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TWENTY LESSONS IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE
By William M. Smith

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INTRODUCTION TO THIS DIGITAL PUBLICATION

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND LESSONS -- At the time these lessons were written, William M. Smith was serving as Superintendent of Union Bible Seminary, Westfield, Indiana. HDM now has in possession the following sets of 20 Lessons for Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Revelation. As we received them, these lessons were on loose-leaf sheets, printed on one side, and bound in folders. They could be used as either Sunday School or Bible Study lessons.

ABOUT THE DIVIDER BETWEEN THE CHAPTER NUMBER AND VERSE -- The divider between the chapter and verse is not consistent, sometimes being a period and at other times being a colon. I have left them as they were. Also, there was **NO PERIOD AFTER THE NUMBERED ASSIGNMENTS** at the end of the lessons, and I have also left that as it was. --
DVM

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01 -- AUTHOR AND INTRODUCTION

LUKE, the author of the Gospel that bears his name, is called by Paul, "the beloved physician." (Colossians 4:14). He accompanied Paul on some of his missionary journeys, as is evident from what we gather in the book of Acts, which book Luke also wrote. His name occurs only three times in the Bible, the reference above and II Timothy 4:11 and Philemon verse 24.

A Gospel for the Greek. Luke was evidently a Greek, and his Gospel and the book of Acts are addressed to a Greek acquaintance named Theophilus, a name that means "God-lover." The population of the civilized world in New Testament times was made up mostly of Jews, Romans, and Greeks; and there is a Gospel adapted to each of these classes. Matthew is addressed and adapted to the Jews, who knew the Old Testament Scriptures with the prophecies concerning Jesus, to which Matthew often refers. Mark was written by a man whose father was evidently a Roman, and his name is of Roman extraction. Now Luke comes, a Greek writing to Greeks. Matthew presents Jesus as King; Mark presents Him as the Faithful Servant and Conqueror; Luke sets Him before us as the perfect Man.

Luke Records Many Things not in the other three Gospels. We are indebted to "The Student's Commentary on the Scriptures" for the following lists.

Six Miracles in Luke Only

The Draught of fishes -- 4:4
The Widow's Son at Nain -- 7:11
The infirm woman -- 13:11
The man with the dropsy -- 14:1
The ten lepers -- 18:11

The healing of Malchus' ear -- 22:50

Eleven Parables etc. in Luke only

The two debtors -- 7:41

The Good Samaritan -- 10:30

The importunate friend -- 11:5

The rich fool -- 12:16

The barren fig-tree -- 13:6

The lost piece of silver -- 15:8

The prodigal son -- 15:11

The unjust steward -- 16:1

Dives and Lazarus -- 16:19

The importunate widow -- 18:3

The Pharisee and Publican -- 18:9

While the author of the said Commentary lists Dives and Lazarus, as many do, as a parable, we consider it a historical statement, rather than a parable.

Many Records Written. Luke says that "Many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us." From this we conclude that many persons wrote the records of the early days of the church. They may have written what was true, but God has seen fit for all but the four records in the New Testament to disappear, indicating thereby that these four records are the only ones inspired of God.

Luke's Authority to write accurately and by inspiration is emphatically set forth by what he says. He declares that he has had "perfect understanding of all things from the very first," concerning what he is writing. But, if we look into the Greek we find the phrase "from the very first" is translated from the one word another. In other places where this word occurs in the Greek manuscripts it is translated "from above." Look up these passages -- John 3.31 and 19.11; James 1.17 and 3.17. If the word had been translated here as in other places it would read, "having had perfect understanding of all things from above." When we use both of these translations we have evidence that Luke was fully qualified to write what he has written. Luke does not say that he ever saw Jesus, but he is emphatic in saying that he has interviewed persons who, "from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word." As a physician he was qualified to write intelligently of the delicate matters concerning the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus. From what he says it seems quite evident that he interviewed persons who had known the parents of John the Baptist and quite likely personally interviewed Mary the mother of Jesus, who told him the inside story he has so interestingly written.

Important Persons. The first person named by Luke is Herod, whom historians call "Herod the great." His name is used only for the purpose of identifying the date. There are other persons who were of more importance, though it may not have appeared so at the time. Old people, especially, seem to be the conservators of religion.

Zacharias and Elisabeth were devout old people who were in the priestly line. Their names have come down through the centuries as persons who were "both righteous before God". God selected them to be parents of John the Baptist the forerunner of Jesus.

Simeon and Anna later come into the history as they see the Child Jesus in the Temple when Joseph and Mary brought Him in to fulfil the requirements of the law.

Joseph and Mary were of a younger generation, but were also devout persons, chosen of God to be mother and foster-father of Jesus. Then there were others who are not named who were faithful in the midst of the general apostasy that prevailed at the time. Anna is spoken of as speaking of Jesus "to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." It appears, that, no matter how bad things may be going on the surface of things, God always has a remnant that maintains the principles of righteousness.

Apostasy Strikes at the Top. Just as trees often begin to die at the top, while the lower branches still retain life, so it seems in matters religious. Apostasy often begins in the higher circles of religious denominations, while many of the common people still retain their integrity and faith.

Useless officialdom. Religion was highly organized in the time when Jesus was born. But it was all passed by as useless pageantry when the Lord looked for a place to work. An inconspicuous, but devout, virgin was selected to be the mother of the Messiah. An inconspicuous priest and his wife, who lived in the "hill country," were selected to rear the forerunner of Jesus.

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02 -- VISITATION OF THE ANGEL GABRIEL -- Luke 1:1-80

ZACHARIAS' Ministrations. The angel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias when he was about his regular duties -- "in the order of his course." The priests cast lots as to which one should burn incense on the golden altar of the Temple. This time the lot fell on Zacharias, and it was esteemed a rare privilege. The angel appeared to Zacharias in the Temple, God's appointed place to meet His people. If we want to meet God, go where He is likely to speak. Christ is God's appointed place to meet people now, and He can be found anywhere a devout soul will seek Him. Many people meet God in a church, perhaps more than in any other place. Prayer, preaching, singing hymns create an atmosphere where God often speaks to people.

Long Delayed Answer to Prayer. The first thing the angel said to Zacharias was "Fear not Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard." Gabriel knew Zacharias by name; and he knew also that Zacharias' prayer was recorded in heaven to be answered in due time. Evidently Zacharias and Elisabeth had prayed a long time for a son, but her condition had defeated their faith. In spite of an angel from God declaring that his prayer was heard, immediately Zacharias magnified the difficulties and his unbelief in the angel's message. He asked a sign in addition to the angel's message: and he received it in an unpleasant way. He was dumb, and evidently also deaf, (vs. 62) until the evidence of the angel's message was given in the birth of John the Baptist. His mouth was opened with praises when he declared, as the angel had said, "His name is John."

Gabriel's Visit to Mary. About six months after his message to Zacharias, Gabriel was sent to the virgin Mary with a message. The angel's first words were, "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God." There is indication that Mary was seeking something from God and had found favour in an unexpected way. She was puzzled as to "how shall this be?". Her attitude was different from that of Zacharias. He virtually said "How can this be?," while Mary said, "How shall this be?" Zacharias doubted the fact, Mary inquired the method. (Students' Commentary).

The Manner of, Jesus' Conception and Birth. The mystery of this is not easily apprehended by the human mind. But the description of the manner is so explicit that it is plain that Jesus had no human father. God is not bound to methods. He created Adam without either human father or mother; He created Eve with no human mother; and now He creates a man with no human father. As the angel said to Mary, "With God nothing shall be impossible."

The Operation of the Holy Ghost. Not only was the angel Gabriel manifested in the transactions of this first chapter of Luke, but the Holy Ghost was also active, as indicated in the following incidents.

Of John it is said, "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." It appears that John the Baptist was sanctified before he was born. It took place, we may judge, when Mary saluted Elisabeth, on which occasion we read -- "Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost." She and her babe seem to have been filled with the Holy Ghost at the same time.

Mary was told by the angel Gabriel, "the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." Jesus was not a half-breed, half God and half man, as some might suppose; but He had all the attributes and nature of God, and likewise all the attributes and nature of man. See Colossians 2.9 -- "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." The next verse says "ye are complete in Him," from which we may conclude that this means that human nature is completely manifested in Him.

Zacharias, when he wrote, "His name is John," was also filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesied of the wonderful works of God that John would do, and many things that pertain to God's work in the world.

Faith and doubt are both noted in this first chapter of Luke. Elisabeth was apparently distressed with the condition of Zacharias as he came home from his Temple service deaf and dumb. He was so because, as Gabriel told him, "Thou believest not my words."

Elisabeth seems to have rejoiced because of Mary's faith when she came, for she said, "blessed is she that believed," possibly in contrast with Zacharias' unbelief.

Record of Songs. One of the characteristics of Luke's Gospel is the inclusion of what may be termed songs, of which there are three in this first chapter.

First we have the song of Elisabeth when Mary came and when she was filled with the Holy Ghost at the time "the babe leaped in her womb." Mary's salutation of her cousin set off the

song of praise from her lips. Perhaps Elisabeth did not know of Gabriel's visit to Mary, but now knows it by the revelation of the Spirit.

Second we have the song of Mary in response to what Elisabeth has said to her. Comparison with the prayer and praise of Hannah as given in I Samuel 2.1-10 shows a great similarity. It is quite likely Mary knew this ancient expression of Hannah, and perhaps had committed it to memory. There was evidently a prophetic significance in what Hannah said so many centuries before.

Third we have the utterance of Zacharias, which is called prophecy as well as praise. When he showed his faith by saying, as the angel had told him, that the name of the child should be John, his mouth, closed for months, was opened, and he uttered praises to God, and prophesied of things to come.

Zacharias first takes a look backward and refers to the utterances of the prophets "since the world began." He refers to God's covenant with Abraham. Then he speaks of present things -- "the dayspring from on high hath visited us." Then he speaks of the future -- "we should be saved from our enemies." This may include the final deliverance of Israel from all their enemies in the final deliverance of which the prophets speak.

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03 -- BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF JESUS -- Luke 2:1-52

CIRCUMSTANCES of Jesus' Birth -- God has ways of bringing things to pass that are beyond the devices of men. The Old Testament prophecies all pointed to Bethlehem as the place where the Messiah should be born. And yet Mary, the prospective mother of Jesus was living at Nazareth, and all probabilities pointed to Nazareth as the place where the Child would be born. It looks as though neither Joseph nor Mary understood the importance of the situation, or the import of the prophecies. Instead of making a special revelation to Joseph, as God had done on some occasions, He moved Caesar Augustus, away in Rome, hundreds of miles away, to make a decree that compelled Joseph and Mary to move to Bethlehem in time for Jesus to be born there, thus fulfilling the prophecy to the letter. (See Micah 5.2).

No Room for Jesus -- Jesus came to a world that had no room for Him: no comfortable place for Him to be born, "no room in the inn," no place in the Jewish program, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not;" no room in the world, "crucify Him;" no room in people's hearts, "I stand at the door and knock." But, thank the Lord, "as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God."

The Angels' Visitation and Message -- We read of no angels visiting King Herod, the high priest, or any member of the Sanhedrin, nor any official person in Jerusalem or elsewhere. They came to the humble shepherds on the hillsides about Bethlehem, occupied with their usual task of keeping watch over their flocks. Officials in State and Church are often by-passed by the Lord, while He goes to the humble layman who understands His ways better than many of the higher-ups. It is evident that angels are very much interested in anything that pertains to the salvation of people.

(See I Peter 1.12). There is joy also among the angels when anyone is saved from sin. The angel told the shepherds just where to find the baby Jesus. When the first angel had delivered his message then the great heavenly host of angels broke forth into a chant foretelling how peace would eventually be brought about on earth among men: peace between God and men, and between men and men.

The Shepherds' Quest. After the angels disappeared the shepherds decided they would go and seek Jesus. They found Him in a cow's manger in the barnyard of the inn at Bethlehem. There, so far as we know, without physician, nurse, or perhaps even a good grandmother, Mary had given birth to Jesus. The visit of the shepherds and what they doubtless told Mary and Joseph, must have greatly comforted their lonely hearts.

Fulfilling the Law. Jesus was born under the law. Therefore, He went through all the ordinances and thus fulfilled them, so we do not need to go through them. According to the law He was circumcised the eighth day.

His mother, too, after 40 days, had to go through the process prescribed in the Old Testament (See Leviticus chapter 12). Reference to the chapter in Leviticus shows that Mary brought the smallest offering allowed, indicating the limited circumstances of Joseph and Mary.

Two Aged Saints -- While Mary was going through her prescribed ceremonies, Simeon, a grand old saint who frequented the Temple, came in. He was under the power and direction of the Holy Ghost, and was led to the spot by the Spirit. He recognized the Babe Jesus as the promised Messiah and prophesied about Him.

There was also a devout woman by the name of Anna, an old lady, who also frequented the Temple. While the Temple was much misused in those days, yet these old people frequented the place where they believed God was most likely to manifest Himself.

Two Testimonies -- Simeon and Anna each bore testimony. Simeon was now ready to die since he had seen "Thy Salvation," or the One Who was to bring salvation. Anna went out to testify to others what she had seen. There were evidently a group of saints in Jerusalem who were faithful in spite of the prevailing conditions. Some one has aptly said that what Simeon said was the "Swan song of the closing dispensation," (on the supposition that a swan sings just before it dies), while Anna's words are the "Lark song of the coming dispensation." There was the fulfillment of past prophecies, and the utterance of prophecies yet to be fulfilled. Christ stands at the juncture of the dispensations, looking back to the past and onward to the future.

The Sojourn in Egypt is omitted by Luke. The events described in the second chapter of Matthew occurred in the middle of the 39th verse of the second chapter of Luke.

Life at Nazareth -- The first twelve years of Jesus' life in Nazareth are epitomized in one sentence -- "And the Child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him." Though Jesus was the Son of God, yet in His humanity He grew physically, mentally, and spiritually.

The Visit to the Temple -- As devout Jews Joseph and Mary were accustomed to go to Jerusalem for the Passover each year. While they doubtless took Jesus with them each time, no mention is made of His being with them until He was twelve years of age. When a Jewish boy was twelve years of age, they were styled "a son of the law," and went through a course of instruction in regard to worship, etc.

The Missing Jesus -- It seems hard to understand why Joseph and Mary seemed so indifferent as to the whereabouts of Jesus, but people traveled to and from Jerusalem in groups, and they supposed He was somewhere in the crowd, possibly with other twelve-year-olds.

Found in the Temple -- Mary seemed a little aggravated at Jesus and said, "Thy father and I have sought Thee." Jesus seems to correct Mary in calling Joseph His father. To paraphrase what Jesus said we might put it this way -- "Where have you been looking for Me? Did it not occur to you that I would be at My Father's house?" It is a splendid example of Childhood subordination that Jesus was subject to Mary and Joseph for the next eighteen years.

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04 -- THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST -- Luke 3:1-38

THE Chronological setting of the beginning of John's ministry is very exactly stated with Luke's usual details in what he records. He states the time by reference to six political rulers, and two religious leaders.

The Word of God gave John the signal when to begin his ministry No political or religious leader told him when to begin his unusual ministry. From the wilderness, where he had received his schooling, he broke into the public eye much as Elijah, whom he represented, first appeared at the court of Ahab hundreds of years before.

John's Ministry, as stated by the Prophecy of Isaiah, was a "voice," preparing the way for Jesus the "Word." His preaching was to prepare the people for the ministry of Jesus. When ancient kings planned to visit some province of their kingdom, a messenger was sent ahead to prepare the way, leveling off the hills, filling the valleys, straightening the crooked places. Likewise John's ministry was preparatory for the coming of Jesus: the hearts of the people were like a moral wilderness. The call was to repent. Moral crookedness must be made straight. Valleys of moral degradation must be brought up, mountains and hills of self-righteousness must be leveled down. This moral preparation must still precede Jesus in His work in the individual heart.

John's Reception of the multitude who came out to hear him seemed rather rough: "O generation of vipers," offspring of that old serpent that tempted Eve in the garden. People who are not children of God are children of the devil, as Jesus said in John 8.44.

Salvation by Ancestry was punctured by John. He warned the people not to depend on the fact that they were descendants of Abraham, but must repent on their own account, and prove that they were repentant by doing things consistent with repentance. God is not limited to the descendants of Abraham in raising up children. Some people still claim superiority because of

good parents they had. The axe was ready to cut down every tree that did not show fruits of repentance.

Questions Answered -- John's preaching began to produce results. People began to inquire as to details of how to do.

A General Question -- The people in general asked, "What shall we do then?" They began to feel that they should do something. John's answer is plain. His advice for those who have is to share with those who have not, and like statements of Scripture are used by some as trying to show that the Bible teaches socialism, that there should be a general leveling off so that all will have the same amount of everything. Socialism looks to a compulsory edict of law compelling people to accept all alike the same income and other things. The Bible issues no edict, but persuades those who have to help those who have not. Private ownership is not at all discouraged by this statement of John.

Publicans asked, "What shall we do?" They were the tax-collectors of the Roman government. The taxes were "farmed out." That is to say, a man would pay the Roman government a certain sum for the privilege of collecting the taxes in a certain city or region. Then the publican would assess the people of the region, adding enough to what he had paid to pay him for his service. This system was a great temptation to assess more than was proper. To these, John says, "Exact no more than that which is appointed you." That is, no more than a reasonable commission for their service.

Soldiers also asked what they should do. These soldiers were not engaged in warfare, but served as a police force to keep order in the land of Palestine, where trouble often occurred from the restlessness of the Jews who in general hated their subjection to Rome. To them, as policemen, John says to do violence to no man, nor accuse any falsely, or bring a charge against one who has not done anything worthy of arrest. One more notable thing John said to these soldiers -- "Be content with your wages." John did not believe in workers striking for higher wages, neither does God favor such doings. What a better world we would have if all men were content with their wages!

The Two Baptisms -- John did so many things that the people, among whom there was a general expectation that the Messiah was soon coming, began to wonder if John might be the hoped-for One. John soon set them right His baptism of water was temporary, but He Who was coming would baptize with the Holy Ghost -- He would also clean up the threshing floor. The righteous are likened to wheat, the wicked to chaff.

Jesus initiated Into His Ministry -- Eventually Jesus joins the candidates for John's baptism, and is thereby initiated into His ministry. Luke records that Jesus was praying. The rite being performed, the Holy Ghost descends in a visible form like a dove upon Jesus, thus preparing Him in His human nature for His life's work. Furthermore God, the Father spoke from heaven declaring Jesus to be His beloved Son. in all the thirty years Jesus had lived as a child and young man He had done nothing displeasing to God. Until He was anointed with the Holy Ghost there is no record of Jesus doing any miracle, speaking a parable, or giving teaching. The Holy Ghost prepared Him for His life's work.

The Genealogy as Luke gives it is different from the one in Matthew. In Matthew the genealogy proves Jesus as the heir of David and therefore entitled to occupy his throne. The genealogy of Luke is more natural, being traced clear back to Adam, here called "the son of God," referring to him in his unfallen state. A book could be written about these genealogies and their similarities and differences. Briefly stated, in Matthew we have the genealogy traced from David through Solomon, but in Luke it is traced from David through his son Nathan. Both Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Joseph her husband, were descendants of David. Jesus, though not the natural son of Joseph, was his legal heir, and thus entitled to the throne of David. Matthew proves this in his genealogy. Luke traces Jesus' genealogy through His mother, Mary. In spite of their differences both genealogies are correct

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05 -- TEMPTATION AND EARLY MINISTRY -- Luke 4:1-44

Jesus' Preparation for His ministry consisted of two parts: the anointing with the Holy Spirit, and the conquest of the devil. The anointing having been received, as related in the last lesson, Jesus now is led by the Spirit into the wilderness for His contest with the devil. The devil's method is demonstrated by his use of the doubtful IF, trying to cast doubt into the mind of the tempted one. "If Thou be the Son of God," is repeated twice in this temptation, verses 3 and 9. The tactics of the devil is to try to get Jesus to do something wonderful to prove He is the Son of God. The enemy still uses that method with the newly Spirit-baptized person. If you are full of the Holy Spirit, why do you not do something wonderful to prove you are? It is to be observed that the miracles of Jesus were not done by the use of magic. To turn a stone into bread would be in the nature of magic. Jesus did multiply bread, but He started with bread.

The Temptations of Jesus were on a very high plane. The last six of the commandments are not involved. The whole purpose of the enemy was to pull Jesus away from dependence on God and eventually away from God Himself, along the line of the first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." The most appealing temptation was perhaps the temptation to get the control of the world by a short cut. Jesus' purpose is eventually to rule the world: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ," says the prophecy in Revelation 11.15. Satan tried to tempt Him to make a short cut, and avoid the way of the cross.

Jesus' Resistance to Temptation was simple but effective. He could have pointed the devil to the experience He had had shortly before, when God spoke from heaven declaring that He was the Son of God, Luke 3.22. Too many tempted people try to resist by falling back on their experience and claiming that as the basis of their knowledge. Jesus used the Scripture, all three passages from the book of Deuteronomy. The Bible instructs just what to do, so we need to be well versed in the Bible.

Jesus Begins' His Ministry. Jesus is not recorded as engaging in teaching or preaching until He had been anointed with the Spirit and His conquest of the devil. Verse 15 says that He taught in the synagogues. Eventually He came to His home town, Nazareth. He had a good custom, evidently from childhood, of attending the synagogue. It is evident that what Jesus had done in Cana and

Capernaum was known in Nazareth. The head of the synagogue, on hearing He was at home, requested Him to conduct the service at the synagogue, or some part of it. When the time came for Him to do His part, He stood up in preparation to read. The minister, the person who had charge of the Scripture documents, or scrolls, handed Him the scroll of Isaiah. Opening it, He found the 61st chapter and began reading at the first verse, which reads as follows:

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because He hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

The Incomplete Quotation. By looking to the passage in Isaiah, as it reads in the Old Testament, it will be seen that Jesus stopped at an unusual place, at a comma. Of the part He read Jesus could say, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." But this could not be said of what follows, which reads, "and the day of vengeance of our God" etc. The church age, not revealed in the Old Testament, is inserted at that comma. The things following the comma will take place after the church age is finished and will begin with the "day of vengeance of our God," the great tribulation.

The Questioning. It was customary and permissible, after the preacher had finished his message in the synagogue, for the people in the audience to ask questions. The first question asked on this occasion was, "Is not this Joseph's son?" They failed to see it was the Son of God.

Reaction to the Message, The first reaction was favorable. No such preaching as that had ever been proclaimed there. They "wondered at the gracious words." But when he referred to two Old Testament incidents in which Elijah and Elisha did miracles of blessing outside of Israel, they were filled with wrath and were disposed to kill Him. But, with calm step He passed through the crowd and went to Capernaum, which He made His headquarters while ministering in Galilee.

Jesus' Ministry at Capernaum. Those who attended the synagogue in Capernaum were more receptive of the truth Jesus preached than those in the synagogue in Nazareth. "They were astonished at His doctrine, for His word was with power." One sabbath day the service was interrupted by the loud plea of a devil-possessed man, saying, "Let us alone." The devils are ready to acknowledge what men are sometimes disposed to ignore. The devil's testimony through this man was, "I know Thee, Who Thou art: the Holy One of God." Just how, we do not well know how an evil spirit can get possession of a human body and get it to do what it will against the will of the man. Jesus, not pleased with a testimony, though true, from an evil spirit' demanded the devil to come out of the man. The two personalities are evident for it says, "He came out of him."

Jesus' Healing Touch, After the synagogue service, evidently invited by Peter, Jesus went to his house. Peter here is called Simon). But Peter's mother-in-law, who was in charge of getting the dinner for the visitors, Jesus and some of His disciples, had been taken suddenly sick and was unable to wait on the company. Jesus rebuked the fever, and immediately she "arose and ministered unto them." When the sun had set, which ended the sabbath day, throngs came with their sick, and Jesus "laid His hands on every one of them and healed them."

A Widening Ministry. The people very much desired Jesus to stay with them, but He declined, saying, "I must preach the kingdom of God in other cities also, and it is recorded, "He preached in the synagogues of Galilee."

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06 -- CALLING DISCIPLES AND APPOINTING APOSTLES -- Luke 5:1-6:49

After touring the synagogues of Galilee we find Jesus back at Capernaum. He walks out to the sea of Galilee, here called Gennesaret. Two ships are pulled up to the shore belonging to fishermen who are washing and mending their nets. The crowd is following Him, eager to hear Him speak. To avoid being thronged, He steps into one of the ships, which belongs to Simon Peter, and asks him to push out a little from the shore. He sits down and from this advantage point addresses the crowd gathered on the sloping shore. We have no record of what He said at this time, but Peter was a close listener.

Untimely Time to Fish and the Catch. Jesus proposed to Peter that he launch out into the lake and let down the net for a catch of fish. Peter at first objects. They had fished all night, the best time to fish, and taken nothing, and now in the daytime, when fish ordinarily stay deep in the lake, Jesus proposes to fish. "Nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net." It looks as though Peter had no faith that he would get any fish, but he obeyed the Lord, and obedience brought results. Faith and obedience are very closely related. Faith without obedience will bring no results.

Peter's Promotion. Peter was overwhelmed at the result of letting down the net and made a confession of his sin, perhaps the sin of doubting the results of obeying Jesus. But Jesus reassures him by saying that "Henceforth thou shalt catch men." And he did catch them, not by the hook and line method, but by the net full, as at Pentecost. It appears from Mark 1.17-20 that this was when Jesus called Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow Him as a life work. All four of them had met Jesus sometime before, as related in John 1.35-42. They probably had considered the matter before and were ready for the call, which meant leaving their business, their home, and being a pilgrim following Jesus in His travels.

Healing the Leper. The location of this miracle is not given. It appears to be the same as recorded in Matthew 8.2-4. The leper said, "if Thou wilt". Jesus said, "I will." Jesus instructed the healed leper to go to the priest and offer the sacrifice Moses commanded. For particulars see Leviticus chapters 12, 13, & 14. This was a testimony to the priest, who, doubtless, never had a case like it before.

The Palsied Man Healed and Forgiven. Four friends brought the man, but could not get to Jesus in the house, so they went to the roof and let the invalid down before Jesus. Jesus said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Scribes and Pharisees charged Jesus with blasphemy. Jesus, to prove He had power on earth to forgive sins, told the man to take up his bed and walk out, which he did to the amazement of all.

The Call of Levi -- Matthew. Levi was a publican of the most hated class by the Jews. From the fact that he was sitting, we gather that he was the head publican at the custom house. How much he had known before this time we do not know, but it seems evident that he had had some acquaintance with Him. Notice the order of events when he responded to the call of Jesus to discipleship. "And he left all, rose up, and followed Him." An onlooker naturally would have reversed the order: rose up, left all. But the Holy Ghost says that, before he rose up, he had abandoned the job and all it had meant to him. This is the right order. Too many people attempt to rise up and then leave all, and have a hard time getting it done. The heart work must precede the physical action. This is the Apostle who later wrote the Gospel of Matthew.

Levi's Great Feast. As a farewell to his old associates in the custom house, he made a great feast in his own house and invited them, and possibly he used the same time to introduce the publicans who gathered to Jesus, Whom he also invited to his feast.

The Fault-finding Pharisees. They did not attack Jesus directly, but tried to get His disciples to see faults in Him for eating with publicans and sinners. Jesus took their part and answered the Pharisees by saying the sick needed the physician, not the well. Jesus is still seeking the sinner, not the self-righteous.

Then the Pharisees found fault with Jesus because His disciples did not do like the Pharisees and John the Baptist and his disciples. It was customary for the strict Jews to fast twice a week, on Monday and Thursday. There is no command for this in the Old Testament, but had evidently been added to the law by the rabbis, like many other things. Jesus did not observe those days of fasting. The new wine of the Gospel could not safely be put in the old bottles of Pharisaism.

The Pharisees' criticism of the disciples for plucking the wheat-heads and rubbing out the grain to eat was not for the act, but because of the day it was done, the sabbath. The law allowed this picking of grain from another's field. See Deuteronomy 23.25. Jesus refers to David's eating the shewbread as an example of the law of necessity superseding of the law. See I Samuel 21.1-8.

Healing the Withered Hand. Jesus appears to purposely break the Pharisaic rules concerning the sabbath, as He did in this case. Notice, He told the man to do what he could, "Stand forth," and then did for him what he could not do. Jesus often had people He planned to help, to do something first to show their faith.

Appointing the Apostles. After a night of prayer Jesus calls His disciples (a disciple is a learner) and from them He selected twelve to be apostles (apostle means a "sent one"). Seven of these have been mentioned before -- Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew (otherwise called Nathaniel) and Matthew (also called Levi). The other five we have not found mentioned before. A considerable part of the remainder of Christ's time on earth was spent educating these twelve men to take over when He was taken from them.

The Sermon in the Plain. We have in the closing part of this 6th chapter of Luke words similar to the Sermon on the Mount. Some think this is another version of that Sermon, but study of

it will show it is not exactly that The Sermon on the Mount was preached on a mount especially to the recently appointed Apostles.

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07 -- JESUS HEALING, COMFORTING, AND FORGIVING -- Luke 7:1-50

JESUS is Now Back En Capernaum after finishing His sermon on the plain and instructing His newly-appointed Apostles. Capernaum served as His headquarters during His ministry in Galilee.

The Centurion's Servant Healed. Several centurions are mentioned in the Gospels. A centurion was a Roman officer who had under him one hundred soldiers. All those centurions mentioned appear to be men of good character who wisely administered the work committed to them. This particular centurion was located at or near Capernaum. He had a loved servant that was sick and about to die. He heard of Jesus and appears to believe He could heal his servant. He was well liked by the Jews because he had built a synagogue for them. This prompts him to send some elders of the Jews to entreat Jesus to heal his servant. The centurion felt that it would make Jesus ceremonially unclean to enter his house, so, before Jesus got there, he sent friends to tell Him, "but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed." He further said, "For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one Go, and he goeth" etc. Note that word "also," intimating that Jesus also had servants under Him that He ordered. Jesus had not before met this kind of faith, and remarks at it, and said, "I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel."

A Widow's Dead Son Restored to Life. The next day after healing the centurion's servant, Jesus went to a city by the name of Nain. Many disciples and others went with Him. As Jesus and His company approached the city they met a funeral procession carrying a dead man out to be buried. Luke puts it pathetically "the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." It is noticeable that this is one miracle Jesus performed without being asked to do so. Perhaps no one had the faith to ask Him to do it. He did it through compassion for the widow. Did it ever occur to you that Jesus still does things for His people without being asked to do so? For instance, Did any man, or all the men in the world ask Jesus to die on the cross to save them? The compassion of God the Father and of the Son, through love, provided salvation without any one asking them to do so. But He likes to be asked in accord with His promises.

John the Baptist's Question. This question of John the Baptist raises some other questions that Bible students have again and again asked. Was John discouraged? Did he begin to doubt that Jesus was the Messiah? and the like may be asked. It needs to be remembered that John is at this time the prisoner of Herod -- whom he has rebuked for his marrying the wife of another living man -- in the dark, gloomy dungeon at Machaerus. While some of John's disciples had followed John's direction and followed Jesus, some of John's disciples still lingered around him, and evidently came to see him. It is evident these disciples, like those of Jesus had the idea that when the Messiah came He would set up His kingdom on the earth. And it may be that John the Baptist himself shared that opinion. We should not be too ready to criticize this opinion, for, while there are in the Old Testament symbolic references to the church age, there is not definite prophecy. The prophecies concerning Jesus, like the one cited in lesson 4, when Jesus read the prophecy of Isaiah

61.1,2 and stopped at a comma. What follows the comma foretells the kingdom time. Naturally, one reading the Old Testament where the first and second coming are stated in succession, would expect that when the Messiah came He would set up His earthly kingdom. Jesus was not doing as the disciples of John thought He should.

To settle the problem, John sent two of his disciples to Jesus with the question, "Art Thou. He that should come? or look we for another?" On the arrival of these two disciples of John, Jesus did not stop to discuss matters with them, but went on with His healing and preaching work. Then He told the men to go and tell John what they had seen and heard: "how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached." Then he adds, evidently especially for John's benefit, "And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me." Jesus did not want John to stumble over the fact that He was not doing what John thought He should be doing, likewise his disciples.

Jesus' Appraisal of John the Baptist. After John's messengers departed Jesus praised John. He was not a reed shaken by the wind, every way the wind blew; he was not clothed in fine apparel, but he was a prophet, and that was why people flocked to the wilderness of Jordan to hear him. Jesus likened those who did not accept either John or Himself as peevish children who will not play. Their comrades play a tune and say "let's dance," but they say, "I don't want to dance." Then "Let's play funeral," but they say, "I don't want to play funeral." We still have people like that. They say of one preacher, "He is too loud and demonstrative," and of another "He is too quiet and orderly." It is really not the manners they object to, but the gospel they preach.

The Woman Forgiven of Her Sins. A Pharisee named Simon asked Jesus to go home and dine with him, but neglected the usual courtesies shown to guests. It was customary to receive a guest with a kiss, wash his feet, and anoint his head with oil. The Pharisee did none of these things. Simon decided Jesus was not a Prophet or He would have known the character of the woman who was dealing with Him. But Jesus showed that He was a prophet for He read the thoughts of Simon. Jesus compared Simon's discourtesy with the sinful woman's devotion. In answer to Jesus' parable of the two debtors, Simon condemned himself by saying the one forgiven must of course loved most. The woman had many sins to forgive. Simon thought he had few sins to be forgiven. Jesus admitted that the woman had many sins, but He forgave them all. in dismissing her, He said, "Thy faith hath saved thee."

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08 -- ITINERARY IN GALILEE, GADARA AND ELSEWHERE -- Luke 8:1-9:62

Jesus spent much of His time in Galilee. This chapter first tells of an extensive itinerary in Galilee. The twelve apostles were with Him. This must have made the tour of the cities and villages expensive. To help out in this trip certain women contributed of their substance. There were many of them, but only three are mentioned: Mary Magdalene, Susanna, and, strange to say, the wife of Herod's steward.

Parables of Teaching. The parable of the Sower is here repeated. The parable, briefly summarized, may be stated: 1. The seed sown by the wayside pictures the careless hearer. 2. The

seed on stony ground symbolizes the emotional hearer. 3. The seed sown among thorns represents the preoccupied hearer. 4. The seed on good ground is interpreted as the devout hearer. The parable, including the one about the light under the bed, is climaxed with the admonition, "Take heed how ye hear".

Interference of Mother and Brethren. This visit appears to have been designed to persuade Him to go home, for they perhaps thought, as friends did in Mark 3.21, that He was beside Himself. Jesus points to a closer relationship than kindred, those who hear the Word of God, and do it

The Storm on Lake Galilee. All these men had in the experience and equipment was not equal to that storm. Jesus did not ask about their sail, their oars, or their bailer, but "Where is your faith?" Just what they would have done if they had had faith we do not know. We would probably have done as they did had we been in their place -- awakened Jesus. The fact they got into this storm by obeying Jesus' instructions should have been a basis for faith. There are times when we as Christians get into situations where all we can do will not cope with the trouble. Nothing will avail at such a time but faith in the promises of God.

Experiences in Gadara. After the storm they continued their journey to the east side of the lake of Galilee. On landing, they were met by the demoniac, who is described as having had "devils a long time," and they called themselves "Legion." A Roman legion in New Testament times was 6,000. The word is sometimes used loosely to indicate a large number. With Jesus' consent, when ordered to leave the man, the devils went into the herd of swine (Mark says there were about 2,000). The swine seemed to had rather drown than to be possessed with devils. These Gadarenes are supposed by some to be descendants of the tribe of Dan, whose inheritance was east of Jordan. If so, they knew better than to raise swine, and ought not to complain at the destruction of their property. The description of the man before the miracle was, "wore no clothes." After the miracle he was, "clothed and in his right mind." Jesus consented to leave the country on request of the people; but He refused the request of the healed man to go with Him.

Jairus' Daughter and the Infirm Woman. On the return of Jesus to the west side of the sea, He found people glad to receive Him. Jairus, a ruler of a synagogue came to Him in behalf of his sick daughter. As Jesus started to go with him He was interrupted by the woman who had infirmity for twelve years. She did not have the long-distance faith of the centurion who said, "Speak the word," but had to contact Him for her faith to work. Jesus' question, "Who touched Me" was not because He did not know, but to draw out a confession from the woman. Jesus said that her faith made her whole. In the interval while Jesus was dealing with the woman the daughter of Jairus died and a messenger came to tell him. Jesus encouraged Jairus by saying, "only believe." Jesus did not do miracles in the company of unbelievers, so He put out the mourners and took with Him believers. After restoring the daughter, Jesus told the parent to give food. Restored life must be sustained by usual means.

Feeding Five Thousand. Jesus sent the apostles out on a special mission. About the same time Herod beheaded John the Baptist. On the return of the twelve, Jesus started to take them to a quiet retreat for rest, but the multitude followed them. As the day waned the apostles desired to

send the people away, but Jesus said to feed them first. They had five loaves, donated by a lad. But Jesus took these and by a miracle increased them so that all the five thousand and more were fed.

Jesus Foretells His Death. After a discussion as to the identity of Jesus, He, for the first time, told the disciples of His necessary death and resurrection. Then Jesus told what it would mean to follow Him -- Loss of some things, but great gain in the end.

The Transfiguration. About a week later, Jesus selected Peter, James, and John and went to a mountain to pray. As He prayed He was transfigured. Moses and Elijah came and appeared with Him. The three disciples seemed to think that perhaps Moses and Elijah had come to stay, and Peter proposed arranging for their comfort, putting them on an equal plane as Jesus. But God spoke from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son: hear Him." Note that the conversation of Jesus with Moses and Elijah was about "His decease that He should accomplish at Jerusalem." The word "Decease" is the same as "Exodus." Jesus' death was an accomplishment, the greatest work He did on earth.

The Distressed Father. Coming down from the mount the next day they found the nine disciples in trouble. Though they had been given power over evil spirits they could not deal with this one. Jesus came to their rescue, and to the comfort of the father, healed the son.

Who Should Be Greatest. Jesus settled this dispute by showing that one must be childlike to be even in the kingdom, saying nothing of being the greatest John was at this time quite sectarian, did not want others to cast out devils. James and John wanted to call fire down on the Samaritan village that would not give hospitality, but on Jesus' advice, "They went to another village."

Three Would-Be Candidates. (vss. 57-62) The first said he would follow Jesus anywhere, but when Jesus told the condition, he evidently did not go. The second wanted to wait until his father was buried. The third wanted to say farewell to friends. Jesus remarked -- "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

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09 -- THE SEVENTY, GOOD SAMARITAN, BLESSINGS & WOES -- Luke 10:1-11:54

The Sending of the Seventy. Having previously sent the twelve disciples whom He appointed as Apostles, Jesus now sends seventy others on a similar mission. But there are differences in the two groups. The twelve were all named and given a permanent standing that continued during their lifetime. These seventy are sent on a temporary mission, none of them are named. There is a woe pronounced on any city that did not receive them. In this connection Jesus pronounces woe on Chorazin, Bethsaida, and especially on Capernaum, which has been exalted to heaven by Jesus, Whose throne is in heaven, for a season made Capernaum His headquarters.

The Return of the Seventy. Not much is said of the result of the work of the seventy, but they reported with evident satisfaction that, "Even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name." Jesus instructed them that their chief cause of joy should not be that devils were subject unto them, but that their names are written in heaven. Jesus pronounces privately a blessing on His

disciples, saying that many prophets and kings have desired to see what they are seeing, but did not see them.

The Good Samaritan. Jesus tells of the deed of the good Samaritan in answer to some questions a certain lawyer asked Him. This lawyer's theology was good, and Jesus commended him for it, but he was faulty in his attitude and life. The priest and the Levite held high positions in the church, but the Samaritan surpassed them in good works. A high office in the church is no guarantee of salvation.

Martha and Mary Introduced. The closing verses of chapter 10 introduces briefly these two women who are more fully described in the Gospel of John. There are two sides of entertaining a guest -- giving a good meal, and entertaining by visiting. Mary chose what Jesus said was the "good part."

A Lesson on Prayer. Jesus was often in prayer. On this occasion, when He ceased, one of His disciples requested that He teach them to pray. In response, Jesus gives another version of the prayer recorded in Matthew 8.9-13. Then He illustrates prevailing prayer by the friend who at midnight needed something to set before a visitor who had unexpectedly come. The reluctance of the man to inconvenience himself was overcome by the persistence of the seeking neighbor. God pays little attention to casual prayer when there is no real need or desire back of it. People often pray for things they do not expect to get, and therefore get nothing. God responds to real needs persistently pressed. Jesus further encouraged asking, seeking, and knocking, with promise of results.

The Giving of the Holy Spirit. Verses 11-13 set forth a great principle. A son is pictured asking his father and got needed food. Even an evil father would not substitute a stone for bread, a serpent for a fish, nor a scorpion for an egg. If evil fathers know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more freely will the heavenly Father give good things to His children. This passage is a great help to one seeking the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Note the condition: a person must be a child of God before he can correctly ask for the Holy Spirit, and, of course, an obedient child of God. A person must be free and clean from every committed sin and walking in the light to date, with no unforgiven sin. In that condition, and that condition only, can a person ask for the Holy Spirit. But the promise seems so easy to the obedient that there seems not to need any special struggle to receive the Spirit -- just ask for the baptism with the Spirit.

Jesus' Miracles Wrongly Explained. When people do not like a person they try to find false reasons for their success. In the case of Jesus healing the dumb and casting out the devil who had possessed the man, people who opposed Jesus, attributed His success by suggesting He was in agreement with the devil in releasing the man from the evil Spirit's possession. But Jesus shows that, while there was a strong man in possession of the man, He was the stronger Man and disposed of the dumb spirit.

The Greater Blessing. In verse 27 a woman in the crowd pronounces a blessing on the mother of Jesus, but Jesus said, "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it."

Jesus Vindicates the Book of Jonah. Infidels and modernists do not believe that a man like Jonah ever lived. But Jesus believed that Jonah was a real man and not a mythological figure. The great city of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah, but the Jews as a nation did not repent at the preaching of Him Who was greater than Jonah. The Jews wanted a sign from heaven but Jesus gave them only the sign of the prophet Jonah. Jonah's experience was a foreshadowing of the death and resurrection of Jesus. People who do not believe the story of Jonah as a rule do not believe in the atoning death of Jesus and His bodily resurrection. The Bible ties them together.

The Strong Man and the Stronger One. Satan is the strong man keeping his goods, but Jesus is that stronger Man that can take the captives of Satan away from him. If you are in bondage to the strong man, Satan, call on Jesus the stronger Man and He will deliver you.

Contest with Pharisees and Lawyers. It is likely that this Pharisee who invited Jesus to dine with him had ulterior motives as was later demonstrated. First, he found fault with Him for not ceremonially washing His hands. Jesus responded to the effect that the Pharisees kept the outside of the platter clean, but the inside was dirty.

Woes Pronounced. Jesus proceeded to pronounce a woe on the Pharisees and scribes. A lawyer interfered and said He reproached them also. Whereupon Jesus gave a series of woes on the lawyers more drastic than on the Pharisees, though they were doubtless included in the woes. It is interesting to compare these with the Blessings of Matthew 5.3-12. Note the contrast. Then Pharisees, scribes and lawyers made common cause against Jesus, trying to provoke Him to say something they could lay hold on as a basis of an accusation to the civil authorities.

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10 -- INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT THE USE OF PROPERTY -- Luke 12:1-59

Christ's Estimate of Man's Worth. Great crowds followed Jesus. On this occasion He took time to warn the people to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, meaning the doctrine they taught. While it is natural to have some fear of being killed, Jesus emphasizes the importance of fearing Him Who can cast into hell, even God. Jesus compares God's care for sparrows with His care for man. In the market two sparrows were sold for a farthing, as told in Matthew 10.29, but here we find that five sparrows are sold for two farthings, showing that when a customer paid two farthings another sparrow, making five, was thrown in, but, while men regarded that fifth sparrow so little, that fifth one was not forgotten before God. But Jesus says that we are worth more than many sparrows. Then He goes on to say that even all the hairs of our heads are numbered, or counted, so that God knows how many hairs are on the head of every one of His children.

Importance of Right Confession. It is surprising how difficult it is to testify to the unsaved what Christ has done for us. The enemy of good makes people timid to speak of salvation. However, we need to be sure we testify truly before men for Christ's confession of us before the Father and the holy angels depends on how we testify for Him in this world.

Honor the Holy Ghost. Sinners take the name of God and Christ in vain, but few if any take the name of the Holy Ghost in vain. The reason of that speaking lightly of the Holy Ghost is

because He is the member of the Trinity that deals directly with the soul. If anything is done that grieves Him away, it cuts people off from communion with God. It is reported that Aaron Burr, who became a wicked man, in his youth was under deep conviction for months at one time. In his desperation one day he said "Jesus Christ, if You will let me alone, I will leave You alone." Instantly his conviction ceased. He had grieved away the Holy Ghost Who was seeking his salvation. He never again had any desire to be a Christian.

A Covetous Man, distressed about getting his share of an inheritance, interrupted Jesus in His talk by asking Him to interfere with his brother's plans, who evidently was trying to get all of an inheritance left to both of the brothers. Jesus refused to take the case, as He was not appointed to judge. He will judge when He comes again. Jesus took the occasion to give warning against covetousness. A man's life and value are not measured by the property he possesses. Too many count it in dollars.

Parable Prompted by the Incident. In order to make His teaching more effective regarding covetousness Jesus gives the parable of the man who had abundance beyond his barns to store. All people like security, but too many seek security in money. That is one reason that "Social Security" has such a grip on some people. The man in the parable put his dependence on security on the quantity of goods he had laid up for many years. He undoubtedly came honestly by what he possessed. Jesus gives no hint but that he had come by his wealth honestly. We sometimes get the idea that covetousness is wanting what some one else has. But from what Jesus said to the would-be client, and from what He said about this rich man, covetousness may consist in too much storing up of what is honestly ours. This man in the parable had a wonderful opportunity to do good with his possessions. But it seems never to have occurred to him to help his poor neighbors or give to God's cause. No mention does he make of God, or thankfulness for his abundance. He did not consider the uncertainty of his own life. He enjoyed his plan to "eat, drink, and be merry," only by anticipation, an anticipation that was never realized.

The Problem of Making a Living Solved by what Jesus says. Making a living for one's self and family is a problem most people have to work out some way. There is always the specter of the "wolf at the door" in the way of fear of loss of job, loss of property, loss of health, crash of the stock market or some unforeseen calamity. Most people are anxious about this. But Jesus said, "take no thought for your life," that is, how to live. Jesus said this relatively and not positively. The meaning is not to be anxious. Jesus illustrates His meaning by referring to birds and lilies. Birds are not anxious, but always busy. They have no barns, but we do have, and are more distressed in making a living than they. The whole matter hinges on what is our first seeking.

Readiness for the Lord's Coming. The time of the Lord's return is not made known, but the attitude we should have toward it is made plain by the Lord. We should be always ready. That will keep us from carelessness.

Peter's Question brings out the fact that some persons are responsible as a householder watching over others to keep them ready. Pastors should keep their hearers informed of the need for readiness for the Lord's coming. The attitude of thinking the Lord delayeth His coming is a dangerous attitude to take. The few and many stripes evidently does not mean different degrees of punishment in hell, but things in the way of punishment in this life.

The Divisive Work of Christ. Jesus will eventually be the Prince of peace, but for the present He is divisive in people's attitude toward Him. It is true that families are divided in their attitude toward Christ. Some parents have disowned their children because they became Christians. Christians should not marry non-Christians, for they are laying the ground work for disagreement in days to come.

Reading the Signs. Jesus showed the people that they were adepts in reading the signs of changing weather, heat and cold; but they were ignorant about reading the signs of the time. Calamity was hanging over the land and people of Israel, but they were unconscious of it. A few years later, because of the rejection of Jesus, the Jewish state was abolished to remain so for many centuries. This the people, even the wisest of them, seemed not to sense. Likewise today the masses even of church members and their preachers seem not to be able to see the signs of the dissolution of the present order of things and the terrible tribulation that is impending.

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11 -- WORDS AND PARABLES OF WARNING -- Luke 13:1-14:35

TWO CALAMITIES had recently befallen some Jews. The people tell Jesus of one. Some Galilean Jews, probably considered antagonistic to Pilate, came to the temple in Jerusalem to offer sacrifices, and Pilate had massacred them while they were engaged in offering their sacrifices. Jesus mentioned the other calamity: a tower in Siloam had fallen on eighteen men and killed them. The Jews took the attitude that these men perished because of sin against God.

Jesus Applies these occasions as a warning to all the Jews as a premonition of coming disaster to the nation. These Galileans were no worse sinners than other people of Galilee, nor were the eighteen killed by the falling tower worse sinners than the other people of Jerusalem. Then Jesus gives the warning, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Parable of the Unfruitful Fig Tree. Jesus then applies the incidents by this parable. A certain man had a vineyard and in the vineyard he had planted, it seems, a solitary fig tree. This fig tree seems to have been a special tree that the owner had great hopes of bearing fruit. Three years he had come year by year in the hope of getting fruit, but the tree bore no fruit. In his disappointment he told the gardener to cut the tree down. The gardener pleaded with the owner to try it one more year. This pictures Jesus' three years finding no fruit from His ministry in Jerusalem. Pentecost gave a little opportunity for repentance, but they rejected the Holy Spirit just as they rejected Jesus.

Healing the Crooked Woman. Jesus was teaching in one of the Jewish synagogues. He saw the unfortunate woman and called her to Him. He thus called her faith into action by asking her to do what she could do, before He did for her what she could not do. The ruler of the synagogue was displeased at what Jesus did, and proposed to the congregation to come on a week day and not on the sabbath if they sought healing. Jesus plainly called him a hypocrite and cited the inconsistency of taking a domestic animal to water for its well-being, and criticizing the relief of a suffering woman. The common people rejoiced at what Jesus did.

Parable of Mustard Seed and Leaven. These are fully explained in our Matthew lesson, the mustard is an herb, but grew to be a tree, symbol of a nation. God did not intend the church to become a political power as Rome aspires to do. Leaven is a type of evil doctrine that has contaminated the once pure doctrine of the church.

Few Saved, or Many? Jesus did not directly answer this question, but said that the gate is difficult to enter and that many would not get in. The door of opportunity will eventually be closed, and pleading of good works will not avail. The Jews with the best opportunity are going to miss getting into the kingdom, while from far away places people will come and sit down with the Patriarchs.

Danger from Herod Jesus is evidently east of Jordan in the territory of Herod Antipas, who beheaded John the Baptist, and the Jews try to frighten Jesus.

Opportunity Rejected Brings Desolation. With loving compassion Jesus had brooded over Jerusalem as a hen cares for her brood, but the Jews would have none of it. Therefore their house has been left desolate for centuries.

Jesus Heals the Victim of Dropsy. Jesus went into the house of a chief Pharisee, evidently at his invitation, and the Jews took occasion to watch what He would do to the infirm man. As usual Jesus broke their distorted idea of what was right on the sabbath. He again showed their hypocrisy by showing how differently they treated domestic animals.

Advice to Host and Guests. While at this Pharisee's table Jesus gives instruction to the maker of a feast and the guests. First He instructs that when invited to a feast, it is best to sit down in a lowly place, and give the host opportunity to bid him come to a more important place. Then He instructs the host to invite persons who are not able to return the hospitality. Since they cannot reward the host he will be rewarded at the resurrection of the just

Parable of the Supper. Those invited to this supper had excuses why they did not want to come. This pictures three things that keep people from coming to Christ.

The Farm. The man who refused to come to the feast had bought land. Some people are so busy on the farm that they have no time to go to church, even get the tractor out on Sunday to plow or reap.

Teaming and Trucking. The man who was occupied with his oxen suggests the man who makes a business of hauling. Oxen have given place to horses, and horses to trucks. There are many truckers on the highways on Sundays these days.

Family Relationships. The man who had married a wife and could not come pictures the danger of family relationships keeping people away from God. Many a man and woman, called of God to the ministry or missionary work, have married and settled down: having chosen a companion not interested in the call to the Lord's service. A person's relatives are often the enemy

of what God has called one to do. Too many men have married wives who are a liability rather than an asset.

It is the down and out, the poor, the sinners that are really more apt to respond to the call of God than the respected people who are getting along all right by themselves, in their own opinion.

The Cost of Discipleship. Jesus never emphasized the easy side of being a disciple. He now sets forth the rigor of being a disciple. We must love nothing more than God. We should count the cost before enlisting in His army, or before building our house, lest we stop with a half-finished house, or suffer defeat by the enemy. Too many have not counted the cost and are sad spectacles of backsliding today. Their salt has lost its saltiness, and they are insipid people today, a reproach on the cause of Christ

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12 -- PRODIGAL -- UNJUST STEWARD -- RICH MAN & LAZARUS -- Luke 15:1-16:31

PUBLICANS AND SINNERS now gathered near to Jesus while the Pharisees criticized but their criticism had in it a great truth -- "This Man receiveth sinners."

Three Lost Things are dealt with in this chapter -- a lost sheep, a lost coin, and a lost boy. Let us consider each of these.

The Lost Sheep -- The owner of the hundred sheep very likely valued all of his sheep, but the lost one received the most attention. The shepherd sought until he found the lost sheep, and carried it home on his shoulders. There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety-nine persons who do not repent, for only repentant sinners get to heaven.

The Lost Coin -- This woman had ten coins, but had lost one. She took no rest until she found it. Her house had a thorough sweeping that day, every comer was searched, every crevice dug into. At last she found it. She took no rest until she found it.

The Lost Boy -- A father is here pictured. In this case we may say, the father did not lose the boy, the boy deliberately went away. The father did not seek the boy. There was no use following him and trying to persuade him to come back. If he ever comes back it will be because he determines to come back. The lost sheep could not find its way back, the lost coin could not get back on the necklace of the woman or back in her purse. But the boy could come back, and it was up to him whether or not he ever came back.

Picture of a Backslider -- In one way the prodigal is a picture of the backslider. He was at one time in the Father's house, partaker of his father's love, ate at his father's table. He seems to have no drawing to go back until he came to poverty and hunger. Notice the order by which he came to the decision to go home. It fits the psychology of man's behavior. First the intellect, he remembered. Second the sensibilities, his desire was aroused at the thought of his father's bountiful table, where the servants had such an abundance that they left bread-crusts by their plate. O, How he wished he had one of these crusts! Then his will: "I will arise and go to my father." He was sure

his father would receive him. It seems the father's eye looked daily down the road to where it disappeared in the distance to see if the son might come home. One day, O joy, the father sees him "a great way off." What a welcome awaits the returning backslider!

The elder brother, while faithful as a son to his father, did not enter into the rejoicing of his father. He planned to be saved by his good works, but the prodigal was restored by grace.

G. Campbell Morgan says the three parables have one meaning. The shepherd represents Jesus, the good Shepherd, suffering bruised feet, thorn-scratched brow and hands. The woman represents the Holy Spirit, seeking until found. The father represents God the Father ready to welcome every wanderer who will come back.

Perhaps the lost sheep represents the imbecile who does not know enough to find his way to the fold; the coin, the little child who will never be saved unless found, and will be found if dying in infancy. The prodigal is the intelligent person who knows the way back, and must himself take the initiative if ever saved.

The Unjust Steward -- Chapter sixteen opens with the account of a rich man who had been told by someone that his steward was unfaithful. The rich man's suspicions are aroused, and he asks the steward to give an account of his service. The steward fearing he will be cast out of his job, having full control of his master's affairs, calls the people who owe the rich man, and settles with them on easy terms, thus winning their favor, so, if he is cast out he will have friends who will favor him. The rich man admired the ingenuity of his steward for the wisdom he had shown for his personal good. The steward's plan was that, if thrown out of his stewardship, these debtors he had favored would receive him into their homes.

Rich Man and Lazarus -- Some call this a Parable. May it not rather be a page from history as Jesus knew it, telling what happened on earth for these two men and an insight into eternity? Extremes of wealth and poverty are indicated. But in the next world conditions were reversed. The unseen world has two apartments with a great gulf between. Paradise is one side, and hell on the other side. It is noticeable that the rich man did not ask to go to Abraham's bosom, but to have a little relief where he was. He, as all sinners, will find their condemnation is just and beyond possibility of change. If people will not use the present opportunity in the world to seek heaven, there is no hope after death.

A woman once told me that she did not want to go to heaven, that her husband died a sinner and went to hell, and she wanted to go where he was. This account shows that dead relatives are very solicitous about where their relatives and friends go. This present world seems to be the only place where people are not anxious where their relatives go in eternity. Heaven rejoices over one sinner converted, inhabitants of hell want to have their relatives warned. But in this life, where alone people can be saved, there seems little interest in the salvation of others.

The rich man had a plan to save his brethren, and Lazarus to warn them. Abraham replied that if they would not heed the words of Moses and the Prophets they would not believe even if one went to them from the dead. Not long after this Jesus did raise from the dead a man named Lazarus, and people were not saved by him. Even the resurrection of Jesus from the dead did not

convince the temple authorities, who hated the preaching of the resurrection of Christ by the Apostles more than anything they preached. Hell is not a reformatory, or a purgatory where souls are fitted for heaven. Punishment will not save anyone. But faith in the atonement made by Jesus Christ will save from punishment.

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13 -- FORGIVENESS, FAITH, AND THE FUTURE -- Luke 17:1-37

CAUTION AGAINST OFFENSES -- "Offence" as here used means to do something to cause someone to stumble. Jesus says it is inevitable that they come, but woe to the person who causes one of God's little ones to stumble.

The Forgiving Spirit. An offending brother should first be rebuked, and if he asks forgiveness he is to be forgiven. To forgive seven times in a day, evidently means to always have a forgiving spirit toward those who trespass against us.

Possibilities of Faith. In view of the fact that there is no record of Jesus or His disciples, or any other Bible character moving a mountain by faith or uprooting a tree by faith, it is evident that Jesus here does not mean that faith will move either mountains or trees, and evidently means some difficulty that we meet in our Christian life. An illustration may be seen in Zechariah 4.7 -- "Who art thou O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." From the context it appears that the difficulty of restoring the house of the Lord is the "mountain" referred to.

Master and Servant. Since Jesus begins verse 7 with the word "But" it is likely that what He says in verses 7-10 in some way modifies what He says about faith. We need to ever remember that Christ is Lord, and we are servants. Our principle work is to do our duty. If we had the faith to do big things we might be moving mountains and pulling up trees just to show what we could do.

The Ten Lepers. Jesus was taking the short route to Jerusalem, so passed through Samaria. The ten lepers stood afar off and tried to be delivered. Jesus tried their faith not by immediately healing them, but telling them to show themselves to the priests. According to the Levitical law (See Leviticus chapters 13 and 14.) a leper was not free to mingle with other people until the priest pronounced him clean. It was a test of faith for the lepers to go when not yet healed. They were obliged to show their faith by their works. They were evidently healed before they got to the priests. Only one, and he a Samaritan, turned back to thank Jesus. The ten were healed, but where did the nine go? Are we also that thankless for what the Lord has done for us?

The Kingdom within. In answer to the Pharisees' question Jesus says the kingdom of God is within. That is its present place in this age. Christ is gathering subjects for the Kingdom.

The Coming Kingdom. Then Jesus addresses His disciples. Though the disciples desired to see the days of the Son of man, Jesus tells them they will not see it, for He must first suffer many things and be rejected by that living generation. Then He gives two signs by which the approach of that day may be recognized.

As in the Days of Noah. Genesis 6.5 describes the days of Noah thus, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Jesus does not mention the wickedness of those days, but how the people were occupied -- They did eat, they drank, they married wives. Now these doings, of themselves, are not wicked. But the inference is that they were wholly occupied with these things with no thought of God. And that is the matter today. There were never so many kinds of things to eat as there are now. Ask your grocer how many things he has to have on his shelves to satisfy his customers. This is the most drinking generation that ever was. Not satisfied with good water, people are drinking varieties of soft drinks, and hard drinks are continually increasing in use and the number of people who are habitual drinkers of liquor and beer. Marrying and getting divorced are the commonest ever. Then, what are people talking about? Go home from church with almost any church member, and even with a preacher, and practically all they talk about at the dinner table is about most anything but religion. Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks.

As in the Days of Lot Jesus describes those days as, "They did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded." The people of Sodom, including Lot's family were eating, drinking, marrying, wholly occupied with the present. Has there ever been such a day of buying and selling as now? Note how great is the building being done. The suburbs of the large cities are spreading out into what was, a little time ago, farm land with crops of wheat and corn, but now long rows of houses along new streets. And every little town is spreading out with dozens and hundreds of new houses. Then there are great manufacturing factories of enormous size. Then, too, note the vast number of ornate and expensive church buildings. Present conditions surely fit the pattern of what Jesus foretold. People must be prepared to leave on short notice. "Remember Lot's wife," is emphasized. She lingered too long and did not escape.

Taken or Left. Jesus now gives three cases of how people will be divided.

Two Men in One Bed. They appeared much alike and were evidently agreeable to each other. But, "The one shall be taken, and the other left." They doubtless looked very much alike.

Two Women Grinding Together. They were doubtless preparing meal for the morning breakfast. Both looked alike, but, "The one shall be taken and the other left." While working at the same task and both interested in what they were doing, one was prepared with a heart rendition to go.

Two Men in the Field Again these two men were similarly engaged, working together harmoniously, apparently both much alike, but, "The one shall be taken and the other left." One was ready and the other was not.

This evidently depicts scenes at the rapture. Notice the three times of day, indicating it will take place instantly all over the earth. Men in had. night; women grinding, morning; men in the field, mid-day. This could take place in only a spherical earth. None of these were in church or prayer meeting. They had at some previous time gotten ready.

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PRAYING ALWAYS -- The purpose of the parable of the unjust judge is to teach that we ought always to pray and not faint in our praying. The importunate widow worked against great odds. The judge did not have any sympathy for her or her case. But persistence prevailed, and the judge, weary of her oft coming, finally granted her what she wanted. In contrast with this judge, God is a just Judge. He will eventually avenge His people who may cry day and night unto Him. The statement that "He bear long with them," may refer to our adversary, rather than to us. He is longsuffering with the wicked oppressors of His people.

The Pharisee and Publican were both in the temple seeking help from God. The Pharisee pled for help on the ground he observed certain ordinances. The publican had no such plea: he took the ground where God put him, a sinner, and God heard him, rather than the Pharisee. The Pharisee doubtless went home with some sense of satisfaction that he had been to the temple to pray. The publican went home with the sense of forgiveness, having found the mercy he sought.

Jesus and the Children. The disciples objected to mothers bringing their infants to Jesus, on the supposed idea that He was too busy with old people to have time for children. Children do not need to grow up in order to get Jesus' help; but grown-ups have to become children to have the favor of Jesus.

The Rich Ruler. This synagogue ruler humbled himself to come to Jesus, but he had a need that drove him to Jesus. He addressed Jesus as "Good Master?" Some critics say that in His answer Jesus denied His own goodness. The fact is that He affirmed His goodness. He was God and therefore good. The ruler was conscious of a lack and wanted to know what to do in order to inherit eternal life. Jesus at first tried him on the commandments, reciting to him only the last six that have to do with attitude and duty to fellowmen. The ruler affirmed that he had kept all these from his youth. Jesus did not deny it. "What lack I yet?" was his answer to Jesus. Then Jesus brought to bear on him, duties to God without naming the commandments. Jesus surely gave him a hard road to travel. To sell all his great possessions, give to the poor and become a poor man was too much for him. It is to be noted that Jesus gave him the same call to follow Him that He gave Matthew and others of the disciples. Jesus knew that Judas would disqualify himself as a disciple. This man might have been an apostle if he had taken Jesus' advice.

Jesus' comment to the disciples. It is noticeable that Jesus did not plead with the ruler to do what He told him to do. He did not send one of the disciples after him to plead with him to change his mind and do what Jesus said. He told His disciples that it was very hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom. And it still is. It seemed that the disciples had the idea that a rich man had some advantages. There were the cases of Abraham and Job that were rich men, and they pleased God. The disciples virtually said, if a rich man cannot be saved, who can?

Peter's Remark and Jesus' Comment. Peter said, "Lo, we have left all, and followed Thee." This implied the question, What shall we have? The words of Jesus extended beyond the twelve disciples, applying even in our day. Giving up things for Jesus will bring rewards both in this life and in the life to come. But few do it. They who faithfully do it have been rewarded in this life,

and are assured of eternal life. The things Jesus mentioned are not easy to give up. Jesus never made the way of salvation easy.

Jesus informs His Disciples of what awaited Him. "We go up to Jerusalem." Jesus and His disciples, and a multitude of pilgrims were coming up from Perea to go to Jerusalem to observe the Passover. This was the last time Jesus went to Jerusalem. Jesus told the disciples plainly what awaited Him at Jerusalem, scourging, arrest, trial, crucifixion, death, but rising again the third day. But the disciples understood none of what He said. It is possible to have one's mind so obsessed with pre-conceived ideas that anything to the contrary does not receive attention. The disciples, as well as the crowd of pilgrims, thought Jesus was now going up to Jerusalem to set up the kingdom, and they would have high places in that kingdom. Even after His resurrection they asked if He was now going to restore the kingdom to Israel. See Acts 1.6. There are many Christians today that, in spite of all that is going on to the contrary, believe that the preaching of the Gospel is going to conquer the whole world and the world will be made ready in that way for Jesus to set up His kingdom. Bible prophecy all points to the failure of all efforts to bring peace. The world at large is getting worse and worse as Jesus and all the prophets have said. The disciples were in a measure excusable for their opinion, for in the Old Testament it appears that Jesus will set up His kingdom at His first coming. The church age was not made known to the Old Testament prophets. John the Baptist had preached that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, and Jesus had also preached that way for a time, as did also His disciples when first sent out. Read Isaiah 61.1-3 and compare with how Jesus read and interpreted it at the Nazareth synagogue in Luke 4.16-19, and note, He stopped at a comma. At that comma the church age has been inserted.

A Blind Man Receives Sight. Jesus and the multitude that was with Him had crossed the Jordan river, and were approaching the city of Jericho. A blind beggar heard the noise of many footsteps and asked what it meant. Informed that Jesus was passing, he cried out, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." The crowd of pilgrims tried to silence him, thinking that it was annoying Jesus, perhaps. But this was his last and only chance, and he cried yet the more. Jesus was willing to stop and inquire what he wanted. The blind man was explicit and asked for just what he wanted: "Lord, that I might receive my sight." Jesus responded to his faith and gave him his sight immediately.

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15 -- JESUS' LAST JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM -- Luke 19:1-48

ZACCHAEUS Seeking and Finding. Jesus and the multitudes who were accompanying Him on their way to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, had crossed Jordan and passed through the ancient city of Jericho. Zacchaeus, a rich publican was interested in seeing Jesus. Being short in stature, he could not get to Jesus or see Him because of the crowd about Him. But he was so determined to see Jesus that he took unusual means to see Him. He saw the road Jesus was taking and ran ahead of them and climbed up in a sycamore tree. From this vantage point he had a good look at Jesus as He came under the tree. But Jesus was interested in seeing Zacchaeus, and when He came under the tree, He looked up and met the gaze of Zacchaeus.

It seems that, even though so many people were interested in Jesus, no one had invited Him to dinner. Zacchaeus very likely felt himself unworthy to ask Jesus to his house, so Jesus invited Himself, saying, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down for today I must abide at thy house." It is well to respond quickly when Jesus calls. Zacchaeus evidently realized this, for "he made haste, and came down, and received Him joyfully." Zacchaeus was evidently well known, for the people complained that Jesus had "gone to be guest with a man that was a sinner."

Zacchaeus was chief among the publicans. Publicans were tax-gatherers appointed by the Roman government, then in control of Palestine, and a Jew who consented to fill that office was considered a renegade Jew. The government probably had sold the privilege of collecting the taxes of Jericho and vicinity at a certain lump sum, and he as publican assessed the taxes on the individual property owners. It was easy to over-tax and get rich on this plan. In our previous lesson Jesus had told the rich ruler to sell all he had and give to the poor in order to inherit eternal life. But Zacchaeus does not wait for instructions: he voluntarily declares that he is going to give half of his possessions to the poor. It very likely took the other half of his possessions to restore fourfold to the people he had over-assessed. which he promised to restore. Jesus responded to what Zacchaeus said by declaring that salvation had come to his house.

The Parable of the Pounds. The crowd following Jesus were expecting that when Jesus reached Jerusalem He would immediately take over the government, overthrow the Romans and set up the Kingdom. Jesus gives this parable as a means of dissuading them of their false expectations. This parable of the pounds is sometimes considered another version of the parable of the talents recorded in Matthew 25. While there are some truths common to both parables, they are quite different. The talents were distributed according to each servant's ability; the pounds were given equally to all the ten servants. This parable was spoken between Jericho and Jerusalem, the talents a few days later at Jerusalem. Both parables look forward to Millennial conditions. The faithful servants who used their talents were told they would rule over many things; the successful servants with the pounds were given cities according to the pounds they gained. It seems strange that nothing is said about the other seven of the ten servants who received each a pound. Perhaps they confiscated their pound. Evidently what they did was not worthy of a place in the Bible. Is it possible that only two out of ten servants of God will prove successful, one prove lazy, and seven out of ten do nothing worth recording? Note the difference between the servants and the citizens who did not want his rule.

Jesus Coming to Jerusalem. It was very important that Jesus have a certain animal on which to ride. If He had not come riding on an ass, He would not have done according to Prophecy. See Zechariah 9.9, where His entry is foretold. When a king enters a city riding an ass or mule, it means he is coming on a mission of peace. See in contrast with this entry of Jesus to Jerusalem, Revelation 19.11 where Jesus is seen on a white horse.

The Rejoicing Multitude. When Jesus approached the city of Jerusalem, the whole multitude broke into praise. To them it was a triumphal entry of the new King to set up the Kingdom. They used the statement in Psalm 118.26.

The Weeping Jesus. In the midst of all this rejoicing, which was untimely, Jesus, when He came in sight Of Jerusalem, wept This was a different weeping than that weeping Jesus did at the

tomb of Lazarus, as recorded in John's gospel. That was a weeping of sympathy. This was a weeping of intense sorrow, more of a wail as He saw what would shortly come to Jerusalem in the next years. While the people saw Jerusalem a city of beauty, with its magnificent temple, He saw the time when it would be in ruin, not one stone on another that would not be thrown down. He describes what He foresees, the city surrounded with armies. Already, while the common people were rejoicing, the official Jews were plotting His destruction. The calamities that Jesus foretold would come, "because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." There are individuals now to whom the Spirit speaks in revival meetings, and they do not know It is the time of their visitation, and will land in hell because they did not know it was their last opportunity. There is a last time that God will speak to souls about salvation. When the Holy Spirit strives is the time to move.

The Temple Cleansed. Jesus had driven the traders out of the temple court early in His ministry, as told in John's Gospel 2.14-16. Provision was made for persons who lived at a distance from Jerusalem to sell their cattle and take the money and buy their sacrifices after getting to Jerusalem. See Deuteronomy 14.22-26. It was therefore legitimate for traders at Jerusalem to have sacrificial animals for sale to these who came from a distance. But the trouble in Jesus' day was that these traders had moved the stalls into the temple courts and asked exorbitant prices, from which the priests got a rake-off. This illegitimate business was what Jesus condemned and therefore He drove these traders and their cattle out of the temple court.

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16 -- JESUS ANSWERS AND ASKS QUESTIONS -- Luke 20:1-47

JESUS Questioned as to ins Authority. Jesus had gently interfered with the desecration of the temple by the traders, and done several other things that disturbed the priests, scribes, and elders, and they come to Him inquiring why He is doing as He does, and by what authority. These Jewish officials held it as their right to say who should speak in the temple courts and do other things He had done.

Their Question. "Tell us, by what authority doest Thou these things." They felt that they should have the say as to what was said and done in the temple and its courts.

Jesus Answers by asking His questioners another question. "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?" The question pertained to the authority of John to baptize and to teach doctrine. Who gave John authority to do what he did? This question put the questioners of Jesus in a dilemma. The people in general believed that John the Baptist had his commission from God. And, since he had practically initiated Jesus into His ministry, to answer that John's doings were from heaven would indicate that Jesus also had authority to do what He did. But these questioners of Jesus had not repented at the preaching of John. If they answered that John had his authority from heaven they would face the question why did they not submit to his baptism. But, if they said his commission was of men, they would arouse the anger of the multitude of Jews who believed John was from heaven. So they answered that they could not tell. Then Jesus said He would not tell them by what authority He did His works. Undoubtedly this perplexed and angered these Jewish leaders, and they plan to catch Him in some way, that they may accuse Him to the governor.

The Parable of the Vineyard. The nation of Israel was already described as the Lord's vineyard. See Isaiah 5.1-7. See also Psalm 80.8-16. Jesus, it says, spoke this parable to the people, but the authorities evidently overheard it. The husbandmen to whom the vineyard was let out was the Jewish nation. The servants are the prophets that God sent to the Jews, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others, all of whom were mistreated by the Jewish authorities in the days of their prophesying. The one the owner finally sends is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. It is easy to see that these Jewish leaders understood the parable as applying to themselves. If they knew it referred to them, why did they not repent? It is still true when men's sins are uncovered, they will hate the preacher who preaches the truth.

The Stone the Builders Rejected. It will be recalled that the stones for Solomon's temple were prepared at the quarry so that no chiseling or fitting was necessary by the builders.. It is readily suggested that these builders found a stone that they could not fit as they proceeded with the building, so it was laid aside. But when they came to the top of the corner, they found this stone just exactly fitted, and became the head of the corner. From the beginning of the Bible, prophecy looked forward to Jesus as the final goal toward which all history tended. But these Jewish builders of the parable, rejected Him. But some day He will be the head of the corner and fitted into His intended place. As a comment on this stone, read I Peter 2:4-8. He Who is the capstone of the Jewish dispensation is the corner stone of the church.

The Question Concerning Tribute. The Roman government had jurisdiction over Palestine at this time, and it was a mooted question among the Jews whether to pay tribute to the Roman government or not. There were three principle divisions of the Jews at this time -- the Pharisees, whose theology was generally correct, the Sadducees, who did not believe in the great truths of the Bible and the Herodians, who favored the Roman government. All of these were antagonistic to each other, but they all hated Jesus, and therefore, it was easy for them to make a united attack on Him. The question, "Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or no?" was concocted by the Pharisees and the Herodians, as another Gospel shows. It is one of those questions that to answer by either YES or NO would not be a complete answer, and would put the one who so answered in a difficult position. If Jesus said it was right, He would lose the confidence of the common people, who would accuse Him of being an Herodian. But, if He said it was not lawful, He would have made Himself liable to arrest by the Roman governor, as teaching sedition.

The Question of the Sadducees. These people did not believe in angels, spirits, or the resurrection, and their question was intended to make the resurrection seem ridiculous. Their reference to Moses' law was correct, but their interpretation of it was faulty. Jesus plainly told them they were ignorant of the power of God. Resurrected people will be, in one sense, like angels, but will not be angels. Jesus' reference to what God told Moses is enlightening. "God is the God of the living." Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who died centuries before are still living according to this statement of Jesus.

The Question Jesus Asked. The Jews believed when their Messiah came (they would not accept Jesus as such) that He would be the Son of David. Since this is what the Jews believed, Jesus propounds the puzzling question, "David therefore called Him Lord, how is He then his Son?" Reference to the 110th Psalm gives the quotation.

Jesus Answered all the questions they asked Him without getting into the trap they set for Him. But they could not answer His questions. His enemies were completely whipped, and dared not ask Him any more questions lest they find themselves trapped in their own scheme.

Warning Against the Scribes. In the audience of all the people, Jesus instructed His disciples to beware of the scribes. They were proud: desired greetings in an elaborate form in public places, sat in prominent places in the synagogues, chose the chief rooms at feasts. But they were hypocrites, prayed long prayers for the widows, doubtless for pay. The widows who paid them eventually spent all they had on these prayers, it appears.

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17 -- JESUS PROPHECIES OF COMING EVENTS -- Luke 21:1-38

THE WIDOW'S CONTRIBUTION -- Just before Jesus left the temple, evidently for the last time, He sat over against the treasury, observing how the people put in their offerings. Many rich cast in much of their abundance, but Jesus particularly noticed and called the attention of His disciples to the contribution of a trifling contribution of a poor widow. It is well to remember that Jesus is interested in the giving habits of His people.

Prophecy about the Temple. What Jesus says about the temple as recorded in this chapter is different from what we have studied in Matthew and Mark. While it starts with His statement that the time is coming when there will not be one stone left upon another, His further remarks are not the same in every detail. What was said in Matthew and Mark was spoken to certain of the disciples as He sat on the Mount of Olives. What is said here in Luke appears to have been said while He was still in the Temple court or at least while He was still in Jerusalem.

The Law of Double Reference applies to the discourses in all three Gospels that report what Jesus said on this occasion. There are evidently two destructions of Jerusalem and the temple, one in the near future when Jesus spoke, and one in the distant future from that time.

The Different Signs When to Flee. By comparison of Matthew 24.15 and Mark 13.14 with Luke 21.20 you will notice a decided difference. In Matthew and Mark the sign to know when to flee from Jerusalem is, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth let him understand) then let them which be in Judea flee unto the mountains." Mark is a shorter quotation of the same import. But in Luke 21 the sign of when to flee as given in verse 20 is, "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains." These signs must plainly refer to different times and to different groups.

To Wait Until This Sign appears on its face to be unusual, for how could they flee when the city was surrounded with armies? History gives us the reason. About the year 70 A.D. the Romans laid siege to Jerusalem, making escape apparently impossible. But, we understand that here was a change of generals and the army was temporarily withdrawn from the city to reorganize. In the interval that elapsed before they re-encompassed the city, the Christian Jews, who had believed what Jesus has said, fled across the Jordan to a city named Pella.

The Sign of the Abomination of Desolation belongs to a period still ahead, in the great tribulation. The Antichrist, who will reign in the seven years of Daniel's last week of years, will eventually place his image in the temple of the tribulation period and that will open the eyes of the devout Jews who have been cured of image worship, and that will be the signal for them to flee from Jerusalem, These two signs should be clearly distinguished, as well as the period to which they belong. Many of the predictions of Jesus belong to both periods, but the signs are distinct from each other.

Events Following the First Destruction. That the sign of the army around Jerusalem belongs to the destruction of Jerusalem that occurred in the first century is more plain from the fact of what follows that event Verse 24 says, "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." It is estimated by some writers that over a million Jews, the unbelieving ones, were killed by the Romans in their bringing the Jews into subjection, and the remainder were scattered among the nations of the world.

The Times of the Gentiles began when God took the rule of the world away from the Jews and gave it to the Gentiles at the time Nebuchadnezzar took the Jews captive to Babylon, and will continue until the church is completed, when "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. See Romans 11.25. These are the Gentiles that are being saved in this age. The city of Jerusalem has been trodden down in turn by the Mohammedans, who have their Mosque of Omar on the old temple site, and the Turks followed them, and old Jerusalem, including the temple site is still in the hands of the Arab nation known as Jordan.

The End of the Age will be indicated by various signs in the heavens, and distress on the earth. These will indicate that the time of our redemption is at hand, that is the redemption of our bodies in the first resurrection. We are to be on the watch especially when these things begin to come to pass. Our attitude is to be that of looking up and watching.

Need for Caution. "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time, (even one time) your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting (overeating and other indulgences) and drunkenness, and cares of this life, so that day come upon you unawares." All manner of diversions are being invented to distract people from watchfulness for the Lord's coming.

Our Prayer Attitude. Note especially verse 36 -- "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things, and to stand before the Son of man." How many Christians do you think pray this prayer daily or even occasionally?

The Meaning of "This Generation". Some expositors try to make out that when Jesus said that this generation should not pass until all these things were fulfilled, that He meant the generation then living, and try to fit various occurrences of those days to fit the pattern. It is more likely that He meant the generation that sees the sign of the budding fig-tree, that is the re-animated Jewish nation. Anyway, we do well to watch, for the time is evidently drawing near.

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18 -- THE BETRAYAL AND ARREST OF JESUS -- Luke 22:1-71

THE Plan to Betray -- The Jewish officials had settled it that they would kill Jesus if they could do it secretly for they feared the Jews in general who favored Jesus. Judas comes to their help in the plan. Judas, John 13.2 says, the devil having put into his heart to betray Jesus, and here it says in verse 3 that Satan entered into him. The plot was devised by the devil, who found in Judas a willing instrument to carry out his design.

Preparing to Celebrate the Passover. Every year the Jews celebrated the deliverance from Egyptian bondage by keeping the feast on the anniversary of the original event. Jesus plans to observe the feast with His disciples. Jerusalem was thronged with a multitude at this time, and a place for thirteen men to hold the feast together, was a problem. Just how that certain man was moved of God to prepare a place for Jesus and His disciples we do not know, but he had a large room prepared and furnished for the occasion. Jesus tells Peter and John how they will find the place, and instructs them to go and prepare the Passover feast

Jesus and the Twelve Assemble. At the appointed hour Jesus and all the apostles sit down at the table for the feast of the Passover. While the table and seating is not described in the Bible, it is supposed to be after the regular style of those days, a table rectangular in shape, but about twice as long as wide, with seats on three sides, but no seats at one end. Jesus naturally took His place at the head, which, as He leaned on His left arm, would locate Him at the end facing the table. There is no record that Jesus seated the twelve. It seems rather that He permitted them to seat themselves. From John 13.23-26 it appears that John took his place at Jesus' right, leaning on His breast, and that Peter chose the lowest place, which would be opposite Jesus and John, and that Judas, presumptuously chose the seat at Jesus' left. In that position Jesus could say to Judas to do what he did quickly without any of the others knowing why Judas went out, supposedly on an errand Jesus sent him to do.

The Meaning of the Passover. Most Protestants hold that on this occasion Jesus instituted what is called "The Lord's Supper," but Friends (Quakers) do not think that He ordered this as an ordinance to be kept perpetually, but that He was explaining the meaning of the Passover. It is true that the Passover symbolized the coming of Christ as its culmination. "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." (I Corinthians 5.7).

Strife Among the Twelve. There was strife who of them should be the greatest. This possibly shows that there was contention for the highest place at the table, which was at Jesus' left, which Judas finally succeeded in getting. Jesus patiently deals with the contention and encourages humility, but promises them that eventually they shall sit on twelve thrones as judges of the twelve tribes, which will be in the Millennium.

Caution to Peter. Peter seems to be recognized by Jesus as a kind of head of the apostles, and He gives him a charge, To get the meaning note carefully the pronouns in the King James version, which is not shown in some revisions. "Satan hath desired to have you (all of the twelve) that he may sift you as wheat." "But I have prayed for thee (Peter alone) that thy faith fail not."

Then, when he is re-established, he is to strengthen the others. Peter boldly affirms that nothing will turn him from the Lord. Jesus declares that Peter will deny Him before the cock-crowing time.

Changes Foretold. Jesus asks the disciples if they lacked anything when He sent them out two by two. They answered that they did not lack anything. But now He says things are going to change. They are now to prepare for conflict. When He says to prepare a sword He evidently does not mean a literal sword, for two would not supply twelve a sword each. He evidently means that they are to look for conflict in their future work.

Events in Gethsemane. After the feast Jesus leads the way to the Mount of Olives. After cautioning the disciples to watch and pray, He goes further into the garden and there prays. Jesus is now facing, not only the cross with its suffering, but the fact of being forsaken of the Father. The ordeal looks unbearable, and Jesus asks if possible the cup might be removed but submits to the Father's will. An angel strengthens Him, and now He goes boldly without flinching, to trial after trial and eventually to the cross and its horror.

The Arrest of Jesus. Judas identifies Jesus by kissing Him and He is then taken in custody by the mob. Peter thinks that now is the time to use the literal sword and takes off a man's ear, but Jesus restores the ear. Peter's boldness soon gives place to cowardice and three times he denies that he knows Jesus, but when the cock crowed, he was reminded of what Jesus said and went out and wept bitterly.

Jesus on Trial. At the hands of the mob Jesus suffered many indignities, which was contrary to all lawful proceedings. They blindfolded Him then someone would strike Him, and they asked Him to tell who it was that smote Him to test out His knowledge, but it appears He did not respond to their insinuations. Jesus went calmly through the ordeal patiently putting up with indignity He suffered at the hands of these persecutors.

The Condemnation of Jesus. The members of the Sanhedrin put Jesus through certain preliminary tests but as it was illegal to try a criminal at night, they met in the morning to confirm what they had already determined to do. It required at least two witnesses to agree in order to condemn a criminal, but no two had been found that fully agreed. So they resorted to the unfair practice of condemning Jesus on His own testimony. Jesus was not condemned for any evil deed He had ever done, but on His testimony that he was the Christ, the Messiah, and the Son of God. They construed this to be a lie and blasphemy and on that ground condemned Him. But Romans 1.4 says that the resurrection of Jesus proved that His testimony was true. The high court of Heaven decided against the lower courts of earth both religious and civil.

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19 -- JESUS CONDEMNED AND CRUCIFIED -- Luke 23:1-56

JESUS TAKEN TO PILATE -- The Jewish council having condemned Jesus of blasphemy and therefore guilty now seek to have Him legally condemned by Pilate, the Roman governor. They accused Him before Pilate of things He did not do, but Jesus held his peace. In answer to Pilate's question if He was King of the Jews He assented that He was. Pilate then replied to the Jewish

leaders that he found no fault in Him. Then the Jews became more insistent in their demands and accusations.

Jesus Taken to Herod -- On hearing that Jesus was from Galilee, Pilate undertook to escape responsibility in the matter by sending Him to Herod, who was in Jerusalem at that time. This was Herod Antipas, who had beheaded John the Baptist. Herod hoped that Jesus would perform a miracle for him. He seemed to think Jesus was a sort of magician who would perform miracles to please people. Jesus was silent to Herod, not answering any of his questions.

Jesus again before Pilate -- Herod made no decision in Jesus' case and sent Him back to Pilate, who again was responsible for what was done to Jesus. Pilate was in a serious dilemma: he was satisfied that Jesus was innocent of the crimes the Jews charged Him with, but to displease these Jewish leaders might result in disaster to himself.

Jesus or Barabbas? -- It was the custom of the Roman governor at Passover time, to release to the Jews any Jewish prisoner that they desired. Pilate tried to get the assembled Jews to vote to release Jesus, but the Jewish leaders influenced them to ask the release of Barabbas a noted prisoner who had been arrested for a serious crime.

Christ or Barabbas -- It should be noted that Barabbas was not just an ordinary criminal. He was guilty of sedition and murder in the process of having his plan carried out. His name is significant. Bar means son and Abba means father. There is reason to believe he was a false messiah, who had raised a following and was bent on replacing the Roman governor and set up a false Messiahship. The Jews chose the release of the false Messiah, and demanded the crucifixion of the true Messiah. Pilate, contrary to law and his own conscience, intimidated by the insistence of the angry mob gave in and ordered Jesus to be crucified.

On the Way to Calvary -- It was customary to compel a criminal to carry his own cross to the place of crucifixion. It is apparent that Jesus weakened by the night with no sleep and buffeting and scourging was too weak to carry His cross. A man known as Simon from Cyrenia in Africa was coming into the city and met the crowd that was accompanying Jesus, and the soldiers laid hold on him and compelled him to carry the cross for Jesus. Simon may have resented this, but was it not wonderful for him to say to his children in days to come, "I am the man who carried Jesus' cross for Him."?

The Crucifixion of Jesus -- There were three crosses erected on Calvary; Jesus on the center cross, and a third on each side. When Jesus prayed "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," was it for the men driving the nails, or was it for the men who had brought His crucifixion about? Perhaps both. It means that at least provision for forgiveness was made, whether they accepted it or not. This crucifixion was a very public affair. Crowds were looking on: "the people stood beholding." The ruling Jews derided Him. There is no record that anyone derided the thieves: all the criticism was heaped on the innocent One.

The Thieves' Attitude -- One thief railed on Jesus demanding that if He were the Christ, He save Himself and them. The salvation of the other thief is remarkable. Showing the simplicity of salvation He confessed his sins, the first requisite of salvation then he admitted the innocence of

Jesus, and then made his petition. He had no liberty to perform an ordinance or do a good deed, but he simply took by faith what Jesus could do for him. What a wonderful day for that thief! Taken from prison to the cross hanging in agony, but before sundown in Paradise with Jesus.

Significant Events -- It was dark from noon to three o'clock in the afternoon. This could not be an eclipse of the sun, for it was the time of the full moon, and the period of darkness was longer than even a total eclipse. The veil in the temple that separated the holy from the most holy place was rent in two. Jesus cried with a loud voice, showing that He did not die of weakness: He died at His own will -- as He had said, He hath power to lay down His life and to take it again. The centurion, who had charge of the crucifixion, declared, "Certainly, this was a righteous man."

Jesus Decently Buried -- The bodies of criminals were generally thrown to the dogs or as refuse. Joseph of Arimathea could not bear to see Jesus' body thus treated, so went to Pilate for permission to bury Jesus. We know from John's Gospel that Nicodemus participated in the burial. Joseph buried Jesus in what appears to have been the tomb he had prepared for himself. He evidently believed that Jesus would not occupy it very long. While the eleven disciples evidently were possibly hiding, these formerly secret believers came out in the open and identified themselves as Jesus' disciples.

Witness of the Burial -- The women who came from Galilee showed their interest by witnessing the burial and how the body was laid, and went to prepare spices and ointments to anoint the body, but were interrupted by the setting sun that indicated the sabbath was at hand. It was a day never to be forgotten by those who witnessed the events of the day.

The Day of the Crucifixion. The popular opinion that Jesus was crucified on the day we call Friday, is considered by many as erroneous, as three days and three nights could not be possible from Friday night to Sunday morning. For a full discussion of this matter, get Simeon O. Smith's booklet entitled "Wednesday Crucifixion of Christ" from the Gospel Minister bookstore for 25 cents. [Not a current offer -- DVM]

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20 -- JESUS SHOWS HIMSELF AFTER HIS RESURRECTION -- Luke 24:1-53

WOMEN at the Empty Sepulcher. The women who had prepared spices and ointments for the anointing of Jesus' body as related in the previous chapter, are seen here bringing their preparations to the tomb of Jesus. They find the tomb open and the body of Jesus not here. While wondering, two angels appear to them and tell them that Jesus has risen from the dead, and remind them of what Jesus had said. The women then go to tell the eleven apostles and others that Jesus has risen from the dead, but they are not believed; it seems so incredible.

Jesus Appears to two Disciples. Just why Jesus selected these two obscure disciples, whom we have not heard of before, and told so much about Himself, is not easy to explain, but none of His disciples are too insignificant to escape His attention and help. Whether the two were a husband and wife or two men, is not stated. They were evidently going back to their home at

Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, after witnessing the events connected with the crucifixion.

The two are discussing the events of the past few days. Jesus, supposed to be a stranger, joins the two, and, after asking some questions, expounds the Scriptures concerning Himself. They, along with the disciples, had the idea that Jesus was to set up His kingdom at this time, and are disappointed that He has not done so. The Stranger shows how that what has happened, is exactly as the Scriptures foretold it should be.

Arriving at their home, the two invite the Stranger to tarry with them. As they sit at the evening meal, suddenly, their eyes are opened and they recognize Him Whom they have thought was a stranger, as Jesus Himself, being convinced by the way He broke the bread. As soon as they recognized Jesus, He disappeared out of their sight. What had been revealed to them was too good to keep: they must go and tell others what they have heard and seen. They naturally seek the eleven apostles and find them and others gathered together.

Jesus' Appearance to Simon Peter. The eleven who had doubted the testimony of the women as idle tales, appear to be convinced of the resurrection, from the fact that He had appeared to Simon. It shows the sympathy and solicitude of Jesus for a sorrowing disciple, grieved because of his denial of Jesus, that He should have appeared to him first and alone.

Jesus Appears to the Company. While the two were explaining how they knew Jesus by the breaking of bread, suddenly, Jesus Himself appears in the midst of the eleven and others assembled with them. The first effect of Jesus' appearing is fright. It was so out of the ordinary, they thought they saw a spirit. But Jesus reassures them. He calls attention to His pierced hands and feet, and asks that they handle Him. John evidently refers to this occasion in his First Epistle, first verse, when he says, "Which we have heard, Which we have seen with our eyes, Which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life." Jesus further convinces them of the reality of His bodily presence by asking for something to eat, and eats before them.

Jesus Expounds the Scriptures. Having convinced the company that He is really there in person, He shows that the things that have happened to Him are in accord with the Scripture predictions. He refers to the whole Bible under the three divisions: Moses, the prophets and the Psalms, all of which foretell of Him and His work.

Jesus Opens Their Understanding. He helped them especially in understanding the Scriptures. It would be wonderful if Luke had put in writing how He did this; but Jesus left much for the Holy Spirit later to do for Bible readers. Too many people, even some Christians, do not diligently try to understand the Bible, and even do not regularly read it.

The Great Commission -- Then He briefly gave the disciples their work. Repentance and remission of sins are to be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. All Christians are commissioned to do this, beginning at their own home. This is being very inadequately done. Interest in getting the Gospel to the heathen nations is not deeply interesting to the majority of those who class themselves as Christians.

The Promised Gift of the Father. This promise is that the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, is to come and they are to wait for that gift before engaging in their life work of evangelization. This equipment is needed now by those who preach the Gospel, but is not too often waited for nor expected. Power to witness is to come when the Comforter comes.

Jesus' Departure from the Disciples. There is evidently a period of time between the 49th and 50th verses. There must have been about forty days interval. This is more fully stated in the first chapter of Acts. As He blessed them with uplifted hands, He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.

The Effect on the Disciples. First of all, they worshipped Him while He was blessing them and after He disappeared into heaven. We still worship Christ, though we are not privileged to see Him. He will eventually come back in visible form as He promised in the 14th chapter of John's Gospel. The disciples then returned from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem with great joy. They used the Temple as a rallying place and evidently assembled there every day. There they were engaged in praising and blessing God. After ten days, while in the upper room, the Spirit came on them with manifestations of wind and fire. Then their life work began at Jerusalem where three thousand were converted the first day. We need the same enduement today, though the initial signs may not be repeated.

Other Appearances of Jesus. We need to read the other Gospels to find a description of the appearances of Jesus that are not mentioned in Luke. These omitted incidents occurred between the 49th and 50th verses of Luke. I Corinthians 15.4-8 mentions other appearances. The appearances of Jesus after the resurrection occurred at intervals for forty days.

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THE END