 - 3. In his request, he is implying that if he had had sufficient warning and evidence of his need to repent he would not be where he is now. “It is God’s fault that I am here!”
 - a. This may very well reflect on a previous statement made concerning the Pharisees, that they justify themselves in the sight of men (vs.15) - not that in its application here it would be pertaining exclusively to Pharisees.
 - 4. But notice how Abraham responds. “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them” (16:29).
 - 5. The rich man debated his cause by saying, “Nay, father Abraham: but if one go to them from the dead, they will repent.”
 - a. The rich man was now showing contempt for the sufficiency of God’s word to instruct and to warn.
 - b. This also echoes the Jews’ propensity to seek signs.
 - 1) They were known for saying, “Show us a sign that we may believe” - even after some great sign had been shown them.
 - 6. Abraham said, “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead” (vs.31) - perhaps an allusion to the resurrection of Jesus.

- a. Abraham is telling us a great deal about the nature of faith.
- b. It not only involves the intellect, it includes the will and the emotions as well.
- c. "Because this is the case, faith cannot be forced by signs and miracles, for where there is a determined alienation of the will and the affections from the truth, no impression will be made by these miracles" (see Trench, p. 169).

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

- A. This is another in a list of eschatological warnings:
 - 1. Walter Leifeld points out that this account makes three powerful points:
 - a. The future reversal of the human condition (vvs.20-26).
 - b. The reality of the future judgment based on one's decision in this life.
 - c. The futility of even a resurrection to persuade those who persist in rejecting God's revealed word.
 - 2. The rich man of this text was not the only one taken by surprise. There was:
 - a. The rich fool - "this night is thy should required of thee" (12:13-21).
 - b. The unfaithful servant - their master came in a day they did not expect it and he was beaten with many stripes (12:41-48).
 - c. The unrighteous steward - was called to give an account he never thought he would have to give (vvs.1-13).
 - d. The rich man, who believed the insufficient warning had been given to him (vvs.19-31).
 - 3. When our Lord comes as a thief in the night will He find you ready or will He take you by surprise?

The Ten Lepers

Luke 17: 11-19

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In Luke's account of the life of Christ, there is a story concerning ten lepers.
1. The incident occurs well into the adult ministry of our Lord while He and His disciples were on their way to Jerusalem.
 2. While on their way, their attention was diverted by the cry of ten lepers who stood afar off.
 - a. Leprosy is an infectious disease which, by Law, required these men to live alone, outside the city - hence, they "stood afar off."
 - b. Leviticus 13 and 14 has been heralded as some of the best literature concerning leprosy that has been written to date.
 - 1) In it the Lord instructed: "And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent and the hair of this head shall go loose and he shall cover his upper lip and shall cry, 'Unclean, Unclean.' All the days wherein the plague is in him he shall be unclean: he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his dwelling be" (Lev 13:45,46).
 - 2) I urge everyone to read all of chapters 13 and 14.
- B. These ten lepers lifted up their "harsh and squeaky" (McGarvey) voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us" (17:13).
1. There are various kinds of leprosy, which the Law helped the priests to identify (Lev 13 and 14), but severe forms involve progressive anesthesia, paralysis, ulceration, nutritive disturbances, gangrene and mutilation (A.H.D. p. 749).
 2. It is referred to as a "plague" numerous times in the classic text (Lev 13 and 14). A plague, by definition, is a highly infectious, usually fatal, epidemic disease (A.H.D.). ("Epidemic" is from two words: "epi" - among and "demic" - people.)
 3. It is no wonder they cried out for mercy from the one with a reputation for healing the sick and all manner of disease.
 - a. In fact, Jesus' ministry is characterized as such.
 - b. Luke 7:18-23.
 4. Some forms of leprosy are incurable. That is why, even today, there are still leper colonies to keep those infected isolated from society.

- C. Jesus responded to their plea for mercy by saying, "Go and show yourselves to the priests."
1. Whenever someone had a swelling, a rash or bright spot on their flesh, they were to be brought to Aaron, the high priest or to one of his sons for examination (Lev 13:2).
 - a. Leviticus 13 and 14 instructed them on what to look for and what to do in the varying circumstances.
 - b. Some situations required quarantining of a person for seven days to see what developed with reference to the rash or scab.
 - c. In severe cases the leper was to live outside the camp or city, where they were to remain as long as they were unclean.
 2. Notice the sequence of events:
 - a. Jesus said, "Go and show yourselves unto the priests."
 - 1) Notice this: He is telling lepers to go show themselves to the priests - something they had already done to be diagnosed and banished from the city. What purpose was there in going to the priests again?
 - 2) But, they go - which was a manifestation of faith.
 - a) They could have questioned, "Why?" or insisted on a miracle, but they did not.
 - b) Luke writes, "And it came to pass, as they went, they were cleansed."
 - c) One reason for going to the priest was to be diagnosed. Another reason was to get a clean bill of health. Going to them this time would confirm that a notable miracle had been performed. It would have been like going to a doctor today to confirm that the leper had been cleansed.
- D. 17:15 "And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, with a loud voice glorifying God; and he fell upon his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan" (17:16).
1. This seems to imply that the other nine may have been Jews.
 2. But Jesus answering said, "Were not the ten cleansed? but where are the nine? Were there none found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger?" (17:17,18).
 3. Could these have been the same nine lepers that were, a moment ago, crying out for mercy to be healed of the plague of leprosy?

- a. Would you or would you not have returned?
 - b. Would you have been *the* one or *with* the one? Or would you have been with the nine?
4. Jesus said to the grateful one who had returned to thank and worship Him, "Arise and go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole" (17:19).

MIRACLE STORIES:

- A. In the miracle stories in the accounts of Christ's life you will find five basic components which make up that story (with slight variation).
- 1. A need is established.
 - 2. Jesus' help is sought.
 - 3. Faith or obedience is expressed by those seeking the help.
 - 4. Jesus performs the miracle.
 - 5. The character(s) respond..
- B. Breakdown:
- 1. The need established in Luke 17 is to be cleansed of a horrifying disease - leprosy.
 - 2. Jesus' help is sought in their cry, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."
 - 3. Their faith or obedience is manifested in their going to show themselves to the priests when Jesus said, "Go and show yourselves to the priests."
 - 4. The miracle was performed "as they went."
 - 5. Nine of the ten lepers responded without thanksgiving. Only one of the ten returned to thank Jesus and to glorify God.
- C. There is what is called "end stress" where stories are concerned. It simply refers us to the emphasis in a story being placed at the end.
- 1. If there is any merit to this notion, then this particular story is designed to teach us a lesson in gratitude and how thoughtless and appalling a lack of thankfulness is in those who are like the nine - AND how good it is to be thankful like the one.
 - 2. One man wrote that the characters in the Bible "are sketched with sure strokes, but not so fully as to preclude our identifying ourselves with them. Their faces are never so completely drawn that we cannot place our own heads on their shoulders: we could be blind man, neighbor, parent, or Pharisee, and it can be instructive for us to assume each role in turn as we read" (Roland Fry, quoted in *Words of Life*, by Leland Ryken, p. 37).

PARALLELS:

- A. If we were to use this story as an example, we have someone (ten men) in need - they call on Jesus for help - Jesus helps them - nine never return to express their gratefulness - only one returns.
 - 1. What has God ever done for us?
 - a. Answered prayer?
 - b. Cared for our daily needs?
 - c. Delivered us from evil?
 - d. Saved us from sin?
 - 2. And how have we responded?
 - a. Ironically, this lesson is more likely to strike at the hearts of those who will never hear it.
 - b. Many go to worship to express their thanks in prayer, song and worship.
 - c. But perhaps some feel like they need to worship out of a sense of duty. You need to learn to attend worship out of a sense of thanksgiving for all God has done for you.
- B. Every Christian ought to be compelled by the thanksgiving that flows in his heart to worship God and to study His word.
 - 1. The question you need to answer is: are you numbered among the nine or with the one?

The Revelation of the Son of Man

Luke 17:22-37

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Jesus and His disciples were on the border of Samaria and Galilee when the Pharisees bring up question concerning the kingdom of God.
 - 1. They ask Him when the kingdom of God is supposed to come (17:20).
 - 2. Jesus said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." In other words it is not an observable process (Leifeld, p. 997).
- B. By the time Luke writes this book rumors were already abroad that the day of the Lord had already come (2 Thess 2:1-12, Leifeld, p. 996). Later, others would question whether He would return at all (2 Pet 3:3,4).
 - 1. Jesus has already established the fact that He viewed the time between His departure and His return as considerable and unknown.
 - a. He characterized some people as thinking He had delayed His coming (12:45 - "My lord delayeth his coming").
 - b. The faithful are characterized by their waiting up and readying themselves no matter what watch of the night He comes.
 - c. The time of His return is unknown.
 - 1) "For in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh" (12:40).
 - 2) "... the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he expecteth not and in an hour when he knoweth not, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the unfaithful" (12:46).
 - 2. The topic of 17:22-37 is the day of the Son of man (17:22,24,26,30). While this phrase may have several referents, in this context I see no reason not to view it as pointing to the last day.
 - a. Verses 22-37 are addressed to Jesus' disciples.

THE DAY OF THE SON OF MAN:

- A. Jesus makes reference to "the days of the Son of man," but also to "his day" (vs. 24) or "the day that the Son of Man is revealed" (vs. 30).
 - 1. Of that day, He warns His disciples of those who would lead them astray by saying, "Lo, there! Lo, here!" as if they had located Him.

2. But Jesus tells them, “. . . go not away, nor follow after them: for as the lightening, when it lighteneth out of the one point under heaven, shineth unto the other part of heaven, so shall the Son of man be in His day” (17:24).
 - a. Just as lightening is universally experienced and unannounced by human heralders, so shall Jesus' coming be.
 - b. The point being that no one will need to direct us to see Him in that day, for every eye shall see Him and every knee shall bow.
 - c. It will be evident to all.
- B. But, first things first: “But first must he suffer many things and be rejected of this generation” (17:25).
- C. Another point Jesus makes with reference to the day of the Son of Man is that it cannot be foreseen from signs (vvs. 26-31).
 1. If you were to take the time to compare this text with Jesus' message in Matthew 24 here is what you would find.
 - a. In Matthew 24 Jesus provides a number of precursory signs which will warn the faithful of the impending doom and will accompany the destruction of Jerusalem, i.e.:
 - 1) Wars and rumors of wars,
 - 2) Nation shall rise up against nation and
 - 3) Famines and earthquakes in divers places.
 - b. But with regard to the coming of the Son of man and the simultaneous passing away of heaven and earth, no precursory signs are given.
 2. In Luke 17:26-31, Jesus identifies no precursory signs that will alert the faithful to His coming.
 - a. He compares His coming to the days of Noah.
 - b. He compares His coming to the days of Lot.
 - c. Notice also this comparison:
 - 1) In the days of Noah until the flood people ate, drank, married and were given in marriage.
 - 2) In the days of Lot, until the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, people ate, drank, bought, sold, planted and built.

- 3) Not only do these descriptions indicate "life as usual," I wonder if it is not the same thing as:
 - a) The rich fool who said, ". . . take thine ease, eat drink, be merry" (12:19).
 - b) The foolish servant who thought his master had delayed His coming, so ate, drank and became drunk (12:45).
 - c) The rich man of Luke 16:19-31 who fared sumptuously and was clothed in purple.
- 4) Whether death or the Lord's return, both took each character off-guard.
- 5) "Despite all warnings, they were taken by surprise when completely off their guard" (McGarvey, p. 532, *Fourfold Gospel*).
- 6) The Lord's message in 17:22-37 is "Do not let My coming catch you off-guard."

D. Jesus' instructions in verses 31-33 are rather interesting.

1. Some have concluded that this may very well be a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem and that Jesus is warning them not to delay leaving Jerusalem when they see the precursory signs of its destruction surrounding them.
 - a. In the Matthew text, they are exhorted to "flee unto the mountains" (24:16).
 - b. In Luke 17:22-37 there is no reference to fleeing anywhere.
2. If these instructions pertain to the final coming of our Lord, what sense would it make to warn people not to return for goods from their house?
 - a. J. W. McGarvey wondered the same thing. "It seems strange that the terrors of the last day should be accompanied by any thought or concern for property, but such is the plain intimation of the text. If our hope has been centered upon earthly things we will be found seeking them even in that hour, just as the face of Lot's wife was turned toward Sodom despite the glare of the penal fires. Our earthy characters become fixed, and great catastrophes do not change them (Rev 22:10-12). If in that hour we be found seeking to save our carnal treasures, it will be a sign that we have lost the spiritual from our lives and have no heavenly treasures" (p. 533).
 - b. Thus, our Lord's admonition, "Remember Lot's wife."
 - 1) Lot and his family left the plain cities with the divine warning not to look back lest they be consumed (Gen 19:17).

- 2) But Lot's wife looked back and became a pillar of salt (19:26).
- c. There is also the warning of verse 33.
3. This also fits in with instructions Jesus has already given concerning where a person's treasures are.
 - a. After delivering the parable of the rich fool Jesus said, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God" (12:21).
 - b. After His discourse on anxiety, He exhorted His disciples to make for themselves treasures in heaven that fail not, where no thief can break through and steal and where moth cannot destroy (Mt 6:19).
 - c. He warns us that discipleship requires us to renounce all that we have (14:33).
- E. This event (17:34,35) will not be isolated to one geographical location on the globe. It will be a world-wide event.
 1. Some will be sleeping, others grinding together.
 2. What is meant by, "One shall be taken and the other shall be left."?
 - a. My personal judgment is that some shall be taken to glory while those who are left are abandoned to judgment (Leifeld concurs).
 - b. This has, for a long time, been my conviction with reference to Matthew 24: 40, 41.
 - c. This coincides with the teaching of Paul that there will be an order to the resurrection of the just.
 - 1) "The dead in Christ shall rise first,"
 - 2) "Then we that are alive. . ." (1 Thess 4:16,17).
 - 3) Perhaps the unjust shall be left and be the last to be raised - but raised to judgment.
 3. Verses 34,35 tell us what will happen in the day of the Son of man.

RESPONSE:

- A. The disciples' response to all of this is, "Where, Lord?" (The Pharisees asked, "When?" His disciples asked, "Where?")
 1. Jesus said to them, "Where the body is, thither will be the eagles (vultures) also be gathered together."
 - a. Jesus' reference to "the body" paints for us a picture of the dead.

- b. His refers to eagles (lit. "vultures") which always seek out the dead.
- 2. It is apparently a picture of spiritual judgment on the spiritually dead.
- 3. So, where will all this occur? Wherever bodies and the vultures are. Everywhere!
 - a. Geldenhuys: "Where there is spiritual decay judgment will follow relentlessly and assuredly - this refers to what happens through all ages, but especially to the time of the end, when the judgments of God will visit the unregenerated after the faithful have been finally united to their glorified Lord and Redeemer" (p. 446, *New International Critical Commentary, Luke*). Geldenhuys believes this last statement to be a well known Palestinian proverb (p. 447).
 - b. McGarvey, P. 533,534, "The disciples desired to know where this manifestation and division would take place, looking upon it as a local prediction. Jesus gave a proverbial answer, the meaning of which is that sin courts and draws to itself punishment and destruction just as a carcass draws winged scavengers. Applying his words, we may say that as the corruption of the antediluvians drew upon them the devastation of the flood and as the crimes of the Sodomites called down upon them the fires from heaven, and as the unbelief of the Jews of Christ's day caused the destruction of Jerusalem and the death of the nation, so the wickedness of the men of the last times will result in the ending of the world."

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

- A. In this section of Luke (19:51-19:58):
 - 1. "Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on" (12:22),
 - 2. Be rich toward God (12:21, 33,34),
 - 3. Be ready (12:40),
 - 4. Be penitent (15:18),
 - 5. Be prudent (16:1-13),
 - 6. Be kind (16:19-31),
 - 7. Be forgiving (17:1-4),
 - 8. Be faithful (17:5) and
 - 9. Be prepared (17:22-37).

The Unrighteous Judge

Luke 18:1-8

INTRODUCTION:

- A. The parable of the unrighteous judge follows on the heels of Jesus' dissertation on the day that the Son of man is revealed (17:22-37).
 - 1. The reason it is important to know this is that the setting and audience are the same when Jesus spoke the parable of the unrighteous judge and the widow (18:1-8).
 - 2. He is speaking to His disciples (17:22) ". . . to the end that they ought always to pray and not to faint" (18:1).
- B. Before we look at this parable in detail, let me caution you on one point.
 - 1. Some have appealed to this parable to argue that if you want something from God - anything at all - all you have to do is pester Him to death and He will relent.
 - 2. The prayer Jesus urges in this story is not for the everyday things. It is prayer that God will vindicate His misunderstood and suffering people.
 - a. This is seen to be the case in verses 7,8.

THE UNRIGHTEOUS JUDGE:

- A. There are two primary characters in the story.
 - 1. The first one we are introduced to is a judge in a city.
 - a. He is described as a man "who feared not God and regarded not man" (18:2).
 - b. Brother Wayne Jackson once remarked that this is the most fearful character type the Bible describes.
 - c. How would you like to depend on such a judge for a just decision? What would motivate him to judge righteously?
 - 1) A fear of God? or the judgment?
 - 2) An interest in man? or love for man?
 - 2. The second character we are introduced to is a widow who lived in that same city.
 - a. Think for just a moment about the image a widow conjures up in your mind.

- 1) We are not talking about a society in which a widow is financially cared for better in her husband's death than when he is living.
 - 2) A widow in the ancient East was exposed to all kinds of oppression. They were desolate. That is why God has always instructed man to care for them as well as orphans.
 - a) Consider:
 - (1) "Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child" (Ex 22:22).
 - (2) "Thou shalt not wrest the justice due to the sojourner or to the fatherless, nor take the widow, raiment to pledge" (Deut 24:17 - "as a pledge").
 - (3) "Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (Jas 1: 27).
 - 3) So, the image a widow should conjure up in our minds is that of a poor and defenseless woman, probably an older woman.
- b. Jesus said that such a woman came often to the judge in her city saying, "Avenge me of mine adversary" (18:3).
- 1) Why did she come to him so often? Because he did nothing about her dilemma? It also says something about the importance of her problem. It was not something she could let pass.
 - 2) Remember, the judge cannot be motivated by either his fear of God or his regard (or care) for man - because he had none of either.
 - 3) This also highlights the conflict in the story.

- B. Eventually, the judge succumbs and avenges her - but not because he has changed. He has developed no reverence for God nor any regard for her.
1. What has motivated him to execute justice for her is that he is afraid she will wear him out by her constant pestering. (Parents know what this is like!)
 2. It is at this point Jesus says, "Hear what the unrighteous judge saith" (18:6).
 3. And here is His point: ". . . shall not God avenge his elect, that cry to him day and night and yet he is longsuffering over them? I say unto you, that he will avenge them speedily."

- a. First of all, notice the comparison drawn between the characters in the parable and the ones to whom Jesus compares them (see McGarvey, p. 535).
 - 1) The unrighteous judge who has no fear of God or regard for man is contrasted with the longsuffering God of heaven who truly cares for mankind (a just God and an unrighteous judge).
 - 2) While the widow is a bother to the judge with her continual cries for justice, the cries of the saints go up to God and He is eager to hear us (a despised widow and the beloved elect).
 - a) Our prayers are depicted as being mixed with incense as they rise up to the throne of God (Rev 8:3,4).
 - 3) One similarity is the cries of the widow and the elect to be avenged.
- b. Secondly, notice how long it took for the judge in the story to respond. The widow, out of necessity, came to him *often* before he would relent.
 - 1) Some may interpret God's timing in avenging His saints as inopportune. Some grow impatient with God and His timing.
 - 2) But Jesus assures His disciples, "I say unto you, that he will avenge them speedily" (18:8) - which does not necessarily mean immediately or without delay.
 - 3) Coming "speedily" can also mean quickly or suddenly.
 - a) Because persecution is not always quickly vindicated, the idea may point more to the idea of *how* He will come rather than *when* He will come.
 - b) His coming will be sudden, like a thief in the night, but the time of His coming is indefinite.

C. The message?

1. R. C. Trench, "If a bad man will yield to the mere force of the importunity which he hates, how much more certainly will a righteous God be prevailed on by the faithful prayer which He loves?"
2. Jesus is teaching His disciples to:
 - a. Pray without discouragement and
 - b. Be patient in prayer until the Lord returns.

APPLICATION:

- A. This parable addresses, at least in principle, the issue of theodicy - sin, suffering and the existence of God.
 - 1. In 17:22 Jesus said, "The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man and ye shall not see it."
 - a. Let me speculate here. The days of the Son of man may very well point to the many days throughout history in which God casts His judgment against a nation or people - i.e., A.D. 70.
 - b. "The day that the Son of man is revealed" refers to the last day - the final judgment (17:30).
 - c. So Jesus, in 17:22, may be saying that when persecution arises against you, you will desire to see one of those days - a day in which God avenges you and you will not see it.
 - 2. But what is a Christian to do if such is the situation for him?
 - a. He "ought always to pray and not to faint" (18:1).
 - b. Be assured that God will "avenge His elect" (18:7).
- B. There are several examples to draw from when God's people cried out to Him to bring an end to their troubles.
 - 1. Read :
 - a. Psa 25:1-3.
 - b. Rev 6:9-11.
 - c. Remember the children of Israel in Egypt.
 - 2. Also there are the passages exhorting us to remain faithful - even unto death.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 15:58 "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord."
 - b. Of the impending destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus said, "And because iniquity shall be multiplied, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved" (Mt 24:12, 13).
 - c. Revelation 2:10.
 - d. "Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal 6:9).

- C. Jesus spoke this parable to His disciples “to the end that they ought always to pray and not to faint” (18:1).

The Pharisee and the Publican

Luke 18:9-14

INTRODUCTION:

- A. One of the amazing features of our Lord's teachings is His ability to create a story or parable on the spur of the moment to meet the teaching needs of His audience.
 - 1. These stories are among some of the most memorable in all literature.
 - 2. It would take a great deal of time to carefully construct a brief story but then it would not come close to matching His masterpieces.
 - 3. The brevity of the parables makes them conducive for remembering; and being so memorable, they are calculated to cause us to ponder their meaning - to plumb their depths.
- B. One such parable is found in Luke 18:9-14.
 - 1. Those to whom Jesus addressed the parable were "certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and set all others at naught." (18:9).
 - 2. In the parable itself there are two primary characters.
 - a. One was a Pharisee.
 - 1) Now to this point in the book the Pharisees already have a bad name.
 - a) Luke 11:42-44.
 - b) After pronouncing His woes on the Pharisees and lawyers, they "... began to press upon Him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things; laying wait for him, to catch something out of His mouth." (11:53, 54).
 - c) Jesus told His disciples, "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisee, which is hypocrisy" (12:1).
 - d) In 16:14 Luke informs us that the Pharisees were "lovers of money."
 - b. The other character in Jesus' parable was a publican. A publican was a "collector or renter of Roman taxes" - ASV, footnote.
 - 1) The interesting thing about publicans is that they were despised by the general public and classified, in the same breath, with sinners by the Pharisees.

- 2) They were characterized as extortioners even by our Lord.
 - a) Some came to be baptized asking Jesus, "Teacher, what must we do?" and Jesus said, "Extort no more than that which is appointed you" (Lk 3:12,13).
 - 3) Luke 5:27-32.
 - 4) In Luke 7:29 the publicans were contrasted with the Pharisee in this fashion:
 - a) The publicans were the ones who, having heard Jesus preach, "glorified God, being baptized with the baptism of John."
 - b) "But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him" (7:30).
 - 5) It was the publicans and sinners who drew near to hear Jesus preach. And because of this, the Pharisees and scribes would murmur; "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them" (15:2).
 - a) Knowing this, Jesus spoke the parable of the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost (prodigal) son (Lk 15).
 - 6) Ironically, the publicans were rejected by the religious leaders of the day, but received by the Lord.
- c. Jesus began His parable by telling us, "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee and the other a publican" (Lk 18:10).
- 1) "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get" (18:11,12).
 - a) Jesus said the Pharisee "prayed with himself." Even though he addresses God, this is nothing more than a rehearsal of his own deeds for his own self-satisfaction.
 - b) A. T. Robertson: "... his gratitude to God is for his own virtue, not for God's mercies to him."
 - c) Then he lists items of which he was not guilty.
 - 2) The Pharisee in Jesus' parable perfectly depicts the audience to whom Jesus addressed the parable: "... certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and set all others at naught" - the arrogant self-righteous.

- d. "But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, God, be thou merciful to me a sinner" (18:13).
 - 1) Both men went to the temple to pray.
 - 2) The Pharisee stood and prayed with himself; the publican, standing afar off, depicting a humility in spirit, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven. (Can you see them?!).
 - 3) The Pharisee listed his accomplishments; the publican listed none.
 - 4) The Pharisee did not so much as hint at a need for God. The publican prayed, "God, be thou merciful to me . . ."
 - 5) The Pharisee so much as declared himself righteous. The publican called himself a sinner.

C. Jesus' stories (parables) have the amazing ability to catch us relating to the "bad guy" without at first realizing that he is the "bad guy."

1. In an initial reading of this parable we may ask ourselves, "What is wrong with *not* being like the rest of men; men who are extortioners, unjust, adulterers; or fasting and giving alms?"
2. But when we are introduced to the humble-spirited publican we realize that Jesus catches us relating with the Pharisee - that is exactly what it is designed to do.
 - a. Once we learn of the humble stance of the publican, we immediately distance ourselves from the arrogant self-righteousness of the Pharisee.
 - b. Jesus even tells us, "I say unto you, This man (the publican) went down to his house justified rather than the other" (18:14). The Pharisee trusted in *himself*. The publican trusted in *the mercy of God*.
3. The publican was justified because, ". . . every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (18:14).
 - a. There is nothing inherently wrong with *not being* an extortioner (that is the crime of the publicans), not being unjust or not being an adulterer. This is good.
 - b. There is nothing inherently wrong in fasting twice a week or giving tithes of all we have. The question is, "When are these activities and qualities effective with God?"

- c. The minute we begin trusting in *ourselves* that *we* are righteous for having done these things, we ought to be able to smell the burning flames of fire and brimstone!
- 4. Many of us can probably recall making similar statements to that of the Pharisee about our own condition prior to salvation.
 - a. We may have reasoned with the one who taught us the, "Why do you say I am lost? I have never murdered, committed adultery or intentionally lied. I even pray and give money to charitable works."

INTERPRETATION:

- A. Obviously the Pharisee is to be paralleled with "certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and set all others at naught."
- B. The publican depicts for us the right response to God.
 - 1. The publican was poor in spirit. He would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven.
 - 2. He was mourning over his sinfulness. He smote his breast and called himself a sinner.
 - 3. He was meek, acknowledging his dependence on God.
 - 4. He was a man who hungered and thirsted after righteousness. Jesus said, "This man went down to his house justified rather than the other."
 - 5. The Pharisee did all he did to be seen *by men*. The publican did not take his humble stance to be seen of men, but to be seen and heard *by God*.
- C. These stories are designed to move us to a response. The response Jesus elicits from us is that we not think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think (Rom 12:3).
 - 1. The parable was designed to expose the arrogant self-righteousness of certain ones in His audience.
 - a. He did so by first of all getting them to relate with the Pharisee in the story.
 - b. He then passes judgment that the publican, not the Pharisee, was justified because the Pharisees trusted in themselves that they were righteous.
 - c. Jesus' parable was designed to cause His audience to question the reliability of their particular mind-set and to change.

RIGHTEOUSNESS:

- A. This parable points to a number of other passages in the Bible relating to it. For example:
1. Romans 3:20 - “. . . by (the) works of (the) law shall no flesh be justified in his sight.”
 2. Matthew 5:20 - “For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisee, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.”
 3. Philippians 3:1-16.

APPLICATION:

- A. The modern-day spirit of the Pharisee might reason: “I thank you that I am not like other men; swindlers, unjust, adulterers or even as a lawyer or politician. I was baptized and attend church services three times a week, I give of my means . . .”
1. Paul shared with us his list in Philippians 3. The Pharisee shared his list in Luke 18:10ff.
 2. Nothing is wrong with the items listed - unless we trust in them to save us independently of the grace and mercy of God.
 3. What list would you make? What is your attitude toward it?

What Shall I Do to Inherit Eternal Life?

Luke 18:18-30

INTRODUCTION:

- A. One of the more significant themes of Luke's book on the life of Christ is that of the kingdom of God.
 - 1. If you will remember, in the previous text (17:20) the Pharisees asked Jesus when the kingdom of God was coming.
 - 2. What would provoke them to ask such a question?
 - a. Toward the beginning of the book, the people of Capernaum wanted Jesus to stay with them after they saw the power He displayed but Jesus said, "I must preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God to the other cities also: for therefore was I sent" (4:43).
 - b. He also enlisted 12 men to the same work (8:1; 9:1,2).
 - c. Jesus said, "The law and the prophets were until John; from that time the of the kingdom of God is preached and every man entereth violently into it" (16:16).
 - d. In the process of proclaiming the nearness of the kingdom, they went about healing the sick, casting out demons and bestowing sight to the blind (7:21f; 9:1,2; 11:20).
- B. Luke focuses on various aspects of that kingdom. That is because it was a primary work of our Lord.
 - 1. He has been answering questions concerning it (17:20).
 - 2. He has identified the evidence of its nearness.
 - 3. He has addressed misconceptions concerning it.
 - 4. And He has identified the character of its citizens.
 - a. The poor will more readily enter it than the rich (6:70; 18:24,25).
 - b. No man looking back is fit to be a citizen (9:62).
 - c. Entrance is not granted by accident or in ignorance. Those who enter are those who seek it above all else (12:31). Joseph of Arimathea is described as a man who was looking for the kingdom of God (23:51).
 - d. They are like little children (18:16,17).
- C. More recently, here is what we have studied.

1. Jesus tells the disciples of the difficulties which will accompany them because they are His disciples. "The days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man and ye shall not see it" (17:22).
2. But in spite of such adversity, he encourages them with a parable that affirms God's care and concern for them (18:1-8).
3. He warns them against exalting themselves by telling a parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and set all others at naught (18:9-14).
4. This is followed by the admonition, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein" (18:17).

D. This is where our text fits in.

1. Jesus is approached by a certain ruler who asks Him the question, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (18:18).
2. Jesus delineates what it takes to be His disciple - a citizen of the kingdom of God. He does so by helping us to see what our attitude toward material things (riches) ought to be. This is not the first time Jesus addressed this issue.
 - a. He addressed the issue of materialism in the parable of the rich fool (12:13-21).
 - b. He addressed it when He spoke of anxiety and treasuring up for ourselves treasures in heaven (12:22-34).
 - c. When He spoke of the exacting nature of discipleship He said, "Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (14:33).
 - d. He informed us that we cannot serve both God and mammon (16:1-13).
 - e. He depicted the foolish trust some place in their possessions by characterizing them as running for them when He returns (17:31-33).
 - f. In Luke 18:18-30 Jesus spoke with a man who will lose his soul over his material possessions.

LUKE 18:18-30.

- A. As can be surmised by the various people who speak in this text, a group of some sort is listening in on the initial discussion between the rich young ruler and Jesus.
 1. Luke simply begins by telling us that a certain ruler asked Jesus the question, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

- a. His question fits into the general discussion of the kingdom of God because eternal life is in the kingdom of God.
- b. In a few moments, Jesus relates the man's question to the kingdom of God by saying, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" - that is, into the realm where God rules and reigns supreme.
- c. But notice that the ruler addresses Jesus with respect by saying, "Good Teacher."
- d. Jesus seizes the opportunity to let the young man know what is implied by the address.
 - 1) "Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, even God" (18:19).
 - 2) Jesus said, "None is good, save one, even God."
 - 3) In the absolute sense, no one but God is good. He is infinitely good.
 - 4) We all hope to hear our Lord say, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Mt 25:21,23) and, if we do, it will only indicate that we were good to a degree.
 - a) Jesus spoke of the good man bringing forth that which is good because there was good treasure in his heart (6:45) - but he is only good to a degree.
 - b) Those with an honest and good heart are the ones who hear the word of God, hold it fast and bring forth fruit with patience (8:15) - but they are only good to a degree. They were not bringing forth fruit until the word was planted.
 - 5) So, Jesus seizes the opportunity to let the ruler know what was implied by this respectful address.
2. Jesus then went right to the question (18:20).
3. The ruler replied, "All these things have I observed from my youth up" (18:21).
4. Jesus' response (18:22).
 - a. Jesus spoke earlier of laying up for ourselves treasures in heaven (12:33) and being rich toward God (12:21) and that where our treasure is, there will our heart be also (12:34).
 - b. "But when he heard these things, he became exceeding sorrowful; for he was very rich" (18:23).

5. Jesus, seeing him, observes: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to enter in through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (18:24,25).

a. Those standing by asked, "Then who can be saved?"

b. Their question exposes their idea that wealth is always a sign of God's favor and approval. If a rich man will not make it, who has a chance?

c. 18:27-30.

1) While the rich man may let his riches bar him from heaven, God is able to save the poor.

2) The financial status of an individual is not what guarantees eternal life or bars one from the gates of heaven. It is his attitude toward his financial status that will make the difference.

3) Timothy was told to "charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not high-minded, nor have their hopes set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God" (1 Tim 6:17f).

a) They are to be ready to distribute, willing to communicate where the need of others is concerned.

(1) McCord: "willing to give and to share."

(2) NIV - "To be generous and willing to share."

b) The rich man of Luke 16:19-31 was unwilling to share even the crumbs which fell from his table.

c) The rich ruler of Luke 18 set his affections on his earthly treasures. He trusted in them and could not live without them.

d) So, when the Lord required Him to renounce all that he has (14:33) he became "exceeding sorrowful; for he was very rich" (18:23).

B. When Peter affirmed that he and the other apostles had left their houses to follow Jesus, our Lord told him rewards would be granted for those who forsook all.

"There is no man that hath left house, or wife, or brethren, or parents, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this time and in the world to come eternal life" (18:29,30).

1. The bottom line appears to be this: do not trust in yourselves or your riches to care for you. Riches are uncertain (1 Tim 6:17). They place people's

feet on slippery ground if they trust in them (Psa 73:18). Rather trust in God to provide for you. Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness (Mt 6:33).

2. Geldenhuys: God “. . . does not call upon everyone to sell his belongings or to leave his family, but He calls upon all to surrender to Him unconditionally the first place in their hearts and lives” (p. 460, 461, *New International Critical Commentary, Luke*).

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

- A. We are here discussing things pertaining to the kingdom of God. It is not something to be missed. But will you miss it because you harbor some unhealthy passions for your possessions?
 1. Are you using your riches for the kingdom of God's sake or will you walk away exceeding sorrowful after hearing this lesson because you too are very rich?
 2. Where is your treasure? There you will find your heart.
 3. Remember, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (16:13).
 4. The happiness of a godly man is not dependent on the gain or loss of fortunes, but is rather dependent on His relationship with God.
- B. When the rich young ruler asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life, Jesus told him to sell all that he had and to distribute to the poor. In so doing he would have treasure in heaven.
 1. Jesus told him to sell all because his riches are where his heart was.
 2. What would the Lord ask of you?
 - a. If your treasure is anywhere other than heaven, that is what He would ask you to give up.
 - b. Unless we renounce *all*, we cannot be His disciples (14:33).
 3. To some Jesus would say:
 - a. “If thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out and cast it from thee” (Mt 5:29).
 - b. “If thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off and cast it from thee” (Mt 5:30).
 - c. To the rich young ruler Jesus said, in so many words, “Since your riches cause you to stumble, sell all you have and distribute it to the poor and come follow me.”

Zacchaeus

Luke 19:1-10

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Luke focuses his attention on the rich man more so than any other chronicler of the life of Christ.
 - 1. Matthew only refers to two rich men: the rich ruler (19:16ff) and Joseph of Arimathea (27:57).
 - 2. Luke makes brief reference to the rich men who cast their money into the treasury (Lk 21:1), along with the rich man of Luke 18:18-30.
 - 3. John makes reference to no one who is “rich.”
 - 4. Matthew, Mark and Luke cite Jesus’ warning concerning the deceitfulness of riches. This warning was issued in Jesus’ parable of the sower (Mt 13:22; Mk 4:19; Lk 8:14).
 - 5. Mark and Luke both quote Jesus’ saying on how hard it is for a rich man to be saved.
 - 6. But it is Luke who makes reference to six rich men and their attitudes toward riches. Some of the rich men in Luke’s account are characters in parables Jesus presented.
- B. General survey of rich men:
 - 1. The first rich man we run across in Luke’s account is a character in one of Jesus’ parables. He is a rich fool who devoted all his life to his property and spent no time preparing for eternity.
 - a. The night he concluded that he could take life easy and eat, drink and be merry the Lord said to him, “Thou foolish one, this night is thy should required of thee” (12:20).
 - b. Jesus concluded, “So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God” (12:21).
 - 2. The next rich man we come across is the one with the prudent steward. He was as corrupt as his lying steward (Lk 16:1-13).
 - a. In this parable we are exhorted to be prudent.
 - b. We are instructed to be faithful with our use of money (referred to as “unrighteous mammon”).
 - c. We are informed that no servant can serve two masters. “Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (16:13).

3. The third rich man we read about is the one who would not so much as feed the poor man, Lazarus, the crumbs from his table.
 - a. He had not learned the art of making friends by means of what he possessed.
 - b. When he and Lazarus died, we saw a great reversal of fortunes.
 - c. This man's riches did not serve, nor save him from the fate of eternal torments.
 4. The next rich man Luke writes about is the one who addressed Jesus as "Good Teacher" and asked, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"
 - a. When Jesus told him to sell all he had, distribute to the poor and to come, follow Him, he became exceedingly sorrowful "for he was very rich" (18:23).
 - b. It is on this occasion that Jesus exclaimed, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" (18:24).
 5. Later on in Luke's account we get to watch, with Jesus, the rich men who were casting their gifts into the treasury.
 - a. Jesus said, on that occasion, that the poor widow who cast in her two mites, which was all she had, gave more than they all.
 6. While Luke does not explicitly inform us that Joseph of Arimathea is rich, he is mentioned in Luke 23:51. Matthew informs us that he was a rich man (27:57).
- C. The one rich man I omitted in this general survey is Zacchaeus. He is the focus of our lesson and an example of a rich man who found favor in Jesus' sight.

ZACCHAEUS:

- A. Zacchaeus.
1. He is the subject of a children's song:

"Zacchaeus was a wee little man, A wee little man was he.
He climbed up in a sycamore tree, For the Lord he wanted to see,
For the Lord he wanted to see.

"And as the Savior passed that way, He looked up in the tree,
And He said, 'Zacchaeus, you come down, For I'm going to your house today,
For I'm going to your house today.'"
 2. Luke tells us he was a resident of Jericho.
 - a. Jericho is the obvious setting for the story.

- b. In chapter 18 we learn that Jesus entered Jericho and there healed a blind man.
 - c. Because of the healing, a great commotion stirred as people glorified God.
- 3. He was a chief publican and was rich (19:2).
 - a. McGarvey: "Herod the Great had raised Jericho to opulence, and to be rich in such a city was no small matter" (p. 562).
- 4. He was small in stature.
- 5. He wanted to see Jesus due to all the commotion He had created but, because of the crowd and his small stature, he had to climb a sycamore tree somewhere down the road where he surmised Jesus would pass.
- 6. He did not go unnoticed.
 - a. Have you ever sat on the roadside or on a curb to watch a dignitary or celebrity in a parade pass by?
 - b. Can you imagine being singled out by that dignitary as he calls you by name?
 - c. That is what happened to Zacchaeus. But there was a miraculous element to the encounter that we should not let pass by.
 - d. Zacchaeus had never met the Lord.
 - 1) Luke tells us "he sought to see Jesus who he was" (19:3).
 - 2) When Jesus came to the place where Zacchaeus climbed the tree, the Lord looked up and called him by name. "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for today I must abide at thy house" (19:5).
 - 3) This is the only place recorded where Jesus invited Himself to be anyone's guest.
 - e. The Lord knew the hearts of men. He knew Zacchaeus was noted among those of the despised professional tax collectors and that he was rich.
 - 1) Why would the Lord purposely select his house?
 - 2) In fact, notice how the crowd responded. "They all murmured, saying, He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner" (19:7). Zacchaeus was an outcast.
 - f. Zacchaeus was not the first publican to whom Jesus had shown compassion and attention.. In fact, the publicans, the outcasts of

society, were more inclined to draw near to Jesus than the Jewish leaders of the day (see Lk 15:1,2).

B. Due to the encounter with the Lord, a great change took place in Zacchaeus.

1. When they entered his house, Zacchaeus stood and said, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold."
2. The way some translations render Zacchaeus' commitment, it sounds as if he was already in the practice of doing the things he expounded to Jesus.
3. But it is more likely the case that he practiced extortion and that his change of heart occurred in his meeting with Jesus.
 - a. NIV chose to render Zacchaeus' words: "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."
 - b. I could cite the various commentaries, but they all agree that this story depicts a change of heart and not a statement explaining how he had been conducting the financial affairs of his life.

C. Notice these contrasts:

1. For Zacchaeus, giving half of his possession to the poor and restoring what he had exacted from others was indicative of a change of heart.
 - a. In Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and publican, the Pharisee's not being an extortioner and giving tithes of all he obtained was nothing more than evidence that he trusted in himself and a means of setting all others at naught.
2. When the Lord left Zacchaeus' house, Zacchaeus was a happy man because that day salvation came to his house (19:9).
 - a. The rich ruler in the previous chapter turned away from Jesus exceeding sorrowful because he would not part with his riches.
3. Luke records a visit between Mary and Elizabeth in the beginning of his book. Mary spoke by the Spirit exalting God.
 - a. In her exaltation she said of God, "The hungry he hath filled with good things; And the rich he hath sent empty away" (1:53).
 - b. Think how this applies to the rich people in the book:
 - 1) The rich fool of Jesus' parable in chapter 12 amassed for himself a fortune "... and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?" (12:20).

- 2) The rich man at whose gate Lazarus was thrown, was sent to torments at his death.
 - 3) The rich ruler of Luke 18:18-23 came seeking eternal life, but left exceeding sorrowful "for he was very rich."
- c. But Zacchaeus was not sent away empty.
- 1) He repented.
 - 2) He made for himself friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness so that, when they failed, he would be received into the eternal tabernacles (16:9).
 - 3) He gave much of what he had to the poor, thus laying up for himself treasure in heaven (18:22) and
 - 4) The Lord blessed him with salvation.
- D. Why did Jesus pick the house of one of societies undesirables? "For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (19:10).
1. He is not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet 3:9).
 - a. Mark tells us that when the rich ruler of Luke 18 came to Jesus with his inquiry concerning eternal life that Jesus looked upon him and loved him and said "One thing thou lackest . . ." (Mk 10:21).
 - 1) Mark 10:22 "But his countenance fell at the saying and he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions" (cf. Lk 19:22).
 - 2) He did not repent. The Lord loved him and told him what he lacked - but he did not repent.
 - b. Zacchaeus repented.
 - 1) He gave half of his goods to the poor and
 - 2) Those he wronged in his tax gathering, he restored fourfold (restitution).
 2. It is not whether a man is rich or poor that secures him heaven or consigns him to hell. It is where he places his trust and his attitude toward his economical status and what he does with what he has that makes the difference.
 3. From time to time we need to examine ourselves to see if there is not some-thing/s that the Lord would have us renounce.

Parable of the Pounds

Luke 19:11-27

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In the previous lesson we looked at Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-10 and how he fits into so many other “rich man” themes in Luke’s account. Remember, Luke tells us about:
1. The rich fool of Jesus’ parable (12:13-21).
 2. The rich man and the corrupt manager (16:1-13).
 3. The rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31).
 4. The rich ruler who walked away exceeding sorrowful, for he was very rich (18:18-30).
 5. The rich publican, Zacchaeus (19:1-10).
 6. The rich contributing at the temple (21:1-4).
- B. Zacchaeus’ house is the setting for our next text (19:11-27).
1. To his household and to those that must have accompanied them from the city of Jericho, Jesus tells the parable of the pounds.
 2. Luke tells us, “And as they heard these things (that is, the things Jesus spoke to Zacchaeus), He added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear” (19:11).
 3. Let us take a side trip for a moment:
 - a. In the main section we have been in for some time now (9:51-19:48) there have been several references to Jesus setting his face toward Jerusalem.
 - 1) 9:51- “And it came to pass, when the days were well-nigh come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.”
 - 2) 13:22 - “And he went on his way through cities and villages, teaching and journeying on unto Jerusalem.”
 - 3) 17:11 - “And it came to pass, as they were on the way to Jerusalem, that he was passing along the borders of Samaria and Galilee.”
 - 4) 18:31 - “And he took unto him the twelve and said unto them, Behold, we go to Jerusalem and all these things that are

written through the prophets shall be accomplished unto the Son of Man.”

- 5) 19:11 - The parable of the pounds is spoken “because he was nigh to Jerusalem and, because they supposed that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear.”
- b. Tied in with Jerusalem is:
 - 1) That Jesus would be “received up” (9:51).
 - 2) That “all the things that are written through the prophets shall be accomplished unto the Son of man” (18:31).
- c. But the expectations associated with Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem were opposite of what was to actually occur.
 - 1) They expected Him to be crowned as king, supposing “the kingdom of God was immediately to appear” (19:11).
 - 2) And because of their misconceptions concerning the kingdom, Jesus found it necessary to teach them the need for patience and the need to work in His absence.
 - 3) He does so in the parable of the pounds.
 - 4) It fits in beautifully with one of the main themes of the book - the kingdom of God.

THE PARABLE OF THE POUNDS:

- A. There are three primary characters or groups of characters.
 1. First of all, we are introduced to a “certain nobleman.” A nobleman is a man who is “well-born” or “high-born.”
 - a. Jesus says this nobleman “went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return” (19:12).
 - b. Nothing is said of the character of this man.
 2. The second set of characters in the parable are ten servants.
 - a. The nobleman called for the 10 servants and gave them each the same amount of money - one pound each (a “mina,” which is equal to one hundred drachma, according to the ASV, footnote).
 - b. The nobleman told them to use the money he gave them to trade (in the Greek language *pragmateusasthe*) with “till I come” (NIV: “Put this money to work until I come back”).

3. The third set of characters are the citizens who lived in the nobleman's region.
 - a. The citizens sent an ambassage or delegation to the powers that be saying, "We will not that this man reign over us" (19:14). (NIV: "We do not want this man to be our king").
- B. One of the quickest ways of getting to the heart of a story is to identify the conflicts involved. There are two primary conflicts in Jesus' parable.
1. The first conflict to arise is the last one to be resolved. It is the conflict that the citizens have in the nobleman being made king.
 - a. He is nevertheless made king and receives his kingdom.
 - b. The parable ends with this word concerning them: "But these mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over them, being hither and slay them before me" (vs. 27).
 2. The second conflict is with one of the nobleman's servants.
 - a. The instructions as to what to do with the money he gave his servants were clear: "Trade ye herewith till I come" (vs.13).
 - b. When the nobleman returned after having received his kingdom he summoned his servants "that he might know what they had gained by trading" (19:15).
 - 1) The money was his and
 - 2) He expected some kind of return through trading.
 - c. The servants:
 - 1) The first servant made ten pounds through the trading of one pound.
 - a) "Well done, thou good servant: because thou wast faithful in very little, have thou authority over ten cities" (19: 17).
 - 2) The second servant to present himself had obtained five pounds through trading of one pound.
 - a) "Be thou also over five cities" (19:19).
 - 3) But the third servant had not engaged in trading, thus had acquired nothing. So he said, "Lord, behold, here is thy pound, whither I kept laid up in a napkin: for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that which thou layedst not down and reapest that which thou didst not sow" (19:20,21).

- a) 19:22-26 - The nobleman's judgment against the third servant.

INTERPRETATION:

A. The characters:

1. The nobleman in the story is a figure of Christ who went to a far country, heaven, to receive a kingdom - which He did when He was seated at the right hand of the throne of God.
2. The servants of the nobleman are the disciples of Christ.
 - a. These servants are entrusted with a commission to trade and to be productive until the nobleman returns.
 - b. They are given something that belongs to the nobleman and are told what to do with it.
3. The citizens who say, "We will not that this man reign over us" are the Jews who reject Jesus as King and others who reject Him as well.

B. The conflict:

1. Jesus has entrusted His message in earthen vessels - His disciples; and what His disciples do with that message and whatever else He has entrusted to our care will ultimately require an accounting by us.
 - a. In chapter 16, in the parable of the unrighteous steward, by way of application, Jesus said this: "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much: and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?" (16:10-12).
 - b. Notice what the nobleman said to the first servant: "Well done, thou good servant: because thou wast found faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities" (19:17).
2. The second conflict is found in the displeasure of the citizens over the nobleman being made king to rule over them.
 - a. I am persuaded that there is a two-fold reference where the citizens are concerned.
 - 1) First of all, an obvious reference that these citizens are the Jews.
 - a) In fact, words similar to the ones uttered in the parable are spoken by them with reference to Jesus.

- (1) When Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priest answered, "We have no king but Caesar" (Jn 19:15).
 - (2) The Jews even told Pilate, with reference to the placard he nailed on the cross : "Write not, The King of the Jews, but, that He said, I am King of the Jews" (Jn 19:21).
 - b) See Luke 23:13-25.
 - c) And the reference to the enemies of the nobleman being slain before him may very well refer to the destruction of the Israelite nation in A.D. 70.
- 2) But the application of this parable extends beyond A.D. 70 to the end of time when all who reject Christ as King to reign over them will be cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.
 - a) Psalm 2 makes prophetic reference to Jesus being rejected by the kings of the earth as they say, "Let us break their bonds asunder and cast away their cords from us" (2:3).
 - b) Acts 4:23-28.
 - c) The Gentiles took part in the rejection and crucifixion of Christ.
 - (1) He was not the Christ of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also.
 - (2) He was not rejected by the Jews only, but the Gentiles also.
- 3. This parable does serious damage to some premillennial concepts.
 - a. The citizens of the story let it be known that they do not want the nobleman for a king, but he is made king nevertheless (NIV: "He was made king, however, and returned home").
 - b. One premillennial teaching, by Hal Lindsey, is that the establishment of the kingdom of Christ had to be postponed due to His rejection by the Jews as king.
 - c. Who says so?
 - d. I have contended for years that the establishment of His kingdom was never dependent on man's acceptance or rejection of Him as king.

- e. I discovered this quote from the denominational scholar, Geldenhuys: "The Jews' hate and rejection of the Saviour, however, did not affect His reinstallation in power and glory or His reception of the divine kingship. By His ascension He has already been exalted to the right hand of the majesty on high and at the final Consummation He will return in full glory, then the faithful will have to render an account of the execution of their vocation as labourers in His vineyard . . ." (p. 475, *New International Critical Commentary*).

APPLICATION:

- A. The application of the parable seems clear enough when we consider it in light of the occasion that prompted it.
 - 1. Remember, Jesus spoke this parable because He was near Jerusalem. His nearness to that great city prompted all kinds of speculative ideas in the minds of His disciples - which introduces the reason given for the parable. Some supposed that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear.
 - 2. Jesus combats their faulty notions by telling them the story of a nobleman who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return (19:12).
 - 3. The parable is designed to do two things (R. C. Trench):
 - a. To teach us of the need to wait patiently for Christ's return (much like His message in 17:22-37).
 - b. To teach us to work prudently in His absence.
 - 4. See James 5:7-11 in light of this parable.
- B. You and I will face an inevitable accounting concerning those things God has entrusted to our care:
 - 1. Time,
 - 2. Money,
 - 3. The Gospel and
 - 4. Family and friends.

Jesus Weeps Again

Luke 19:29-48

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In an earlier lesson we noted the number of references Luke gives to the fact that Jesus has set His course for Jerusalem (9:51; 13:22; 17:11; 18:31; 19:11).
 - 1. Jesus associates Jerusalem with.
 - a. His being received up (9:51).
 - b. “All the things that are written through the prophets shall be accomplished unto the Son of man” (18:31). He shall be:
 - 1) Delivered up to the Gentiles,
 - 2) Mocked,
 - 3) Shamefully treated,
 - 4) Spit upon,
 - 5) Scourged,
 - 6) Killed and
 - 7) On the third day He shall rise again.
 - 2. Of interest is the fact that even though He spelled out what would happen to Him, His disciples understood none of these things (18:34).
- B. After having visited Zacchaeus, Luke writes, “And when he had thus spoken, he went on before, going up to Jerusalem.”
 - 1. When He approached Bethphage and Bethany He sent two of His disciples into town to get a colt.
 - 2. His disciples brought the colt from the city, threw their garments on the beast and Jesus sat on it to complete the final leg of His journey and to enter Jerusalem.
 - 3. While His disciples rejoiced, Jesus wept.

KEY NOTES OF INTEREST:

- A. The first note of interest is the means by which Jesus approached and entered Jerusalem.
 - 1. His disciples were told to go fetch a colt from Bethany.

2. The colt, or donkey, has usually been viewed as a dumb, stubborn beast of burden.
 - a. It is ridden by peasants or poor people.
 - b. In the movies they many times carry the comic relief in the story - like a fat and funny friar.
 - c. They many times conjure up the picture of stubbornness and stupidity. (I.e., "He is as stubborn as a mule.")
3. But in the ancient East, the colt (donkey) was held in high esteem.
 - a. They carried the sons of judges (Judg 10:4).
 - b. David's colt was used in the coronation of Solomon (1 Kgs 1:33).
 - c. McGarvey says the donkey was a symbol of peace.
4. Of unique significance is the fact that the colt Jesus sent His two disciples after was described by Him as one "whereon no man ever yet sat" (19:30).
 - a. Many of the sacrifices offered to Jehovah under the Old Covenant were never to have been yoked (Num 19:2; Deut 21:3).
 - b. Here Jesus asks for a donkey that had never been ridden.
 - c. The mode of entrance was also a fulfillment of prophecy:
 - 1) Zech 9:9 - "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee; he is just and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass (donkey), even upon a colt the foal of an ass."

B. Another interesting aspect of the text is the irony present.

1. Irony, by definition, exists when the reader knows more about what is happening than characters in the story do (p. 361, *Words of Delight*, Glossary).
2. In the event we are focusing on the people are rejoicing and praising God as Jesus approaches Jerusalem, but Jesus is seen weeping as He surveys the city he is about to enter.
3. The people are seen rejoicing and praising God for all of the mighty works they had seen expecting Jesus to claim His kingdom, reign over His people and conquer their enemies.
 - a. There is ample evidence that this is how they thought of the kingdom.
 - 1) He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God cometh (17:20).

- 2) The disciples argued over who would be greatest in the kingdom (22:24-30).
 - 3) There was tremendous disillusionment among Jesus' disciples when He was crucified.
- b. The people's enthusiasm and praise demonstrated their lack of understanding of what awaits their king in Jerusalem. Herein is the irony.
 - c. Luke already informed his readers (18:31-34) that the followers of Jesus did not understand Him when He told them that mocking and death awaited Him.
4. With all of this in mind, it should not be too difficult for us to see why Jesus wept as they rejoiced. They had two different impressions concerning what awaited Him in the city.
 5. Also of note here is that this is the second time in the Bible we are told that Jesus wept.
 - a. The first incident was at the raising of Lazarus (Jn 11:35).
 - b. Luke tells us that when Jesus drew near He saw the city and wept over it (19:41).
 - c. Notice what He says as He weeps - 19:42-44.
 - 1) What Jesus says here, prophetically, came to pass and brought the ultimate demise of Jerusalem to pass in 70 A.D.
 - 2) The Jewish historian, Josephus, records that which took place corresponding with Jesus' prophecy.
 - a) Titus was in charge of the entire operation.
 - b) After some heated debate on how to defeat the walled-in Jerusalemites, it was decided that they would encompass the city with a wall and put garrisons in proper places.
 - (1) This would accomplish a couple of things:
 - (a) It would guard against the Jews' use of known and unknown or secret passages out of the city for provisions.
 - (b) It would speed up Titus' victory so as not to take away from his glory.
 - c) 79,000 were carried off as captives.

- d) 1,100,000 perished in the siege.
- e) Women boiled their own children to sustain their own lives.

6. Is there any wonder why Jesus wept as he drew near and saw the city?

- a. McGarvey: "As he looked upon it He realized the difference between what his coming might mean to it and what it did mean to it."
 - 1) "Between the love and gratitude which his coming should have incited and the hatred and violence which it did incite."
 - 2) "Between the forgiveness, blessing and peace which he desired to bring it and the judgment, wrath and destruction which were coming upon it" (*Fourfold* , p. 578).
- b. "Had Jerusalem hearkened unto Jesus then, he would have saved her from that self-exaltation which proved her ruin. But bigotry and prejudice blinded her eyes" (ibid).
- c. Why would Jerusalem suffer such a fate? "Because thou knewest not the time of the visitation" (19:44).
 - 1) They were blind to the time that had come upon them.
 - 2) The kingdom was at hand and the king was present, but they rejected Him - and their rejection would not go unnoticed or unpunished.

C. There were other times in Jerusalem's history when the threat of destruction was present, but she survived.

- 1. During the reign of Hezekiah, Sennacherib threatened to destroy Jerusalem but God said He would put a spirit in him and he would hear a message and return to his own home town.
 - a. Sennacherib returned home to find his people fighting another people and so, engaged in that battle, leaving Jerusalem alone (2 Kgs 18, 19).
 - b. God promised Hezekiah through Isaiah, "I will defend this city to save it, for mine own sake and for my servant David's sake" (2 Kgs 19: 34).
 - c. That night the angel of Jehovah went forth and attacked the camp of Assyrians and 185,000 of their men were destroyed.
 - d. The next morning, surrounded by dead men, they decided to return home.

2. If God was so willing to save Jerusalem in the past, why not save them from Rome?
 - a. God did not always spare Jerusalem in the past.
 - 1) He permitted Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to destroy it in three sieges: 606 B.C., 597 B.C. and 586 B.C. due to their lack of commitment to Him.
 - b. He was not going to spare it from the power of Rome because they had rejected and murdered His Son.
3. Jesus wept over Jerusalem because He knew things could have been different if they had received Him as their king.
 - a. But, like the disgruntled citizens of His previous parable, they said, "We will not that this man reign over us" (19:14).
 - b. Just like the nobleman who returned as king in spite of their protests, said "these mine, enemies, that would not that I reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me" so God's judgment against the Jews was executed in and around 70 A.D.

APPLICATION:

This all prefigures another day - one Paul spoke of in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10.

By What Authority?

Luke 20:1-8

INTRODUCTION:

- A. While in school, I can remember an instructor telling us that when we study with someone the first thing that needs to be established is that the Bible will be our mutually agreed upon authority to settle whatever questions come up.
 - 1. Experience since then has proven that to be good advice.
- B. Authority has always been an important issue. And it is a big issue in our text (Lk 20:1-8).
 - 1. In Luke 19:45 we are told that Jesus entered into the temple and began to cast out them that sold.
 - a. A similar thing occurred earlier in His ministry (Jn 2:13-22).
 - b. The reason for His actions in both cases is the same.
 - 1) In John 2:16 "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise."
 - 2) In Luke 19:46 He said, "It is written, And my house shall be a house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of robbers."
 - 3) These instances demonstrate Jesus' zeal for the Father's will to be done.
 - 2. In Luke 19:47,48 He began teaching in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes and the principal men of the people sought to destroy Him.
 - a. Their desire, however, was frustrated in that they could not find what they might do.
 - b. They were on the horns of a dilemma:
 - 1) If they let Him continue, their authority would be challenged, but
 - 2) If they did anything against Him the people would oppose them - "for the people all hung upon Him, listening."
- C. On one of those final days (some argue it was the Tuesday prior to His crucifixion) Luke tells us that He was teaching and preaching the good tidings in the temple.
 - 1. It is on this occasion that the Sanhedrin decides to take a stand and to challenge Him publicly.

2. McGarvey argues that the regulation and control of the offices of the temple belonged “unquestionably and exclusively” to the priest and Levites.
3. Jesus had been given authority by none of them for the things He was doing.
4. So they asked Him, “Tell us: By what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave them this authority?” (20:2).
 - a. What they referred to was:
 - 1) Jesus cleansing the temple and
 - 2) Jesus teaching and preaching in the temple.

THE CONFLICT:

- A. What occurs here is another example of the mastery Jesus had in the realm of logic.
 1. This short-lived debate was between the Sanhedrin, no less and Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
 - a. The Sanhedrin came out in full force - chief priests, scribes and elders. They did not send a messenger or even one representative.
 - b. They came “with a great show of authority, hoping to make it apparent to the people that Jesus was an unauthorized, self-appointed meddler in matters over which they had exclusive control” (McGarvey, p. 586, *Fourfold Gospel*).
 2. The issue was that of authority as is demonstrated in the questions they asked.
- B. Jesus placed His opponents on the “horns of a dilemma.”
 1. A dilemma is present in a case (like this) when someone is given only two options to choose from and both options put the one making the choice in a difficult position.
 - a. That is why we can speak of the “horns” of a dilemma.
 - b. Horns are pointed and used by animals to protect themselves.
 - c. No matter what horn you choose you are going to get stuck and it is going to hurt.
 - d. Irving Copi, in his text in logic said, “. . . the dilemma is perhaps the most powerful instrument of persuasion ever devised. It is a devastating weapon in controversy” (p. 255).

- e. Norman Geisler - "A dilemma performs the much needed and often exasperating job of making one think about the implications of what he believes" (p. 68, *Come Let Us Reason*, [with Ronald Brooks]).
 - f. Lionel Ruby adds to these ideas the fact that what makes the dilemma such a powerful tool is that "the one in a dilemma is forced to make a choice between equally undesirable alternatives" (p. 297).
 - 1) If the choice need not be made, or there was a third alternative not presented, there would be no dilemma.
 - 2. This dilemma in which Jesus placed the members of the Sanhedrin was a dilemma only for them. We will see how in a moment.
- C. Here was Jesus' response: "I also will ask you a question; and tell me: The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men?" (20:4).
- 1. His unbelieving opponents huddled together to strategize how they would respond.
 - a. "If we say, From heaven, he will say, Why did ye not believe him?" (horn one).
 - b. "But if we shall say, From men, all the people will stone us: for they are persuaded that John was a prophet" (horn two).
 - 2. They responded by lying. They said they did not know "whence it was."
 - a. Their response tells us that they were not interested in the truth.
 - b. They simply wanted to figure out how to save face and how to escape the wrath of the crowd.
 - 3. So Jesus said, "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."
- D. Herein is the crux of Jesus' argument:
- 1. John baptized by the authority of heaven to prepare the way for the Lord.
 - a. His baptism and preaching were undertaken entirely in the light of the coming of Jesus Christ.
 - b. As forerunner he prepared the way of the Lord.
 - 2. Jesus Christ is the Lord.
 - 3. Therefore, by the authority of heaven John prepared the way for Jesus, who is Lord.
 - 4. Brother Thomas Warren puts the argument in this format:

- a. If we say that the baptism of John is from God, then we should have believed him (and, thus, should have obeyed his baptism) and, if we say that the baptism of John is not from God (but is only from men), then (we are afraid that)the multitude will hurt us (for they hold that John is a prophet).
- b. Either the baptism of John is from God or the baptism of John is not from God.
- c. Therefore, either we should have believed John or we are afraid that the multitudes will hurt us (for they hold that John is a prophet).

E. The dilemma:

- 1. If the Sanhedrin had affirmed that John's baptism was from heaven, then Jesus would have asked them, "Why did ye not believe?"
 - a. What did John say that they should have believed?
 - 1) He called Jesus "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29).
 - 2) John, the apostle, said of John the baptizer: "He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light" (Jn 1:8).
 - b. While the Sanhedrin made this an issue of authority (and it is) Jesus included the issue of faith.
- 2. If the Sanhedrin had said that John's baptism was humanly authorized, they would have offended those present - which was something they did not want to risk, for fear of the crowd (they feared being stoned) which also points to them as being cowards.
- 3. I said earlier that the dilemma in which Jesus placed those religious rulers was only a dilemma for them.
 - a. It was a dilemma only because they had rejected Him as the Messiah and were unwilling to accept the evidence concerning Him.
 - b. If the question were asked of you or me, we would simply say, "John's baptisms is from heaven" acknowledging Jesus' authority as the Son of God.
 - c. But that was the last thing His opponents wanted to confess due to their evil hearts of unbelief.
 - 1) The very next scene in Luke, Jesus speaks a parable that centers on their rejection of Him (20:9ff).
 - 2) The scribes and chief priests perceived that He spoke the parable against them and wanted to take Him then and there - but again they feared the people.

PRINCIPLE:

- A. This text establishes a very important principle where matters of faith and practice are concerned.
 - 1. In asking His opponents the question, "The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men?" He was identifying the fact that all that men do in the realm of faith and practice is done either by the authority of God or by the authority of men.
 - 2. This one point identifies the primary difference between the Lord's church and every other religious body whether it be a denomination or a cult.
 - 3. It all boils down to the issue of authority.
 - a. Jesus told the scribes and Pharisees at an earlier time, "Ye have made void the word of God because of your tradition" (Mt 15:6).
 - b. He then called them hypocrites and quoted Isaiah:

"This people honoreth me with their lips;
But their heart is far from me.
But in vain do they worship me,
Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men"
(Mt 15:8,9; Isa 29:13).
- B. All men, including us, should ask themselves if what they teach and practice is from heaven or from men.
 - 1. Things not from heaven:
 - a. Infant baptism,
 - b. Denominationalism,
 - c. Another and
 - d. Instrumental music in worship.
 - 2. "Try your own selves, whether ye are in the faith; prove your own selves" (2 Cor 13:5).

The Parable of the Husbandmen

Luke 20:9-19

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In our previous lesson the Sanhedrin sent their delegation to Jesus in an attempt to discredit Him in the eyes of His followers.
 - 1. While the religious leaders sought to destroy Him, the crowd hung on every word He spoke (Lk 19:47,48).
 - 2. Jesus was in the temple preaching the good news and His antagonists asked Him by what authority He cleansed the temple and preached in it. None of them ever gave Him the permission.
 - 3. They delicately and cowardly avoided both horns of the dilemma on which Jesus had placed them by saying they had no idea whether John's baptism was from heaven or from men.
 - 4. All of this sets the scene for the parable that follows.
- B. The parable of the husbandmen:
 - 1. A certain man planted a vineyard and let it out to some husbandmen (tenants). He then went away to another country for a long time.
 - 2. When the appropriate time came for the owner of the vineyard to enjoy some of the fruit from his vineyard he sent a servant to retrieve such fruit. He was beaten and sent away empty-handed (20:10).
 - 3. Another servant was sent. The husbandmen beat him, handled him shamefully and sent him away empty (vs. 11).
 - 4. A third was sent. He was wounded and cast out.
 - 5. The lord of the vineyard asked, "What shall I do?" and resolves to send his beloved son reasoning, that "it may be they will reverence him."
 - a. But the tenants saw him and said, "This is the heir; let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours."
 - b. And they cast him forth out of the vineyard and killed him.
- C. Jesus then asked His audience, "What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do unto them?"
 - 1. ANSWER: "He will come and destroy these husbandmen and will give the vineyard unto others" (20:16).
 - 2. They said, "God forbid!"

- a. Technically, there is absolutely no warrant for this translation. It should read "Be it not so!" or "Never!"
- D. The obvious conflict is between the husbandmen and the owner of the vineyard as it is acted out against the servants of the owner.
 1. While the owner has every right to enjoy the fruit from off his own land, the tenants who worked the land refused to give him any.
 2. In fact, they did whatever they thought would obtain the land for themselves - including murdering the son of the landowner.
- E. Interpretation:
 1. Some of the elements of this parable are rather easy to identify.
 - a. For example, the son of the landowner who is murdered corresponds with Jesus Christ.
 - b. That would make the owner of the vineyard God.
 2. The husbandmen or tenants, are the Jews.
 3. And those to whom the vineyard will be given after the owner destroys the tenants are the Gentiles.
 4. The servants who are sent to retrieve fruit from the vineyard are the prophets of God.
- F. Historically, the parable accurately summarizes the sad history of the Jews.
 1. When God established Israel by giving them a special law and special land and made them a special people He was, in essence, building His "vineyard" which corresponds with Israel as a nation.
 2. As God sent His prophets to call them back to Himself, His servants the prophets were shamefully treated. (See 1 Kgs 18:13; 22:24-27; 2 Kgs 6:31).
 - a. There are several passages that summarize Israel's ill treatment of God's prophets.
 - 1) 2 Chronicles 36:14-16 - the reason Jerusalem was laid waste is given.
 - 2) Hebrews 11:35-37.
 - 3) Matthew 5:10-12 "Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteous sake: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you."
 - 4) Acts 7:51-53.

3. "Up to this point, Jesus has been surveying the history of the Jews. But from here on, he turns from history to prophecy" (McGarvey).
 - a. God's sending His Son to this earth corresponds with the owner of the vineyard sending his son to be revered.
 - b. But just as the tenants murdered the owner's son, so Israel was just days away from murdering the Son of God on a cross.
 4. The Jews' rejection of Christ corresponds with the tenants' rejection of the owner's son.
 - a. And because they rejected Him, God would reject them and give the blessings that could have been theirs to others.
 - b. Consider these passages:
 - 1) Romans 11:11-24, 25-32.
 - 2) Acts 13:44-48.
- G. Jesus applies Psalm 118:22 to this phenomenon:
1. "The stone which the builders rejected, The same was made the head of the corner."
 2. Compare 20:17.
 3. The reason Jesus' religious antagonists said, "God forbid" to His declaring that the blessings initially intended to include the Jews would be given to another is two-fold.
 - a. First of all, ". . . they perceived that he spake this parable against them."
 - b. Secondly, the thought of those blessings being given to the Gentiles was repulsive to them. Many of them thought the promises of God to Abraham were the exclusive right and ownership of the Jews.
- H. It seems as though with every step Jesus' opponents escalate their efforts to destroy Him. The conflict compounds with every breath.
1. In Luke 20:20-26 they tried to trick Him "so as to deliver him up to the rule and to the authority of the governor" (29:20).
 2. In Luke 20:27-40 the Sadducees try to trick Him with a question concerning the resurrection.
 3. In 20:20-26 they tried to trick Him with a political question; in 20:27-40 they tried to trick Him with a spiritual question.
 4. They failed in both attempts.

OBSERVATIONS:

- A. It is truly amazing how spiteful and irrational people can become when they set themselves against God and the truth.
 - 1. When they questioned His authority at the beginning of the chapter, Jesus placed His opponents on the horns of a dilemma. Of course, it was a dilemma only for someone who opposed Jesus (20:1-8).
 - 2. When they questioned Him concerning tribute paid to Caesar, Luke tells us (NIV) "They were unable to trap him in what he had said there in public. And astonished by his answer, they became silent" (20:26).
 - 3. In response to the Sadducees' question concerning the resurrection, one of the scribes had to admit: "Teacher; thou hast well said." (NIV: "And no one dared to ask him any more questions.") (20:40).
 - 4. This marks the end of all talks. At this point, Jesus' opponents could do nothing but one thing:
 - a. Hire liars to bear false witness concerning Him and have Him put to death.
 - b. Their motive? (Lk 20:45-47).
 - c. John the baptizer's attitude was that Jesus must increase while he himself must decrease - but not so with the religious leaders of the day.
- B. "What will you do with Jesus my friend? Neutral you cannot be. One day your heart will be asking, O friend, what will He do with me?"

Whose Wife Shall She Be?

Luke 20:27-40

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Our study of the according to Luke has brought us to the remaining few days of our Lord prior to His crucifixion.
 - 1. We traced His steps from Bethphage and Bethany into Jerusalem where He entered the temple and taught daily.
 - 2. His antagonists have already confronted Him once in an effort to stop Him and to ridicule Him before an audience that adores Him.
 - a. The Sanhedrin (the chief priests, the scribes and principal men) sought to destroy Him (19:47).
 - b. Having failed in their initial attempt, they sent forth spies who pretended to be righteous that they might catch Him in something He said so they could deliver Him to the rule and authority of the governor (20:20).
- B. When the Sanhedrin came out in their initial display of force, Jesus put them on the uncomfortable horns of a dilemma (20:1-8).
 - 1. Jesus, then told the parable of the husbandmen (20:9-18). The scribes and chief priests “perceived that He spake this parable against them.”
 - 2. They then conspired to send spies to trap Him.
 - a. They thought perhaps to catch Him with some political discrepancy.
 - b. “Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar or not?” (20:22).
 - c. But Jesus saw through them to their real motives and said, “. . . render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and unto God the things that are God’s.”
 - d. Notice their response: “. . . they were not able to take hold of the saying before the people: and they marveled at his answer and held their peace” (20:26).

THE RESURRECTION:

- A. Then the Sadducees came to test him with their “clever” scenario involving marriage and the afterlife.
 - 1. Matthew, Mark and Luke all record this incident and all three writers inform us of a doctrinal peculiarity of the Sadducees. They say, “there is no resurrection.”
 - 2. The doctrine of a resurrection is not all they denied.

- a. When Paul was before the Sanhedrin, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and Sadducees (Acts 23).
 - b. Luke tells us that the Sadducees say “that there is no resurrection, neither angels, nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both” (Acts 23:8).
 - c. J. W. McGarvey argues that the Sadducees denial of such things as spirits was the root from which their other errors sprang as branches (*Fourfold Gospel*, p. 602).
- B. If the Sadducees denied all these ideas why then would they ask Jesus whose wife the woman in question would be in the resurrection? They, too, sought to trap Him by placing Him in a bind.
- C. The Set-Up:
 - 1. The first thing the Sadducees did was to cite Moses’ injunction that “if a man’s brother died, having a wife and he be childless, his brother should take the wife and raise up seed unto his brother” (Lk 20:28; Deut 25:5).
 - 2. The scenario:
 - a. There were seven brothers. The first took a wife and died childless. The second took her to wife; the third and so on up to the seventh.
 - b. They all left her childless, after which she died.
 - c. QUESTION: “In the resurrection therefore whose wife of them shall she be? for the seven had her to wife” (20:33).
 - d. With this “clever” question, they thought to ridicule the whole idea of a resurrection and an afterlife.
 - 3. Jesus was the only one uniquely qualified to answer this question. He is the only one to have left heaven, as the Father of eternities (Isa 9:6), to take up residence in this life. Jesus spoke with authority on the matter.
 - a. The first thing He did was to correct their belief that all things in the hereafter corresponded with life as we now know it.
 - 1) The sons of this world marry, but in the hereafter they neither marry, nor are given in marriage.
 - 2) They:
 - a) Die no more,
 - b) Are equal to the angels and
 - c) Are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

- b. He then makes an appeal to Moses' writing. (Notice, the Sadducees made the first appeal to Moses, Jesus makes an appeal to the same authority.) "... in the place concerning the Bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (29:37). Compare Exodus 3:15.
 - 1) Jesus then affirmed, "Now God is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him" (20:38).
 - 2) Jesus' argument, as constructed by Thomas Warren (p. 37, *Immortality*):
 - a) Since God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,
 - b) And since God is the God of the living and not the dead,
 - c) Then Abraham, Isaac and Jacob must still be living in spite of their having experienced physical death many years before the incident at hand.

D. But how does this answer the question of the Sadducees concerning the resurrection?

- 1. D. A. Carson (E.B.C., p. 467) suggests that at first glance Jesus' argument may seem sufficient to prove immortality, but not resurrection.
 - a. But resurrection is proven when we realize that the Sadducees' concern was not to choose between immortality and resurrection, but between death as finality and life beyond death.
 - b. This being the case, once Jesus proved there is life beyond death, the resurrection follows.
 - c. "Our problem is that we force on the text a neoplatonian dualism and demand a choice between immortality and resurrection."
- 2. Geldenhuys (*New International Critical Commentary, Luke*, p. 511,512): "Real life (in the Biblical sense) is life in soul and in body alike; therefore immortality (in the Biblical sense) includes resurrection (the reunion of the soul with the glorified, 'spiritual' body)."
- 3. Walter Liefeld: "Note the repetition of the word 'resurrection' and the absence of any reference to the Greek concept of 'immortality.' It is not persistence of life but that 'the dead rise' that Jesus is teaching" (p. 1017, E.B.C.).

E. That the body is under discussion where the resurrection is concerned can be clearly demonstrated.

- 1. 1 Thess 4:13-18.

- a. The saints in Thessalonica were concerned about those who had died in Christ prior to the resurrection. The dead in Christ are referred to as “them that fall asleep” which is not a reference to the disposition of the soul, but rather of the appearance of the body at death.
 - b. Paul tells them that those who have fallen asleep in Jesus, God will bring with Him at the second coming (4:14).
 - c. He then informs us that those who are alive at Jesus’ coming “shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep.”
 - 1) The dead in Christ shall rise first, then
 - 2) We that are alive, that are left, “Shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (4:17).
2. 1 Corinthians 15:35-49.
 3. Romans 8:11 - “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwelleth in you.”
 4. Romans 8:23 - “. . . we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”
 5. Philippians 3:20,21 - “For our citizenship is in heaven; where also we wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself.”
 6. John 5:28,29.

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

- A. It is rather ironic that the reason for our one living hope is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead - and yet in the context of His expounding on the nature of the life to come, He stands in the shadow of His own death at the hands of His questioners.

Days of Vengeance

Luke 21

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Since Luke 19:45, we have found our Lord in Jerusalem teaching and preaching them daily.
 - 1. His presence there was not met with unconcern.
 - a. His authority for teaching in the temple was questioned by the Sanhedrin (20:1-8).
 - b. Certain spies, who pretended to be righteous, tried to trap Him with a political question concerning paying tribute to Caesar (20:19-26).
 - c. The Sadducees thought they could confound Him with a religious question concerning marriage and the resurrection (29:27-40).
 - 2. In their efforts to outwit and ridicule Him, they themselves ended up being outwitted and embarrassed.
 - a. The Sanhedrin refused to take hold of either horn of the dilemma in which Jesus placed them (20:7,8).
 - b. Those who pretended to be righteous were unable to trap Him but rather “marveled at his answer and held their peace” (20:26).
 - c. The Sadducees found in Jesus someone who could intelligently respond to their scenario and certain of the scribes answering said “Teacher, thou hast well said.” And the Sadducees asked Him no more questions.
- B. The time for talk had ended.
 - 1. His enemies could not trap or incriminate Him by the use of argumentation.
 - 2. Even up to the end Jesus tried to persuade His religious opponents to reflect on who He was.
 - a. In 20:41-44 He asked them, “How say they that the Christ is David’s Son?”
 - b. He wanted them to see Him not just as David’s descendant, but much more (thus the quote from Psa 110).
 - 3. And even though He wept for them and the fate they were about to suffer, He does not shrink from exposing their insincerity and other sins (20:45-47).
- C. This leads us to chapter 21.

1. This chapter begins with Jesus observing the gifts people put into the treasury.
 - a. A poor widow put in all she possessed - two mites.
 - b. The rich cast in their gifts also - but their contribution came from their excess.
 - c. Jesus was more pleased with the widow's contribution than He was with the contribution of the rich.
 2. While at the temple His disciples were admiring its beauty.
 - a. As they stood admiring it Jesus said, "As for these things which ye behold the days will come, in which there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (21:6).
 - b. Concerning this, His disciples asked Him two questions:
 - 1) "Teacher, when therefore shall these things be?"
 - 2) "And what shall be the sign when these things are about to come to pass?"
- D. Preparatory explanation.
1. The parallel passages to this text are found in Matthew 24 and Mark 13.
 2. Generally speaking Luke 21 and Mark 13 parallel the first point of Jesus' discussion in Matthew 24; more specifically Matthew 24:3-36.
 - a. In Matthew's account, we are informed that the disciples assumed that the destruction of the temple must correspond with Jesus' coming.
 - b. So, in essence, the disciples were asking two questions with two sub-questions.
 - 1) When will the temple be destroyed? and what are the accompanying signs to prepare us?
 - 2) When will you come again? and what are the accompanying signs to prepare us?
 - c. Matthew covers all four questions.
 - 1) He gives them the precursory signs of the destruction of Jerusalem and then tells them that there are some signs which will accompany His second coming and
 - 2) Informs them that these two events will not occur at the same time.

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM:

- A. First of all, Jesus warns them not to be led astray.
 - 1. Impostors will come and say “the time is at hand.” Jesus said to not go after them.
 - 2. They hear of wars and tumults, but were not to be afraid of these reports because the end is not immediately. (I believe this refers to the destruction of the temple.)
- B. Then Jesus lists a number of others signs:
 - 1. Nation against nation,
 - 2. Kingdom against kingdom,
 - 3. Great earthquakes,
 - 4. Famines and pestilences in various places and
 - 5. Terrors and great signs from heaven.
- C. But persecution would arise even before the precursory signs.
 - 1. “They shall lay hands on you and persecute you,
 - a. Delivering you up to the synagogues and prison and
 - b. Bringing you before kings and governors for my name’s sake.”
 - 2. Such persecution will turn out to them for a testimony.
 - a. It would provide them additional opportunities to preach the .
 - b. This being the case, they were to resolve in their hearts not to worry about what they would say, “. . . for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to withstand or to gainsay” (21:15).
 - c. Christians would be delivered up by:
 - 1) Parents,
 - 2) Brethren,
 - 3) Kinfolk and
 - 4) Friends.
 - d. Jesus holds nothing back in the picture He paints when He says “and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.”

- D. Up to this point Jesus has only given the precursory signs.
1. "But" He says, "when ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that her desolation is at hand" (21:20).
 2. And when they see this sign, those in Judaea are to flee to the mountains.
 3. He says, "Woe to them with child" (vs. 23).
 - a. Because of the need to flee Judaea, it would make it all the more difficult for those who were pregnant.
 4. But concerning the Jews that would reject Jesus as the Christ:
 - a. Some would fall by edge of the sword,
 - b. Some would be led captive and
 - c. Jerusalem and her temple would be trodden down by the Gentiles (Rome).
- E. Why would all of this come upon the Jews and Jerusalem?
1. Verse 22 "For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled."
- F. He then speaks a parable (21:29-33).
- G. He warns them to take heed (21:34-36).

OBSERVATIONS:

- A. Some readers become confused by the language of 21:25.
1. Look at some other passages containing the same kind of language (cosmic symbolism):
 - a. Isaiah 13:6-10.
 - b. Isaiah 19:1 - "The burden of Egypt. Behold, Jehovah rideth upon a swift cloud and cometh unto Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall tremble at his presence; and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it."
 - c. Isaiah 34:4,5 - "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their host shall fade away, as the leaf fadeth from off the vine and as a fading leaf from the fig-tree. For my sword hath drunk its fill in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Edom and upon the people of my curse, to judgment."

- d. Ezekiel 32:7,8 - "And when I shall extinguish thee, I will cover the heavens and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud and the moon shall not give its light. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord Jehovah." (Speaking of Egypt).
 - e. Joel 2:1,2; 2:28ff - quoted in Acts 2:17-21.
- B. This is not the first time Jesus has spoken of the destruction awaiting the city of Jerusalem.
 - 1. Luke 17.
 - 2. Luke 19:41-44.

The Death of Christ

Luke 23:33-38

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Jesus spent the remaining few days of His work and His life in Jerusalem teaching and preaching the and countering the foolish attacks of His antagonists.
 - 1. Discovering the hard way that there was no way to trip Him up or to find some speck of a reason to deliver Him to the governors, His ruthless adversaries continued to search for a way to kill Him.
 - 2. By day He taught in the temple. At night He retired to the mount called Olivet. And early every morning the people met Him at the temple to hear Him (21:37,38).
- B. Those who set themselves against Him finally found the opportunity they were looking for.
 - 1. Satan had entered Judas' heart and Judas plotted with the chief priests and the officers of the temple how to betray Jesus when no crowd was present (22:3-6).
 - a. Why was it important to do this when no crowd was present? Because the crowd loved Him!
 - 1) The Sanhedrin feared being stoned by the crowd when Jesus handed them the horns of a dilemma (20:1-8).
 - 2) After telling the parable of the husbandmen, they perceived that He spoke it against them and wanted that very hour to take Him by force but "they feared the people" (20:19).
 - 3) When those pretending to be righteous approached Him on the question of paying tribute to Caesar, "they marveled at His answer and held their peace" (20:26).
 - 4) After challenging Him on the question of marriage in the resurrection the Sadducees "durst not any more ask him any questions" (20:40).
 - b. Jesus instructs Peter and John to make preparation for the Passover wherein Jesus exposes the plot to betray Him.
 - c. After the supper He went to the mount of Olives to weep and pray - while His disciples slept (22:39-46).
 - d. It is into this garden Judas leads Jesus' murderers to Him and he betrays Him with a kiss.
 - 2. From the garden He was led to the high priest's house.

- a. Outside the house, Peter denies Him three times and the cock crows.
 - b. Inside Jesus is questioned and beaten.
- 3. From there He is led to the Jewish council. It is morning.
 - a. "Are you the Son of God?"
 - b. "Ye say that I am."
- 4. From there He is brought to Pilate, then sent on to Herod.
- 5. Herod's soldiers mock and beat Him, then send Him back to Pilate. (Herod and Pilate become friends that day.)
- 6. Pilate is willing to chastize Jesus and let Him go.
 - a. Three times Pilate tries to reason with Jesus' accusers stating he has found nothing worthy of death in Him.
 - b. The crowd cries, "Crucify Him!"
 - c. Luke writes: "And Pilate gave sentence that what they asked for should be done. And he released him that for insurrection and murder had been cast into prison, whom they asked for; but Jesus he delivered up to their will" (23:24,25).
- 7. A great multitude of the people followed. The women bewailed and lamented Him.
 - a. Jesus tells them to weep for themselves, for the day will come when they will be crying for the mountains to fall on them.
 - b. This is probably an allusion to the days of vengeance referred to in Luke 21.
- C. All that Luke has written climaxes in Jesus' death and resurrection.
 - 1. All of history looks forward to it or looks back on it.
 - 2. Profound treatises have been written by the best minds.
 - 3. Our baptism was into the death of Christ (Rom 6:3).
 - 4. The Lord's Supper involves the body and the blood as we show forth His death till He come' (1 Cor 11:26).
 - 5. It is the focal point of all four accounts.
 - a. Everything is arranged to lead up to the climax of the cross.

- 1) 29% of Matthew focuses in on the last week of Jesus' life,
 - 2) 38% of Mark,
 - 3) 25% of Luke and
 - 4) 38% of John.
- b. Key words in the N.W. focus our attention back on the cross.
- 1) "Redemption" - ransom price paid to set someone free,
 - 2) "Propitiation" - turning away anger (Rom 3:25; 5:9),
 - 3) "Reconciliation" - making up after a quarrel and
 - 4) "Justification" - legal claims met.
6. And yet, the death of our Lord is summarized by three or four words:
- a. Luke 23:33 - "they crucified him,"
 - b. Matthew 27:35 - "they had him crucified,"
 - c. Mark 15:24 - "they crucify him," and
 - d. John 19:18 - "they crucified him."
7. All the gory details of crucifixion are left out (see *The Empty Cross of Jesus*, Michael Green).
- a. To quote Michael Green: "It was a messy business" (p. 21).
 - 1) Cicero said it was "the most cruel and most terrible punishment. It was a death reserved for the lowest of the low"
 - 2) In fact, it was too degrading for Romans to even discuss.
 - b. Usually men were scourged before they being crucified.
 - 1) A scourge was a whip with several leather straps inset with pieces of metal.
 - 2) By design, it was meant to rip the flesh of its victims.
 - c. The degradation of the one being crucified was made complete by stripping him and hanging him naked on the cross.
 - d. "The body was fastened to the cross by jagged iron nails that were driven through the most sensitive nerve centers of the wrists and ankles, which ensured constant exquisite torture" (p. 23).

- e. They could not have selected a more difficult or awkward position to hang a man.
 - 1) In order to inhale, the victim must lift up, applying pressure to the nail-fastened feet.
 - 2) To exhale they must do the same.
 - 3) To keep from suffocating, the one on the cross must have looked like a “human pump” in order to breathe.
- f. Medical journals have analyzed the death of Christ as depicted in the accounts to determine the scientific cause of death.
 - 1) Though written academically and as a matter of fact, the reader cannot help but be moved.

D. Why was the most significant death in history summarized by the writers of Scriptures in only three or four words?

- 1. One man remarks: “No story has ever been the cause of so much emotion. The word ‘pathos’ might be reserved exclusively to apply to it. It is the greatest of dramas, and the greatest of miracles. The people who recorded it were affected by the facts they relate in their whole life and conduct. Yet the narrative itself is plain and matter of fact. Never were witnesses more restrained in tone and style. There is no need, and apparently no desire, to embellish” (p. 125, *The New Testament in Literary Criticism*, Leland Ryken).
- 2. While man’s tendency would lean more toward an elaboration of the account, God’s penmen did not.

E. A few observations:

- 1. We have all heard, read or seen stories that moved us to tears - and those stories chronicled far less significant deaths than that of our Savior.
 - a. Even dead puppy dog stories can move us to cry.
 - b. The significance of this event is not simply in the fact that Jesus died.
- 2. Jesus was not the only man to have ever been crucified.
 - a. The account of the malefactor who demonstrated faith in God while hanging next to Jesus on his own cross is touching.
 - b. Tradition has it that Peter was crucified upside down at his own request because he did not feel worthy to die like his Lord.
 - c. Jesus’ death is not significant just because of the way He died - though it is significant.
- 3. Here is another point to consider:

- a. Many of the saints of the first century thought it was a great honor for them to die for Christ's sake. For them, it was evidence of God showing His favor toward them.
 - b. Why is it that in the garden prior to His arrest, Jesus prayed to the Father, "If thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (22:42).
 - c. Why the agony? and sweat that became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground (22:44).
 - d. Is it because Jesus feared death?
 - 1) When the multitudes followed Him to the cross and the woman bewailed and lamented Him, He said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children" (See 23:27-31).
4. Those who write of the death of Jesus do not elaborate on the biological aspects of His death because the significance of the cross is more theological than biological.
- a. It was biological. Jesus really died and He really suffered all the agonies the cross had to offer its victims.
 - b. Jesus' suffering was caused by more than the nails, the cross and the humiliation of being stripped of His clothing.
 - c. For Jesus the supreme agony of the cross, in prospect and in reality, was that the sins of the world would be heaped upon Him.
 - d. His agony on the cross was revealed in these words, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46).
- F. Jesus' death, above all other deaths, was significant for these reasons:
- 1. Because of the one who was suffering - the Son of God (Rom 1:4).
 - 2. Because of the love that activated it - Jn 3:16; Rom 5:8.
 - 3. Because it was voluntary: "No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have the power to lay it down and I have the power to take it again" (Jn 10:18).
 - 4. Because of what it achieved - forgiveness of sins (Mt 26:28).
- G. I am not suggesting we dismiss the physical agony Jesus endured for us. I am simply saying we should not lose sight of its theological significance by our fascination with its physical grotesqueness.

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

- A. As Jesus hung on the cross, it seemed as though all had forsaken Him.
 - 1. His antagonists put Him there out of jealousy and spite.
 - 2. Peter had denied Him.
 - 3. The people stood watching.
 - 4. The rulers scoffed (sneered), "He saved others; let him save himself, if this is the Christ of God, his chosen" (23:35).
 - 5. The soldiers mocked Him, offering Him vinegar and saying, "If thou art the King of the Jews, save thyself" (23:37).
 - 6. And those who knew Him stood at a distance watching (23:49).
- B. His enemies were cowards and, for fear, would not take Him while the crowds were present.
 - 1. Some who believed did not come out openly with their convictions because of their fear of the Jewish officials.
 - 2. Note this:
 - a. One of the criminals who hung next to Jesus insulted Him by asking, "Art not thou the Christ? Save yourself and us" (23:39).
 - b. The other criminal rebuked Him and in an open display of faith said, "Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss" (23:40).
 - c. He then said to Jesus, ". . . remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom."
 - d. Jesus said, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (23:43).
 - 3. Why was this common criminal so open and unafraid of expressing his conviction concerning Jesus while everyone else mocked Him, ridiculed Him, denied Him or watched from a distance?
 - a. Is it safe to say that those who believed in Him were afraid of dying - of facing the same fate?
 - b. Why was this criminal different?
 - 1) His boldness separated him from the rest because he was a "dead man" - he was as good as dead.

- 2) What did he have to lose? What did he have to fear? Nothing!
- c. This is what it takes to be a disciple of Christ. You must be as good as dead - with nothing to lose - with nothing else at stake.
 - 1) Remember Luke 14.
 - a) Unrivalled love,
 - b) Unceasing dying and
 - c) Unqualified renunciation of all that you possess.
- C. Jesus' death was no ordinary death. Its extraordinariness is marked by:
 1. Darkness falling on the land.
 2. The sun's light failing.
 3. The veil in the temple being torn.
 4. Matthew tells us that "... tombs were opened and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised: and coming forth out of the tomb's after His resurrection they entered into the holy city and appeared unto many" (27:52,53).
 5. There was an earthquake.
 7. Fear fell upon a centurion who stood by. And as he saw what was taking place he glorified God saying, "Certainly this was a righteous man" (23:47).
 8. Man's greatest injustice had just been committed. But through it the means by which God could remain perfectly just and also justify those who live by faith was accomplished.

Whom do you say Jesus of Nazareth is?

The Resurrection

Luke 24:13-35

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In the previous lesson we studied the death of Christ.
 - 1. 23:33 - “they crucified him.”
 - 2. 23:46 - “he gave up the ghost.”
 - a. There is really no reason to retain the word “ghost” in this text.
 - 1) It translates a word meaning “he expired,” or “he died.”
 - 2) Matthew and John speak of Him as yielding or giving up His spirit.
 - b. McGarvey noted: “None of the evangelists speak of Jesus as dying: for He yielded up His spirit voluntarily.” Remember Jn 10:18 - “No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have the power to lay it down and I have the power to take it again.”
- B. Luke then briefly chronicles Jesus’ burial.
 - 1. Joseph of Arimathaea went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.
 - a. Joseph’s character is outlined in Mark 15:43.
 - 1) He was a councillor,
 - 2) A good and righteous man (“of honorable estate”) and
 - 3) He was looking for the kingdom of God.
 - b. Joseph prepared Jesus’ body with linen clothes and laid it in a tomb.
 - 1) The tomb was hewn in stone and
 - 2) Was a tomb “where never man had yet lain” (23:53).
 - c. When Jesus was placed in that tomb, He was its sole occupant.
 - 2. The women who followed Jesus out of Galilee followed Joseph, saw the tomb and how Jesus’ body was laid in it.
 - a. These women prepare spices and ointment for His body, but due to time constraints where the Sabbath was concerned, had to wait all Friday night and Saturday before they could return.

- 1) Luke writes, "And on the sabbath they rested according to the commandment" (23:56).
- C. If this is where the story ended - that is, with Jesus dead and entombed, there would be no need to produce what we call "the New Testament."
1. The remainder of what we do read would be nothing more than a fantastic story of fraud propagated by the followers of Jesus.
 2. But this is not where the story ends.
 3. When the women returned to the tomb at early dawn on Sunday morning - referred to as the first day of the week (Lk 24:1) - they found the stone which had sealed the tomb rolled away and the body of Jesus gone.
 - a. Who rolled the stone away?
 - b. Where was the body of Jesus?
 - c. Who would want it?
 - d. What was happening?
 4. When the women returned to the disciples of Jesus and reported their finding Peter ran to the tomb to see for himself.
- D. Laced throughout the last chapter of Luke's account of the are the reactions of various people to the hope that had been (temporarily) deferred.
1. Reactions:
 - a. When the women first came to the tomb and assessed the situation they were initially perplexed. Then, when approached by the angels, they were frightened (24:4,5).
 - b. When they returned to the disciples to inform them what they had seen and heard, their story was disregarded as an idle tale (24:11). Their report was not believed.
 - c. When Peter ran to the tomb to investigate for himself, he left "wondering at that which was come to pass" (24:12).
 - d. The two disciples on their way to Emmaus were sad (24:17).
 - 1) Solomon wrote: "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick; But when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life" (Prov 13:12).
 2. Jesus' resurrection was a tree of life to His followers.
 - a. The women who first approached the empty tomb were reminded of what Jesus said while He was still with them.

- 1) The angels asked them, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" (24:5).
- 2) Then they say, "He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying that the Son of man must be delivered up into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again" (24:6,7).
- 3) "And they remembered His words . . ." (24:8; Mt 17:22,23)
- 4) With their remembrance came the connection between the words spoken in Galilee with the empty tomb.

THE TWO DISCIPLES:

- A. The two disciples on their way to Emmaus exemplify the challenges to understand what had occurred.
 1. They communed with one another and questioned each other about the recent events as they struggled for understanding.
 2. While they tried putting the pieces of the puzzle together Jesus, raised from the dead, drew near and joined in their conversation. They did not recognize Him however.
 - a. "What communications are these that ye have one with another, as ye walk?"
 - b. NIV: "Are you the only one living in Jerusalem who doesn't know the things that have happened there in these days?"
 - c. "What things?", Jesus asks.
 - d. The disciples' response - 24:19-24.
 - e. Jesus' response - 24:25-27.
 - 1) If the disciples had fully understood all that the law and the prophets had written and had they fully understood what Jesus had foretold them, they would have probably been at the tomb waiting to witness His resurrection for themselves.
 - 2) But due to their lack of understanding:
 - a) The women, first at the tomb, were perplexed,
 - b) The disciples did not believe their report,
 - c) The two on their way to Emmaus were sad,
 - d) The disciples were, later, terrified at their first sight of Jesus and

- e) Mark tells us He upbraided them for their unbelief (Mk 16:14).
- 3. These two disciples were so impressed with their visitor's mastery of the Scriptures that they constrained Him to stay.
 - a. And the minute their eyes were opened to recognize the identity of their divine guest, He vanished out of their sight.
 - b. They then returned to Jerusalem, found the eleven and told them, "The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared to Simon. And they rehearsed the things that happened in the way and how he was known of them in the breaking of the bread" (24:34).

OBSERVATIONS:

- A. Mankind has much at stake where the resurrection of Christ is concerned.
 - 1. If He was raised from the dead then He is the Son of God (Rom 1:4).
 - a. If He is the Son of God then all men owe Him their undivided allegiance.
 - b. For those who do believe the testimony of the writers of the New Testament and obey Him, He is a tree of life.
 - 2. But if an individual chooses not to submit to Him, His resurrection and the testimony of the writers of Scriptures, they are thorns in the flesh.
 - a. This rebellion against God and His Son takes on the form of an attack.
 - 1) Some reject the fact He was raised from the dead.
 - 2) And in order to bolster their foolish claims, they reject the testimony of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
 - 3. Objections:
 - a. There are various lines of attack.
 - 1) Some argue that Jesus never really died but rather simply fainted on the cross, revived in the tomb and let Himself out ("swoon theory").
 - 2) Some argue that His disciples stole the body, faked His resurrection and fabricated His appearances after the cross.
 - 3) Some argue that Jesus' appearances were nothing more than hallucinations.
 - b. Objections answered:

- 1) Swoon theory:
 - a) The Romans were experts at killing people on the cross.
 - (1) Not only had He been crucified, but a spear had been thrust into His side and blood and water came out.
 - b) Another negative where this argument is concerned is the fact that a Roman watch (guard) was set outside the tomb. There was no way Jesus could have escaped them without their noticing.
 - c) And, how many people believe that a man who had just been beaten twice, scourged, crucified and thrust through with a spear could have been able to move that stone by himself?
 - (1) Remember, the women approaching the tomb early that Sunday morning, wondering among themselves, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the tomb?" (Mk 16:3).
 - (2) It is then that they look up to see the stone rolled back.
 - (3) Mark describes it as an "exceeding great" stone.
- 2) As for the argument that the disciples stole His body away, they met the initial idea of Jesus' resurrection with unbelief. In fact, Jesus upbraided them for their hardness of heart and unbelief (Mk 16:14).
- 3) And as for His appearances being hallucinations, an hallucination, by definition, is something that originates in the mind of the one hallucinating.
 - a) Two people do not share in the same hallucination.
 - b) Paul later stated that Jesus appeared to above 500 brethren at once (1 Cor 15:6).
 - c) Luke 24 informs us that He appeared to the eleven all at once in the upper room (33-36).

B. I hate to interrupt the beautiful and hopeful account of Jesus' resurrection from the dead by raising some of the more common objections to it, but unless we see how sure and unerring, the Gospel accounts are, perhaps we will not appreciate, the way we ought, what they chronicle.

1. 1 Cor 15:1-4.

2. Romans 4:25 - Jesus was “raised for our justification.”
3. Romans 1:4 - Jesus was “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord.”