

An Easy English Commentary on Luke

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Section 1

Luke: The Man Christ Jesus

The Birth of Jesus and the Beginning of his Work
Luke 1:1 to 4:13

Ian Mackervoy

This commentary **has been** through Advanced Checking.

Words in boxes are from the Bible.

A word list at the end explains words with a *star by them.

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About the *Gospel of Luke

The writer

The *Gospel of Luke does not mention Luke's name as the author. But few people doubt that Luke did write this book. Also, he wrote the Book of Acts. He sent both books to the same person called Theophilus (Luke 1:3 and Acts 1:1).

Luke was not a *Jew. We know this from Colossians 4:11-14. Paul names the three *Jews who were with him in Rome. Luke was not one of them but he was with Paul there. All the other writers of the *New Testament were *Jews.

Luke travelled with Paul on some of his journeys. The evidence for this is that, in several places in Acts, Luke uses the words, 'we' or 'us'. Luke was a medical doctor by profession (Colossians 4:14). There is a tradition that he was born in the city called Antioch in Syria.

Luke was not one of the original *disciples of Christ. But he studied the accounts of Christ's life that were available to him. And he talked with those people who had been with Jesus. Some of the detail shows that probably Luke spoke with Mary the mother of Jesus.

We do not know whether Luke wrote this book in Israel, Rome, or somewhere else. And we do not

know where he sent it. He probably wrote it some time between 59 *AD and 63 *AD.

Purpose

Luke's purpose was to write a good and true account of the life of Jesus. This *Gospel tells the story of Jesus from the time before he was born. And it ends when Jesus went back to heaven. Luke wanted Theophilus and all people to know the truth about Jesus.

The *Gospel of Luke tells us about the things that Jesus said. And it tells us about the things that he did. This helps us to understand how God saves people from *sin. Luke shows us that Jesus is the *Saviour of the world. *Sin ruins people's lives. And after they die, punishment is certain. People cannot save themselves. But Jesus came to look for and to save those people.

Luke shows that Jesus was a real man. In addition, he shows that Jesus was the Son of God.

The beginning of the life and work of Jesus – Luke 1:1 to 4:13

The reason why Luke wrote this book – Luke 1:1-4

v1 Many people have tried to give an account of the things that have happened among us. **v2** We got our information from those people who saw these things. And we got our information from those people who have passed on the message from the beginning. **v3** So it seemed good to me to write down these things in order for you, most excellent Theophilus. I have studied all these things carefully to make sure that I can write accurately about them. **v4** By this account, you can be certain about the truth of the things that you have learned.

Verses 1-4 Luke was not among the first *disciples of the *Lord. He did not see the *Lord while he was alive on the earth. But many people had recorded what they knew about Jesus' life. They got their information from those people who were with Jesus. One of these earlier records was probably Mark's *Gospel. Luke studied what these people wrote. He probably spoke

to many people who were with Jesus. And he listened to what they said. Then he made sure that the information was correct.

Luke calls the message that they passed on: 'the word'. 'The word' means the *gospel and especially what Jesus taught. So, many Bible translations say that these people were 'servants of the word'. They were probably the *apostles and teachers in the first Christian churches.

We do not know who Theophilus was. His name means 'friend of God'. Theophilus was a proper name. Luke calls him 'most excellent Theophilus'. This seems to show that Theophilus was a real person. And he was an important man, like Festus (Acts 26:25). Theophilus may have been the person who would publish this book. That is, he would arrange for other people to make copies of it. He could have been a *Greek or *Roman government official.

Luke wrote this book for Theophilus but he intended other people to read it as well. He wanted Theophilus and other people to have a true record. By this means, they could be sure of what they had learned. They could understand the *gospel and they could believe in the *Lord Jesus.

The birth of John the *Baptist – Luke 1:5-80

The *angel comes to Zechariah – Luke 1:5-25

v5 When King Herod ruled in Judea, there was a priest called Zechariah. He belonged to the Abijah group of priests. His wife Elizabeth was also a *descendant of Aaron. **v6** Zechariah and Elizabeth did what pleased God. They were without blame as they obeyed completely all the *Lord's laws and commands. **v7** But they had no child, because Elizabeth could not have a baby. And they were both getting old.

v8 One day Zechariah was serving as a priest in front of God's *altar, because his group was on duty. **v9** By the method that the priests used, they chose Zechariah to burn *incense in the *Lord's *temple. **v10** A large crowd of people was outside.

At the time when the priest burned the *incense, the people prayed.

v11 Then an *angel of the *Lord appeared to Zechariah. The *angel stood on the right side of the *incense *altar. **v12** It was a shock to Zechariah when he saw the *angel. Zechariah felt sudden fear. **v13** But the *angel said to him, 'Zechariah, do not be afraid. God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give birth to a son. And you must give to this son the name John. **v14** You will have joy and delight. And many people will be glad because of his birth. **v15** John will be a great man for the *Lord. He must never drink wine or other strong drinks. The power of the *Holy Spirit will fill him, even from his birth. **v16** He will turn many of the people in *Israel to the *Lord their God. **v17** He will go before the *Lord. He will be strong and powerful like the *prophet Elijah. He will bring fathers and children together again. He will turn back those people who do not obey God to the right way to live. He will prepare people for when the *Lord comes.'

v18 Zechariah asked the *angel, 'How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is getting old.'

v19 The *angel answered him, 'I am Gabriel. I stand close to God. God sent me to speak to you and to tell you this good news. **v20** You have not believed what I have said. Therefore, you will be silent. You will not be able to speak until the day when these things happen. But what I said will happen at the proper time.'

v21 The people waited for Zechariah, and they wondered at his delay in the *temple. **v22** When he came out, he could not speak to them. He could only make signs to them and he remained unable to speak. Then they understood that he had seen a *vision in the *temple.

v23 When he had finished his time of service in the *temple, he went home. **v24** After this, his wife Elizabeth became *pregnant and she hid herself for 5 months. **v25** She said, 'The *Lord has done this for me. He has looked upon me and he has helped me. The people can see that he has removed my

shame from me.'

Verses 5-7 Herod the Great was a son of a man called Antipater. Herod was not a *Jew by birth. He was the first king of Judah who was not a *Jew by birth. He became king in 37 *BC and he died in 4 *BC. So, the births of John the *Baptist and Jesus were in 4 *BC or earlier.

The name Zechariah means 'God remembers'. Zechariah was a priest. The priests were all *descendants of Aaron but they could marry women from other families. But Elizabeth, Zechariah's wife, was a *descendant of Aaron. So, John the *Baptist was a *descendant of Aaron by both his father and mother.

There were 24 groups of priests. Each group served in turn for one week in the *temple. So one of the groups was on duty at all times. Zechariah belonged to the group of Abijah. The group of Abijah was the 8th group out of the 24 (1 Chronicles 24:10). After the *exile in Babylon, only 4 families of priests came back to Jerusalem (Ezra 2:36-39). Some Bible teachers think that those 4 families became 24 new groups. And they took the names of the previous groups. The family of Abijah did not return from Babylon at that time.

Zechariah and Elizabeth were good people. They loved God and they obeyed his law. They were not able to have children and now they were too old. It was impossible for them to have a child. This caused them to be sad. And Elizabeth felt ashamed that she could not have a child.

Verses 8-10 Every morning and evening, the priests made an animal *sacrifice. This was in the area outside the *temple. Many priests helped in this. At the same time, just one priest went into the room in the *temple called the holy place. Here he burnt *incense on an *altar. There were so many priests that they had to choose one for this task. Because of the number of them, a priest would burn *incense just once in his life. On this day, Zechariah was the priest that they chose. He went into the holy place to burn *incense. A large crowd of people were in front of the *temple. And there they prayed at the time when

Zechariah burned the *incense. We do not know whether this was at the morning or the evening *sacrifice.

Verses 11-12 To burn *incense, Zechariah stood in front of the *altar of *incense. The *altar of *incense was near the curtain that separated the holy place from the most holy place. On the north side, there was the table for the special bread. On the south side was the gold lamp holder. The *angel, who was called the *angel of the *Lord, appeared on the right or south side of the *altar. He stood between the *altar and the gold lamp holder.

The sudden appearance of an *angel was a shock to Zechariah.

Verses 13-15 Zechariah wanted to have a child. He and Elizabeth had probably prayed often to God about it. The *angel came with the news that God had heard those prayers. And Elizabeth would give birth to a son. But Zechariah must give the name John to that child.

John in the *Hebrew language combines the name of God with the word for kindness. Therefore, John means 'the *Lord has been kind'.

Zechariah and Elizabeth had been so sad that they could not have a child. Now the *angel said that the birth of John would bring much joy to them. The *Lord would answer their prayers. John would be a special son to them. Many people would be glad at John's birth and because of his life.

John must never drink wine or strong drink. Strong drink probably means any drink with alcohol in it. (See the rules for the Nazirites in Numbers chapter 6. The Nazirites were people who made a special promise to God.) This showed that John had a special task from God.

God had a special task for John to do. God sent the power of the *Holy Spirit to be in John even before his birth. John would be a great servant of the *Lord. He would be a *prophet; in fact, he was more than a *prophet (Matthew 11:9).

Verses 16-17 The work that John would do was to prepare the people for the *Lord (Malachi 3:1). John

would cause many *Jews to *repent of their *sins. They would turn again to the *Lord their God. Because of this, families would come together again.

In Malachi 4:5 we read that Elijah will come before the *Christ comes. The *Christ means the king that God would appoint to save his people. The promise that *Christ would come is in many parts of the *Old Testament. Here, 'Elijah' means a *prophet who is like the *prophet Elijah in the *Old Testament. This new 'Elijah' would come with the power that the Holy Spirit gives to him. So, John the *Baptist came in that power before Jesus came. John would announce to the *Jews that Jesus the *Christ had come.

Verses 18-20 Zechariah asked what seemed to be a reasonable question. He and his wife were too old to have children. But the question showed that he did not believe the *angel (verse 20). Mary asked a similar question (verse 34). But she did believe the *angel. She asked how God would give her a child.

The *angel told Zechariah that his name was Gabriel. Gabriel means 'God's soldier'. This was a direct message from God. So Zechariah did not believe God. But God would do what he said. Because of this, Zechariah would not be able to speak until after John was born.

There was a tradition of the *Jews that there were 4 chief *angels round the *throne of God. Their names were Michael, Uriel, Raphael and Gabriel.

Verses 21-22 It was not usual for the priest to be such a long time in the holy place. The priest would usually take less than half an hour to burn the *incense. So, the people wondered what had happened. They waited for Zechariah to come out from the holy place. When he did come out, he was both dumb and deaf (1:62).

The people understood that Zechariah had seen a *vision. But he had actually met with the *angel Gabriel.

Verses 23-25 Zechariah did not go home immediately. He continued to perform his duties until the end of the week. Then the group of Abijah had completed their time in the *temple. After this,

Zechariah went home to his wife Elizabeth.

Some time later Elizabeth became *pregnant. This means that she would have a baby. She stayed at home for 5 months. Then there could be no doubt that she was expecting a child.

Elizabeth knew that she could not have a child in the normal way. The *Lord had made it possible. The *Lord gave to her the strength. And he made her able to have a baby although she was so old.

At that time, many people thought that it was a shame for a wife to have no children. The *Lord had removed that shame from Elizabeth.

The *angel announces the birth of Jesus – Luke 1:26-38

v26 In the 6th month, God sent the *angel Gabriel to Nazareth. Nazareth was a town in the region called Galilee. **v27** God sent the *angel to a young woman who had never had sex with a man. Her name was Mary. She was engaged to a man called Joseph. He was a *descendant of David. **v28** The *angel came to Mary and he greeted her. He said, 'The *Lord gives you great honor. The *Lord is with you.'

v29 Mary was very worried by what the *angel said. And she wondered what his words could mean. **v30** The *angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary. God is pleased with you and he has decided to *bless you. **v31** You will become *pregnant. A son will be born to you and you must call his name Jesus. **v32** He will be great, and he will be called the Son of the *Most High. The *Lord God will give to him the *throne of King David, his *ancestor. **v33** He will rule over Jacob's people for all time and his *kingdom will never end.'

v34 Mary asked the *angel, 'How will this happen? I have not had sex with a man.'

v35 The *angel answered her, 'The *Holy Spirit will come upon you. The power of the *Most High will cover you. Therefore, the baby will be called holy, and he will be the Son of God. **v36** Now also Elizabeth, your relative, will have a son although

she is very old. People said that she could not have a child. But this is the 6th month since she became *pregnant. **v37** Nothing is impossible with God.'

v38 Mary said, 'Look! I am the *Lord's servant. Let this happen to me as you have said.' Then the *angel went away from her.

Verses 26-28 Nazareth was a small town or village. It was not on a main road. The *Jews did not consider Nazareth to be important (see John 1:46).

God sent the same *angel to Mary as he had sent to Zechariah. The *angel Gabriel came to Mary in Nazareth. It was the 6th month since Elizabeth became *pregnant.

Mary was engaged to Joseph. In that society, the agreement to marry bound the man and the woman together. In other words, they had to marry each other. If they broke off (ended) the agreement, by their law it would be a divorce. But they must not have sex before the marriage.

Verses 29-31 The appearance of the *angel surprised Mary. What he said made her feel uneasy. She did not know what to expect. But the *angel told her not to be afraid. He had come from God. He told her that she pleased God. So, she had nothing of which to be afraid.

Gabriel told Mary that God had chosen her for the human birth of his son, Jesus. She had never had sex, but she would have a baby. No man would be the father of Jesus. His birth would be a *miracle of the *Holy Spirit. The *prophet Isaiah had said that this would happen (Isaiah 7:14).

Mary must call the baby 'Jesus'. The name Jesus was a common name in *Israel. It is the same name as Joshua, with a different English spelling. The meaning of the name in the *Hebrew language is 'the *Lord saves'. So, Matthew's *Gospel says, 'You must call his name Jesus. This means that he will save his people from their *sins' (Matthew 1:21). One meaning of *Lord is the special name for God in the *Old Testament (Yahweh).

Verses 32-33 Jesus is great because he is the Son of the *Most High. The *Most High was an *Old

Testament name for God. Jesus is and always has been the Son of God. In his birth, he was the Son of God in a human body. Jesus is both God and man. He has always been God; and he became the perfect man.

Christ was, by human birth, a *descendant of King David (3:31). God made a promise to David. He said to David, 'Your *throne will last for all time' (2 Samuel 7:16). By the '*throne', God meant the royal authority to rule as king. In the Psalms, God said to David, 'I will establish your *descendants for all time. And I will build your *throne for all time' (Psalm 89:4). God gave to Jesus the *throne that he had promised to a *descendant of David.

Jesus will rule over *Israel for all time (Jeremiah 33:17). He will rule over everybody and everything in heaven and on the earth. He will be the king of kings and the *Lord of *lords (Revelation 17:14; Revelation 19:16). His *kingdom will never end (Isaiah 9:7; Daniel 2:44; Daniel 7:14; Hebrews 1:8). These *prophecies are about a future time. Jesus will return to this earth and then God will establish his rule.

Verse 34 Unlike Zechariah, Mary did not ask for something to convince her that the *angel's message was true. Her question was to know how it would happen. There was no lack of belief with Mary. The birth could not be a normal one because she had not had sex with a man. She would have known the *prophecy about the birth of the *Christ (Isaiah 7:14). And she realized that the *prophecy referred to her. But she could not imagine how the *Lord would achieve it.

Verse 35 The *angel told her how it would be. The *Holy Spirit will come and the power of the *Most High will cover her. God would cause Mary to have the child. The *scripture does not tell us in detail how God did this. There was no sex act involved in this. Jesus would have no man as his father. But he was born of a woman and so he became a real human. His father is God and he is the Son of God.

Jesus was there with God his Father, even before God made the world (John 1:1-2). Jesus has always been God. But by means of Mary, he became human

(John 1:14). But he was still God.

Verses 36-38 Mary belonged to the *tribe of Judah. Elizabeth was a relative of Mary. But she belonged to the *tribe of Levi. Men from the *tribe of Levi could marry women from other *tribes. So, probably Elizabeth's mother was from the *tribe of Judah. Her father was from the *tribe of Levi.

The *angel told Mary that this relative of hers would have a baby. But Elizabeth was so old that this was not possible. For a normal birth, she was too old. But she had carried the child for 6 months already. This would have encouraged Mary. The *Lord was causing the birth of John; and the *Lord would cause the birth of Jesus.

God is able to do what he wants. Nothing is impossible for him.

Mary believed what the *angel had told her. She accepted it with a good attitude. She was happy for the *Lord to do what the *angel said. In this, she was very brave. In those days, it was a serious matter to have a child before marriage. In law, the punishment could be death, although such a result was rare. But it would be normal for the man to whom she was engaged to divorce her. At this time, she could not know what Joseph would do.

Mary visits Elizabeth – Luke 1:39-45

v39 Soon after this, Mary got ready and she hurried off to a town in the hills of Judea. **v40** She came into Zechariah's house and she greeted Elizabeth. **v41** When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby inside her jumped. The *Holy Spirit filled Elizabeth. **v42** She cried out in a loud voice and she said, 'God has *blessed you more than any other woman. And he has *blessed the child that will be born to you. **v43** I do not deserve this, that the mother of my *Lord should visit me. **v44** When I heard the sound of your greeting, the baby inside me jumped with joy. **v45** The *Lord has *blessed you because you believed him. And he will do all that he told you.

Verses 39-45 We do not know in which town Zechariah and Elizabeth lived. The hills of Judea were

about 50 to 70 miles (80 to 110 kilometers) from Nazareth town where Mary was. Mary went as soon as she could to visit Elizabeth. She stayed with Elizabeth for three months (verse 56). She probably left Elizabeth just before or just after John was born.

At the sound of Mary's voice, the baby inside Elizabeth jumped with joy. The *Holy Spirit was active in the baby before its birth. The baby felt that Mary would be the mother of *Christ. The *Holy Spirit now filled Elizabeth. And the *Holy Spirit showed her that Mary's child would be the *Christ.

A *Jewish woman could have no greater honor than to be the mother of the *Christ. Elizabeth cried out that God had given that honor to Mary. Mary's child would be the *Lord Jesus Christ. Mary believed what God had said by the *angel Gabriel. So, God *blessed her because of her belief.

Mary's song – Luke 1:46-56

v46 And Mary said, 'My *soul tells of the greatness of the *Lord. **v47** And my spirit finds its joy in God who saves me. **v48** God has shown a special kindness to me, his humble servant girl. People in all future ages will say that God has *blessed me. **v49** This is because the powerful God has done great things for me. His name is holy. **v50** In every age, God will pity those people who have an attitude of fear toward him. **v51** He has done great deeds by his power. He has scattered proud people who consider themselves superior. **v52** He has brought down rulers from their *thrones. He has made humble people important. **v53** He has filled hungry people with good things but he has sent rich people away with nothing. **v54** He helped his servant, that is, the people from *Israel. He remembered his love and kindness for them. **v55** This is the promise he made for all time to our *ancestors, to Abraham and to his *descendant.'

v56 Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then she returned to her home.

Verses 46-50 We know what Mary said here as the song of Mary. Many Christians call this song the *Magnificat*. *Magnificat* is the first word in the *Latin

language of this song. It is a song of joy and it is a song to praise God. Much of the language in the song comes from the *Old Testament. In particular, it is quite similar to the song of Hannah (1 Samuel 2:1-10).

Mary praises the *Lord with her *soul and she has joy in her spirit. In the poetry of this song, both *soul and spirit mean the same. They emphasize that she praises God with all of herself. And she enjoys praising God.

Mary did not come from a wealthy family. She was an ordinary girl. She calls herself a humble servant of the *Lord. But God chose her to give birth to the *Christ. By this, God showed his special kindness to her. God showed his greatness by this special act. What God did for Mary is a reason for everyone to praise God.

Mary said that the name of God is 'holy'. She meant that God is different from us. Nobody is like him. His goodness and kindness are extraordinary. The 'name' of God means the person of God. God is perfect and he is wonderful.

'Fear' does not only mean to be afraid. It is the serious attitude of someone who knows about God's greatness. So 'fear' means more than to give honor or to respect God. It shows a proper attitude to God. Those people who have this attitude toward God trust in him. They will try never to offend him. They will try always to do what pleases God. God will be kind to such people.

Verses 51-55 This part of the song describes past events. But it also describes things that God continues to do, both now and in the future. What God has done in the past gives us hope for the future.

Mary continued to praise God. She told of what he did by his great power. God is against those people who are proud of themselves. They think that they are superior. These proud people make themselves enemies of God.

People who are humble ask God for help. And God helps them. God provides for those poor people who come to him for help. He satisfies their hunger. But the rich do not want help from God. They imagine that

their own resources are enough. But God sends them away with nothing.

God loves his people, in other words, the families that came from *Israel. In the past, he has *blessed them and he has been kind to them. He made promises to Abraham and to *Israel. Now God will do as he promised in the person of the *Christ. Those promises include all nations and not just *Israel. By Christ, God shows his kindness to people from every nation.

Verse 56 After three months with Elizabeth, Mary returned to her home in Nazareth town. Elizabeth's baby was due or he was just born. It is possible that Mary stayed until John's birth. Probably by that time it was noticeable that Mary would have a baby.

The birth of John the *Baptist – Luke 1:57-66

v57 When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. **v58** Her neighbors and relatives heard how good the *Lord had been to her. And they shared her joy.

v59 On the 8th day after his birth, they came to *circumcise the boy. They wanted to give him the same name as his father Zechariah. **v60** But his mother said, 'No. His name will be John.'

v61 They said to her, 'But there is nobody in your family with that name.'

v62 They signaled to the father to find out what name he wanted for his son. **v63** Zechariah asked for something on which to write. Then he wrote, 'His name is John'. They were all surprised. **v64** Immediately God made Zechariah's mouth and tongue free. He could speak again and he began to praise God. **v65** All the people who lived near them were very afraid. In all the hill country of Judea, people talked about all that had happened. **v66** Everyone who heard this, thought deeply about it. They said, 'This child will be someone special.' They could see that the *Lord was with him.

Verses 57-66

At the usual time, John the *Baptist was born. Elizabeth's family and neighbors knew that the *Lord

had arranged this birth. It was a time of great joy for them all.

God told Abraham to *circumcise every male in his family. And this was the rule for all his *descendants. They had to *circumcise every baby boy when he was 8 days old (Genesis 17:9-14). So, Zechariah and Elizabeth took John and they *circumcised him on the 8th day.

It was normal to give to the boy a name from his family. So the family wanted to call the boy Zechariah. The boy's father, Zechariah, could not speak but Elizabeth stopped them. She insisted that they called the boy John. The *angel told Zechariah to give this name to the boy (1:13).

The family would not allow Elizabeth to call the baby John. They told her that nobody in the family had that name. Then they asked Zechariah. He could not speak or hear. So, he wrote, 'His name is John.' In this, he obeyed the *angel and God cured him. He could now both speak and hear. His immediate reaction was to praise God.

All the people knew that God was at work. They saw that an old couple had a baby. They saw that God cured Zechariah when he called his son John. This caused them to know the fear of God. And they understood that God had a very special plan for John's life.

Zechariah's song – Luke 1:67-80

v67 The *Holy Spirit filled John's father Zechariah and Zechariah *prophesied.

v68 'Praise the *Lord God of *Israell! He has come and he has made his people free. **v69** He has sent a powerful *Savior to us. Our *Savior comes from the family of God's servant David. **v70** By his holy *prophets long ago, God said that he would do this. **v71** He promised to save us from our enemies and from the power of all who hate us. **v72** He has been kind to our *ancestors and he has remembered his holy promise. **v73** God made that promise to our *ancestor Abraham. **v74** He promised to rescue us from our enemies' power so that we could serve him without fear. **v75** We can now be holy and we

can live in a right manner with God all our lives.

v76 You, my child, will be a *prophet of the *Most High. You will go ahead of the *Lord to prepare his ways. **v77** You will make known to his people that the *Lord can save them. He can forgive their *sins.

v78 By God's love and kindness, a sun from heaven will rise upon us. **v79** The sun will shine on those people who live in darkness and in death's shadow. It will guide them into a life of calm and quiet ways. He will lead us to a peaceful way of life.'

v80 The child grew up and he became bold in spirit. He lived in the deserts until the day when he appeared to the people in *Israel.

Verse 67 The *Holy Spirit came upon Zechariah and he *prophesied. We call this *prophecy Zechariah's song. Many Christians know Zechariah's song as the *Benedictus*. *Benedictus* is the first word in the song in the *Latin language.

The song is in two parts. In the first part, Zechariah praises God because God has sent the *Savior (verses 67-75). The *Savior is Christ. In the second part, Zechariah speaks about the work of John the *Baptist (verses 76-79).

Verses 68-70 God 'has come' means that God has visited his people.

*Prophecy sometimes speaks of the future as if it had already happened. The *Lord has, in the past made *Israel's people free. Here it means that God will rescue his people by means of the *Christ. Many people thought that this was a political rescue. They expected the *Christ to rescue them from the *Romans. (*Israel was under the rule of the *Romans.) But the work of the *Christ was to make people free from *sin and death. This work of the *Christ was not only for the people from *Israel, but also for people from every nation.

Jesus now makes his people free. This means that he has paid the price to make them free. Jesus, the powerful *Savior, paid the price for our *sins when he died for us. Jesus has taken the punishment because of our *sins. We need to *repent and to believe this. Then God will forgive us.

We are free when God forgives our *sin. We are free because the *Lord gives to us a new life. Death cannot end this new life. This new life will never die. This is what we call 'eternal life'.

Verses 71-75 The *Old Testament in many places tells us that God would send a *Savior to his people. This *Savior would be a *descendant of King David. Both Mary and Joseph were *descendants of the family of David. So, by his human mother, Jesus belonged to that family. Jesus is the *Savior that God promised to send.

The promise to Abraham was that God would defeat the enemies of his *descendants. Then Abraham's *descendants could live in the country that God had promised to them. Also, because of Abraham, God would *bless all nations. God would save his people from their enemies.

The *descendants of Abraham include all who believe in the *Lord Jesus (Galatians 3:6-9). The enemies from which Jesus came to rescue us are *Satan, *sin and death.

The purpose of *salvation is that we should serve God. Because of Jesus, we need have no fear. He has removed the punishment because of our *sins. We can be holy and we can live with God.

Verses 76-79 The second part of Zechariah's song is about his son John. Zechariah said that John would be a *prophet of the *Most High God. It seems that there had been no national *prophet among the *Jews for about 400 years.

John would tell the people to *repent of their *sins. He would tell them that the *Christ could forgive them.

God's love and kindness are such that he sent the *Lord Jesus from heaven. The 'sun' that shines upon his people means the *Lord (see Isaiah 60:1-2). And the 'darkness' means *sin. While the people were in the darkness of *sin, God's light shone upon them. In other words, he took away their *sin and he gave to them a new life. He made them free from *sin and death.

Verse 80 The child John grew up to be a man of strong character. He lived a private life in the desert.

When the time came, he appeared to the people in the desert of Judea (Matthew 3:1). He was then about 30 years old. Luke will tell us about John's work in chapter 3.

The birth and childhood of Jesus – Luke 2:1-52

The birth of Jesus – Luke 2:1-7

v1 In those days, *Caesar Augustus issued an order. All the people in the entire *Roman world had to record their names in registers. **v2** This was the first register of the people while Quirinius governed Syria. **v3** And all the people went to their own towns to register.

v4 So, Joseph went from the town called Nazareth in Galilee. He went to the town called Bethlehem in Judea. Bethlehem was the town of David. Joseph went there because he was a *descendant of David. **v5** Joseph went to register with Mary. They had agreed to marry. Mary was expecting a baby. **v6** While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born. **v7** Mary gave birth to her first son and she wrapped him with pieces of cloth. There was no place for them in the hotel. So, she laid him in a box. Usually, animals ate from that box.

Verses 1-3 *Caesar was the title that *Roman rulers took. They were in effect the kings of Rome. Octavianus Augustus was a nephew of Julius *Caesar. Augustus' real name was Thurinus but he changed his name to Augustus in 27 *BC. Augustus means 'honorable'. He became *Caesar after the death of Julius in about 31 *BC. He died in 14 *AD.

Augustus gave the order that all the people must register themselves. The purpose of the registers of people was to charge taxes. This register of the people was when Quirinius governed Syria (verse 2). Bible students are not sure when this happened. There are different ideas about the periods when Quirinius governed Syria, and about the meaning of verse 2.

In *Israel, all the *Jews had to go to the towns of their *ancestors.

Verses 4-7 Joseph and Mary travelled from Nazareth town to Bethlehem in Judea. Joseph was a *descendant of David. Bethlehem was the place where David was born. Mary expected the baby Jesus to be born soon. Mary was married to Joseph (Matthew 1:24-25). Luke says that they had agreed to marry. Perhaps he says this because they had not had sex yet. Joseph was not the father of the baby. The *Holy Spirit had arranged for the birth of Jesus to Mary.

Bethlehem, which means 'house of bread', was about 6 miles (10 kilometers) from Jerusalem. It was about three days' journey for Joseph and Mary from Nazareth. It would have been a rough journey for Mary in her state.

There seems to be no need for Mary to be there. Joseph could register for the family. She was also a *descendant of David. Perhaps for that reason she had to register. But God arranged it this way so that the *Christ would be born there. The *prophet Micah said that this would be so. He spoke about 700 years earlier. He said, 'But you, Bethlehem, are a very small town. You are so small among Judah's families. But out of you, a man will come who is for me. He will be the ruler over *Israel. His origin was a long time ago in the past. It was in an ancient time' (Micah 5:2).

By the time that Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem, there was no room for them. There is a tradition that Jesus was born in a stable. A stable is a place where people keep animals. That could be right. But it is also possible that Jesus was born in a poor home. In the poorest homes, people and animals lived together, in the same room.

When a child was born, *Jewish women would wash it with water. Then they would rub it with salt and they would wrap it in cloths (Ezekiel 16:4). It seems that Mary did this for the baby Jesus. There may have been nobody there to help her. Therefore, Mary had to do these things herself. Then she laid the baby in a box. Usually, animals ate from that box. But that was the only place where she could put her baby to sleep.

The *shepherds and the *angels – Luke 2:8-20

v8 In the same region, there were *shepherds who were living in the fields. They guarded their sheep during the night. **v9** An *angel of the *Lord appeared to them. The *glory of the *Lord shone round them. And they were very afraid. **v10** The *angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy, which will be for all the people. **v11** Today in the town of David, a *Savior has been born to you. He is the Christ the *Lord. **v12** This is the proof by which you will know him. You will find a baby with cloths round him. He is lying in a box. Usually, animals eat from that box.’

v13 At once with the *angel, there was a great army of *angels from heaven. They were praising God. **v14** They said, ‘*Glory to God in the highest heaven. And on earth, let there be peace for the people whom God approves.’

v15 The *angels left them and went back to heaven. Then the *shepherds said to each other, ‘Let us go to Bethlehem. Let us see this thing that has happened. The *Lord has told us about it.’

v16 So, they went quickly and they found Mary, Joseph and the baby. The baby was lying in a box. Usually, animals ate from that box. **v17** They saw this. Then the *shepherds told everyone what the *angel had said to them about the child. **v18** The *shepherds’ reports astonished all who heard them. **v19** But Mary remembered all these things. She thought deeply about what they must mean. **v20** The *shepherds went back to their sheep. They declared how great God is. And they praised God for all that they had heard. They praised him for all that they had seen. Everything was as the *angel had told them.

Verses 8-14 *Shepherds kept their sheep in the open fields near Bethlehem from about April to November. They may have kept the sheep in the fields later than this if the weather was not too cold. They had to guard their sheep from wild animals and from thieves. So, the *shepherds watched in turn through the night to protect their sheep.

Probably they kept these sheep near Bethlehem to be *sacrifices in the *temple.

Suddenly, light replaced the darkness of the night. An *angel appeared and with him the *glory of the *Lord came. This sight frightened the *shepherds. The *angel told them about the birth of the *Savior. This is the good news that would give great joy to all people. The *Savior is the *Christ the *Lord. And he told them how they would recognize the baby Jesus.

The *Jews expected that one day God would send the *Christ to them. The good news that the *Christ had come was to the *Jews first. Then it was good news for all people. People used the word ‘*Lord’ in the *Greek language to translate the name of God from the *Hebrew language. His name ‘the *Lord’ shows that Jesus is God.

Then a large number of *angels appeared in the sky. And, with the first *angel, they praised God. They praised God because he had sent Jesus to save us.

The *angels said, ‘Let there be peace on earth.’ We were all enemies of God because of our *sins. But in Jesus, we can have peace with God. In other words, we have a right relationship with God. In Jesus, God’s enemies become his children.

Verses 15-18 The *angels left the *shepherds. The *shepherds did not doubt the truth of the *angel’s words. They left their sheep and they went to find Jesus. They did not delay but they went quickly. It seems that they knew Bethlehem well. They had to look for a baby, with cloths round it, which was in a box for animal food. And they soon found Mary, Joseph and the baby. Everything was as the *angel had told them. They saw the *Christ who would save his people from their *sins.

The *shepherds told everyone what the *angel had said about the baby. Probably the *angel said a lot more to them than we have in this record. What they said astonished all who heard them.

Verses 19-20 Mary listened to what the *shepherds said. She thought deeply about all that had happened. She tried to understand what it all meant.

The *shepherds returned to their sheep. They praised

God for what they had heard. They praised God for what they had seen.

Mary and Joseph take Jesus to the *temple – Luke 2:21-40

v21 The ceremony to *circumcise the baby happened 8 days after his birth. Mary and Joseph gave him the name Jesus. Before Mary was expecting the child, the *angel had given this name to him.

v22 The time came for Joseph and Mary to perform the ceremony to make them clean. This was to obey what the law of Moses commanded. They took the child to Jerusalem to offer him to the *Lord.

v23 (They did this to obey the law of the *Lord. It says that the first male child of every mother belongs to the *Lord.) **v24** Also, they went to give the *sacrifice that the *Lord's law orders. They had to bring two *doves or two young *pigeons.

v25 A man called Simeon was in Jerusalem. He was a good and sincere man. He respected and obeyed God. This man was expecting the *Christ to come and to help *Israel. And God's *Holy Spirit was with Simeon. **v26** The *Holy Spirit had told him that he would see the *Lord's *Christ. And, that Simeon would not die before he had seen the *Christ. **v27** God's Spirit led him to the *temple area at the time when Mary and Joseph brought the baby Jesus there. They came to do for Jesus what the law orders. **v28** Then Simeon took the child in his arms and he praised God.

v29 He said, 'Now, Master, free your servant to die. Let me be at peace as you promised to me. **v30** With my eyes I have seen the *Christ whom you have sent to save the people. **v31** You have prepared him for people from all nations to see. **v32** He is like a light that will show your truth to the nations. He will bring honor and *glory to your people, *Israel.'

v33 What Simeon said about him astonished the child's father and mother. **v34** Then Simeon blessed them. He spoke to Jesus' mother, Mary. He said, 'This child will cause many people in *Israel to

fall and to rise. He will be a sign from God but many people will oppose him. **v35** This will show clearly what people really think in their hearts. And you, yourself, will suffer and be sad. It will be as if a sword cut through your heart.'

v36 Anna, a *prophet, was also there. She was a *descendant of Phanuel from the *tribe of Asher. She was now very old. Her husband had died 7 years after they married. **v37** She had been a widow a long time. She was now 84 years old. She never left the *temple area. She *worshipped God day and night. She prayed to God and often she went without food. **v38** At that moment, she came to Mary and Joseph and she began to thank God. She spoke about Jesus to all who were waiting for God to free Jerusalem.

v39 Mary and Joseph finished all the things that the *Lord's law orders. Then they went home to Nazareth, a town in Galilee. **v40** The child grew and he became strong. He was learning to be wise. God was pleased with him and he *blessed Jesus.

Verses 21-24 On the 8th day, *Jewish parents must *circumcise a baby boy (Genesis 17:12). Mary and Joseph did all that the law ordered. So Mary and Joseph arranged for this to happen at the proper time. Mary and Joseph obeyed what the *angel had told Mary. They gave the name Jesus to the baby (1:31).

Every first son belonged to the *Lord. The parents had to pay money to the *Lord for the first son when he was a month old. This was to buy back the boy. The fee was 5 *shekels (Numbers 18:15-16)

In *Jewish law, a woman became unclean on the birth of her child because of the blood. The mother was unclean for 40 days after the birth if the baby was a boy (Leviticus 12:4). To be unclean meant that the woman could not go to the *temple. And she could not join with other people as they *worshipped God. At the end of this period, the woman had to bring a *sacrifice to the *Lord. This *sacrifice was a *lamb, with a *dove or *pigeon. If she could not afford a *lamb, she would bring two *doves or two young *pigeons (Leviticus 12:6-8).

So, at the proper time, Mary and Joseph brought

Jesus to the *Lord. They brought the *sacrifices to make Mary clean. Mary and Joseph were not wealthy and they could not afford to bring a *lamb. So, they brought either two *doves or two young *pigeons.

Verses 25-28 We know nothing more about Simeon than is in this passage. It seems that he was an old man. He was a good man and he trusted in God. He was expecting the *Savior to come. And the *Holy Spirit had told Simeon that he would see the *Lord's *Christ. The *Christ would come before Simeon died.

The *Holy Spirit led Simeon to go into the *temple. So, he was there when Mary and Joseph came in with Jesus. Then Simeon knew that the baby Jesus was the *Christ. Here was what he had waited for. It would have been a time of great emotion and joy for Simeon. He took the baby in his arms and he praised God.

Verses 29-32 Many Christians know what Simeon said here as the *Nunc Dimittis*. These are the first two words in the *Latin translation of this passage. It means, 'Now let me die.'

Simeon, the servant of the *Lord, was now ready to die. His ambition had been to see the *Christ. Now with his own eyes, he had seen him whom God had sent. He had only seen a baby, but by *faith, he saw the *Savior. He had seen Jesus who would save his people from their *sins.

In death, Simeon would be at peace. In other words, all the troubles of this life would end and he would go to be with his *Lord.

The *Lord Jesus did not come only for *Israel. He came for people from all the nations in the world. God wanted all nations to hear the good news. God sent Jesus to save people in every nation from their *sins. He saves all who believe him. They must *repent of their *sins and they must trust him.

The structure of these verses is a typical *Hebrew poem. It says the same idea in two ways. So, in verse 29 both sentences show the same thing. Verses 30 and 31 are a couple. And in verse 32, the light to the nations and the honor and *glory for *Israel are a couple.

Verses 33-35 Mary and Joseph were aware of the things that Simeon had said about Jesus. But it astonished them that this man said such things. He had come to the *temple at that exact time. They could see that the *Lord had sent him. Now he spoke to Mary about the future of Jesus.

The *Lord Jesus will be a cause of division among people. They will be either for him or against him. Some people will refuse to accept him. They will be like people who fall (Isaiah 8:14-15). Such people have no hope of *salvation if they do not change their attitudes. But the *Lord will raise up the people who trust him. In other words, he will give them new life.

Jesus will show what God is like. Many people will refuse to believe this. And they will become his enemies.

Mary will see how Jesus dies (John 19:25). This will feel as terrible as a sword that cuts through her heart. As his mother, she will feel the pain of his death.

Verses 36-38 Asher was one of the 10 *tribes of *Israel that Assyria removed from the country called *Israel. Some people from those *tribes had remained in *Israel. Many people from these *tribes joined with Judah during the rule of Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 30:1-11). Anna belonged to the *tribe of Asher.

Anna had been married for 7 years but her husband had died. For many years, she had been a widow. At this time, she was 84 years old. And she was praying in the *temple every day.

When Mary and Joseph had come into the *temple, Anna came to them. Maybe she was there as Simeon took Jesus in his arms. She saw the baby Jesus. She knew that he was the *Christ. She praised God. She spoke about Jesus to those people who waited for God to send the *Christ.

Verses 39-40 Mary and Joseph returned to their home in Nazareth. But this was not immediately after this visit to the *temple. They were in Bethlehem for a period of time. Then they went to Egypt because King Herod wanted to kill Jesus (Matthew 2:13-23). After Herod's death, they made their home in Nazareth where Jesus grew up.

Jesus grew in body and mind as a boy and as a man. He was the Son of God; but he was a real man as well. God his Father watched over his development.

The boy Jesus in the *temple – Luke 2:41-52

v41 Each year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the *Passover *feast. **v42** When Jesus was 12 years old, they went to the *feast as usual.

v43 When the days of the *feast were over, they started to go home. The boy Jesus stayed in Jerusalem but his parents did not know it. **v44** They thought that Jesus was in the group of travellers. They went on their journey for a day. Then they looked for Jesus among their family and friends.

v45 When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him there. **v46** After three days, they found Jesus in the *temple. He was sitting there among the teachers. He was listening to the teachers and he was asking them questions.

v47 His intelligence and his answers astonished all who heard him. **v48** When his parents saw him, it astonished them also. His mother asked him, 'Son, why have you done this to us? Look! Your father and I have been very worried as we looked for you.'

v49 Jesus said to them, 'You did not need to look for me. You should have known that I must be in my Father's house.' **v50** But they did not understand what he said to them.

v51 Then Jesus went with them to Nazareth town and he obeyed them. But his mother kept in her heart all that had happened. **v52** Jesus grew in wisdom and he became a mature man. God was pleased with him and so were the people.

Verses 41-42 God's law said that *Jewish men should go to Jerusalem each year for the three main *feasts (Exodus 23:17 and 34:23). These *feasts were *Passover, *Pentecost and the *feast of shelters. If they could not go to all three *feasts, they made a special effort to go for *Passover. Joseph and Mary went every year for the *Passover *feast. Women did not have to go but many went with their husbands.

At the age of 13, boys become men in the *Jewish religion. At that age, they could take part as adults in

the *feasts. It was usual for boys to go to the *feasts before that age. And they often went a year before. So, Jesus went with Mary and Joseph when he was 12 years old.

Verses 43-44 The *Passover *feast lasted 8 days. The first day was the *Passover when they killed the young sheep. Then there were 7 days for the *feast of bread without *yeast (Exodus 12:15; Leviticus 23:5-6).

At the end of the *feast, Mary and Joseph began the three day journey back to Nazareth. They went with a group of relatives and friends. They thought that Jesus would be with friends in the group. Often men and women walked in separate groups. Joseph may have thought that Jesus was with Mary. And Mary may have thought that Jesus was with Joseph. However, at the end of the day, they could not find him. They did not know that Jesus had remained in Jerusalem.

Verses 45-47 Mary and Joseph supposed that Jesus was still in Jerusalem. They were so worried that they hurried back there. After three days, or on the third day, they found Jesus. The first day was the journey from Jerusalem. The second day was the journey back to Jerusalem. On the third day, or the day after, they found Jesus.

Jesus was in the *temple with the teachers of religion. He listened to them and he asked them questions. Also, they asked him questions. At the age of 12 years, he astonished the people with his knowledge.

Verses 48-50 Mary and Joseph had not expected to find Jesus with the famous teachers. The way that people respected him astonished them. But Mary expressed the worry that she and Joseph had felt. She asked Jesus why he had done this to them.

This incident causes all kinds of questions in our minds. But Jesus gave them an answer that they did not understand. They should have known that God was Jesus' Father, not Joseph. It was natural that Jesus should be in his Father's house. Jesus had to do his Father's work. There was no need for Mary and Joseph to worry. There was no need for them to look for him.

Verses 51-52 Jesus went home with Mary and Joseph. He was God's son but he was also the son of Mary. So, he obeyed his human parents. Mary remembered all that had happened. And she thought much about these events.

Jesus grew into the perfect man. God was pleased with him and all the people respected him.

John the *Baptist *preaches – Luke 3:1-20

v1 It was the 15th year during the rule of the *emperor Tiberius. Pontius Pilate was ruler of Judea. Herod ruled Galilee, and his brother Philip ruled Iturea and Trachonitis. Lysanias was the ruler of Abilene. **v2** Annas and Caiaphas were the *Jewish chief priests. At that time, God spoke his word to Zechariah's son John, who lived in the desert. **v3** So, John went all over the area near the Jordan River and he spoke to the people. He told them to *repent of their *sins. Then he would *baptize them to show that God had forgiven their *sins. **v4** As the *prophet Isaiah wrote in his book, 'A voice cries out in the desert. "Prepare the way for the *Lord. Make straight paths for him. **v5** Make every valley level. Make every mountain and hill low. Make straight the roads that curve. Make the rough roads smooth. **v6** And everyone will see how God saves people from their *sins." '

v7 Many people came to John for him to *baptize them. He spoke to them, 'You are like young poisonous snakes. I want to know who warned you to run away from God's anger.

v8 You need to *repent. You must show that it is real. Do not begin to say among yourselves, "Abraham is our father." I tell you that God can make children for Abraham from these stones! **v9** The axe is already at the root of the trees. The axe will cut down every tree that does not produce good fruit. And fire will burn that tree.'

v10 The people asked John, 'What should we do then?'

v11 John answered them. 'If you have two shirts, give one away. Give it to a person who does not have a shirt. If you have food, share it with other

people.'

v12 Even some men who collected taxes came for John to *baptize them. They asked him, 'Teacher, what should we do?' **v13** He told them, 'Do not collect anything more than is due.'

v14 Some soldiers asked John, 'What about us? What should we do?' John said to them, 'Do not force people to give you money. And do not tell lies about them. Let the pay that you get satisfy you.'

v15 The people expected the *Christ to come. So, they asked themselves whether John might be the *Christ. **v16** John answered everyone, 'I *baptize you with water. But there will come someone who is stronger than I. I am not important enough to be the servant who undoes his *sandals. He will *baptize you with the *Holy Spirit and fire. **v17** He will come as one ready to clean completely the yard where he prepares his wheat. He will gather the wheat grains into his store. But he will burn the rubbish in a fire that nobody can put out.'

v18 With many other words, John encouraged the people. And he explained the good news to them.

v19 But John spoke against the ruler Herod because Herod had married Herodias, his brother's wife. Also, John spoke against Herod because of all the evil things that he did. **v20** So Herod carried out another evil deed in addition. He put John in prison.

Verses 1-2 Tiberius was the *emperor of Rome. He became *emperor in 14 *AD. But he ruled with Augustus for two years before he became the *emperor. He ruled in Rome for 23 years and he died in 37 *AD. So, the date that the *Lord sent John to speak to the people was either about 28 *AD or about 26 *AD.

Pontius Pilate was *Roman, and he governed Judea from 26 *AD to 36 *AD. Some people accused him of serious crimes. Therefore, he had to return to Rome. But before he arrived there in 37 *AD, Tiberius died. Soon after this, Pilate killed himself.

Herod Antipas ruled in Galilee from about 4 *BC. The *emperor Caligula, who came after Tiberius, removed Herod in 39 *AD. Philip ruled in some territories to the

north of Israel from about 4 *BC until his death in 33 *AD or 34 *AD. Both Herod and Philip were sons of Herod the Great. We know nothing about Lysanias.

Iturea was to the north of Israel and to the east of the Jordan River. Trachonitis was to the east of Iturea. And Abilene was to the north of Trachonitis.

Annas was the *Jewish chief priest from 6 *AD to 15 *AD . Five (5) of his sons later became chief priests. The first of these sons was Eleazar, who was chief priest in 16 *AD to 17 *AD. Annas continued to be powerful through the time when Caiaphas was the chief priest. Annas was the father of Caiaphas' wife. Caiaphas was the chief priest from 18 *AD to 36 *AD.

John the *Baptist lived in the desert. At this time, God spoke to him.

Verses 3-4 Then John came from the desert to the Jordan River. Here he spoke to the people about their *sins. He told them to *repent of their *sins. The meaning of *repentance is a change of mind. It includes to be sorry for *sins and a change of life. As people *repented, John *baptized them in the Jordan River.

John was the 'voice' about whom Isaiah wrote. John's task was to prepare people for the time when the *Christ came (Isaiah 40:3). He warned people to be ready because the *Christ would come soon.

Verses 5-6 When a king approached, the people would clear all the roads ahead of him. They would remove all that could delay him. They would make the rough roads smooth and straight. Luke uses this *prophecy to show that people must prepare for the *Christ. John's task was to make people ready to receive the *Christ. The *salvation that the *Christ brings is for all the world. People in all places will see this *salvation.

Verses 7-8 Crowds of people came to John for him to *baptize them. Among those crowds were *Pharisees and *Sadducees. These men were the leaders of the *Jewish religion. But many of them were not sincere. So John spoke these hard words to them (Matthew 3:7). He said that they were like poisonous snakes. And they could not escape the anger of God by

*baptism.

*Baptism alone cannot save people from their *sins. There has to be true *repentance and real belief in Christ. The proof of *repentance will be the change in the life of the person.

Many *Jews thought that they were safe. God would accept them because they were *descendants of Abraham. But they were wrong. The real *descendants of Abraham are those people who believe in the *Christ (Galatians 3:29).

If a fruit tree does not have fruit, the gardener will cut it down. He will burn it with fire. So, God will not save people unless they *repent of their *sins. God as the judge is like the gardener who is ready with his axe.

Verses 10-14 John had told the people to show that they had *repented. They asked him what they should do. He gave to them some examples of the kind of things that they should do. People who *repent should do good deeds to the poor. They should share their goods with people who have nothing. God very much wants us to do good deeds. He cares about poor people, so we should care about them too.

Some men who collected taxes asked John the same question. They collected taxes for the *Roman government. But they were able to take more money than was due from the people. In this way, they robbed the people and they often became wealthy. John told them to collect only the tax that was due and nothing more.

Next, there came some soldiers with the same question. These men were probably *Jewish soldiers rather than *Roman soldiers. John told them that they should not use unnecessary force. They should not use their strength to get money from the people. They should not tell lies when they accuse someone. Their wages, which included other benefits, should satisfy them.

Such good deeds are the effect of *repentance. They are not works to achieve *salvation.

Verses 15-17 The sudden appearance of this *prophet from the desert caused people to ask who he was. They knew from the *Old Testament that God

would send the *Christ. At that time, the *Jews expected that the *Christ would come soon. Maybe John was the *Christ whom God had promised to send.

John knew their thoughts. He told the people that he was not the *Christ. But he taught them that the *Christ would come soon. And he told them something about the nature of the *Christ.

The *Christ is superior to John in every way. John felt that he was not good enough to do such a small thing as to undo the *Christ's *sandals. A servant would do this task for his master. John *baptized with water. But the *Christ will *baptize with the *Holy Spirit and fire. This is what happened on the day of *Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). The *disciples of Jesus received power from the *Holy Spirit. This was so much greater than John's *baptism with water.

Then John spoke about the work of the *Christ. John used the language of agriculture to explain this. The *Christ will test people as the farmer tests his grain. The farmer beats his grain to separate the good grain from the husk (the grain's outer skin). Then he throws it all into the air. The good grain falls straight to the ground. The farmer puts the good grain in a safe store. But the husks blow a bit further away in the wind. The farmer gathers this rubbish and he burns it with fire. So, the *Christ will be the judge of all people. He will separate the people who belong to him from other people. His people will go to the safety of heaven. But he will punish the people who oppose him, as with fire.

Verses 19-20 Herod Antipas divorced his first wife and he married Herodias. She was the wife of one of his brothers. This was one of many *sins of Herod. He was an evil man. John the *Baptist was bold enough to speak against Herod. So, Herod put John in prison.

John *baptizes Jesus – Luke 3:21-22

v21 When John *baptized all the people, he *baptized Jesus too. While Jesus prayed, heaven opened. **v22** And the *Holy Spirit came down on Jesus in the physical form of a *dove. And a voice from heaven said, 'You are my Son. I love you and

you please me very much.’

Verses 21-22 Jesus came to John and asked for *baptism. Matthew’s *Gospel tells us more about this event. John recognized that Jesus was superior to him. So, he said that Jesus ought to *baptize him. Jesus insisted that John should *baptize him. John’s *baptism was a *baptism of *repentance. But Jesus had no *sins and therefore he did not need to *repent. He asked John to *baptize him because it was the right thing to do (Matthew 3:15). In this, he chose to be like the people whom he came to save. He was truly humble.

As Jesus came out of the water, he prayed. He saw heaven open and the *Holy Spirit of God came down upon him (Mark 1:10). Also, John the *Baptist saw the *Holy Spirit as he came down like a *dove. By this means, John the *Baptist knew that Jesus was the *Christ (John 1:33-34).

Then a voice spoke from heaven. It was the voice of God the Father. God said to Jesus, ‘You are my son. I love you and you please me very much.’ God declared that Jesus is his Son.

The family history of Jesus – Luke 3:23-38

v23 Jesus was about 30 years old when he began his work. People called Jesus the son of Joseph. Joseph was the son of Heli.

v24 Heli was the son of Matthat. Matthat was the son of Levi. Levi was the son of Melki. Melki was the son of Jannai. Jannai was the son of Joseph.

v25 Joseph was the son of Mattathias. Mattathias was the son of Amos. Amos was the son of Nahum. Nahum was the son of Esli. Esli was the son of Naggai. **v26** Naggai was the son of Maath. Maath was the son of Mattathias. Mattathias was the son of Semein.

Semein was the son of Josech. Josech was the son of Joda. **v27** Joda was the son of Joanan. Joanan was the son of Rhesa. Rhesa was the son of Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel was the son of Shealtiel. Shealtiel was the son of Neri. **v28** Neri was the son of Melki. Melki was the son of Addi. Addi was the son of Cosam. Cosam was the son of Elmadam.

Elmadam was the son of Er. **v29** Er was the son of Joshua.

Joshua was the son of Eliezer. Eliezer was the son of Jorim. Jorim was the son of Matthat. Matthat was the son of Levi. **v30** Levi was the son of Simeon. Simeon was the son of Judah. Judah was the son of Joseph. Joseph was the son of Jonam. Jonam was the son of Eliakim. **v31** Eliakim was the son of Melea. Melea was the son of Menna. Menna was the son of Mattatha. Mattatha was the son of Nathan.

Nathan was the son of David. **v32** David was the son of Jesse. Jesse was the son of Obed. Obed was the son of Boaz. Boaz was the son of Salmon. Salmon was the son of Nahshon. **v33** Nahshon was the son of Amminadab. Amminadab was the son of Ram. Ram was the son of Hezron. Hezron was the son of Perez. Perez was the son of Judah. **v34** Judah was the son of Jacob.

Jacob was the son of Isaac. Isaac was the son of Abraham. Abraham was the son of Terah. Terah was the son of Nahor. **v35** Nahor was the son of Serug. Serug was the son of Reu. Reu was the son of Peleg. Peleg was the son of Eber. Eber was the son of Shelah. **v36** Shelah was the son of Cainan. Cainan was the son of Arphaxad. Arphaxad was the son of Shem. Shem was the son of Noah.

Noah was the son of Lamech. **v37** Lamech was the son of Methuselah. Methuselah was the son of Enoch. Enoch was the son of Jared. Jared was the son of Mahalaleel. Mahalaleel was the son of Cainan. **v38** Cainan was the son of Enosh. Enosh was the son of Seth. Seth was the son of Adam. Adam was the son of God.

Verses 23-38 Jesus began his special work for God when he was approximately 30 years old.

To the *Jews, family history was very important. God had promised to send the *Christ who would be from David's family. It was necessary to show that the *Christ was a *descendant of David. So, both Matthew and Luke record the family history. Here is an explanation for the two different family lists.

Matthew gives the legal list of names from Abraham to Joseph. In *Jewish law, Joseph was the father of Jesus but in fact, he was not. Matthew starts with Abraham and comes forward in time (Matthew 1:2-16). This shows that Jesus as a man comes from the *Jewish nation. Jesus was the *Christ that God promised to *Israel.

Luke shows that Jesus is not in fact a son of Joseph. So, he gives the list of Mary's *ancestors. Joseph was the son of Jacob (Matthew 1:16). Heli was his father-in-law (the father of Joseph's wife Mary). Mary was the daughter of Heli. Probably Luke used the name of the male, Joseph, as it was the custom of the *Jews at that time. The *Jews would not usually end or start the family list with a woman. They would give the name of her husband instead.

Luke shows the family list from Joseph and he goes back in time to Adam. This shows the man Jesus as a relative of all people and not just of the *Jews. God promised Adam that his *descendant would defeat *Satan (Genesis 3:15). This *descendant was Jesus.

The devil tests Jesus – Luke 4:1-4:13

v1 Jesus was full of the *Holy Spirit as he returned from the Jordan River. Then the Spirit led Jesus into the desert. **v2** For 40 days in the desert, the devil *tempted him. Jesus did not eat anything during those days. And at the end of those days, he was very hungry.

v3 Then the devil spoke to Jesus. 'If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.' **v4** Jesus answered him from the Bible. "*Scripture says, "A person cannot live on bread alone.' "

v5 The devil took Jesus up to a high place. And he showed Jesus all the *kingdoms of the world in an instant. **v6** The devil said to Jesus, 'I will give to you all this power and the *glory of these nations. All of it belongs to me. And I can give it to anyone that I wish. **v7** So, if you *worship me, it will all be yours.'

v8 Jesus answered him from the Bible. "*Scripture says, ""Worship the *Lord your God." And it says, "Serve only him." '

v9 Then the devil led Jesus to Jerusalem. And he put Jesus on the highest part of the *temple. The devil said to Jesus. ‘If you are the Son of God, jump down from here. **v10** The *scriptures say, “God will order his *angels to preserve you from danger.” **v11** Also, the *scriptures say, “The *angels will carry you in their hands so that you will not hurt your foot against a stone.”’

v12 Again, Jesus answered the devil. ‘The *scriptures say, “Do not test the *Lord your God.”’

v13 After the devil had *tempted Jesus in every way, he left Jesus for a time.

Verses 1-2 The *Holy Spirit came upon Jesus at his *baptism in the Jordan River. The *Holy Spirit came into Jesus so that Jesus was full of the *Holy Spirit. Then Jesus went away from the river. The *Holy Spirit made Jesus go into the desert. Jesus was in the desert for 40 days and 40 nights. During that time, he had nothing to eat. All through these 40 days, the devil *tempted Jesus. But the final attack of the devil came at the end of that time.

Verses 3-4 The devil, who is also called *Satan, opposes God and God’s people. Often he works by means of evil spirits or *demons.

Jesus was by this time very hungry. So, the devil came to him. What he said meant this: ‘You can make bread from a stone. By this, you can prove that you are the Son of God. Do it and satisfy your hunger. Use your power for your own benefit.’ *Satan *tempted Christ to act apart from *faith in God.

Jesus answered the devil from the Bible. He repeated words from Deuteronomy 8:3. In that verse, Moses reminded *Israel that for 40 years in the desert God gave food to them. Then Moses said, ‘Man does not live on bread alone. But man shall live on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’

We need to listen to the words that God speaks. For us today, the normal way that God speaks is by means of the Bible.

Verses 5-8 The devil took Jesus to a high place. We do not know whether this was a physical mountain. But from this place, the devil showed Jesus all the

*kingdoms of the world. He could not do this from any one place on earth. So clearly, the devil gave to Jesus a *vision of the whole world. He showed Jesus all the wealth and the *glory of the nations.

*Satan said that he owned all these nations. God has allowed *Satan to have some power over the nations. Jesus calls *Satan 'the ruler of this world' (John 12:31; John 14:30; John 16:11). This does not say that *Satan owns the world. But he does have great authority in the world.

If Jesus *worshipped *Satan, *Satan promised to give all these nations to Jesus. That would mean that Jesus accepted *Satan's authority. They would not still be enemies. Then Jesus would not have gone to the cross to die for our *sins. And there would have been be no *salvation for us.

Again, Jesus answered the devil from the Bible (Deuteronomy 6:13). It was wrong to *worship *Satan. Jesus would remain completely loyal to God, his Father.

Verses 9-12 A third time *Satan *tempted Jesus. He took Jesus to Jerusalem. This was probably in another *vision. He asked Jesus to throw himself off from a certain high point of the *temple. This would prove that Jesus is the Son of God. *Satan even used the Bible to argue that Jesus would be safe (Psalm 91:11-12).

Jesus did not need to do a *miracle to prove who he was. Instead, Jesus answered *Satan by another *scripture (Deuteronomy 6:16). It is wrong to test God. We must not expect God to do what we want. We must not try to achieve God's purposes by methods that are not proper.

Verse 13 The devil would continue to *tempt Jesus. But for now, he went away.

Word List for Section 1

AD ~ years after Jesus Christ.

altar ~ a special table where priests burned *sacrifices or *incense for God.

ancestors ~ people in history from whom your family has come.

angel ~ a servant of God from heaven. God made angels to serve him and to take his messages. So, angels are God's servants from heaven. But there are evil angels who opposed God. These evil angels now serve the devil.

apostle ~ someone whom God sends; especially one of the 12 men whom Jesus chose to be his helpers.

baptize ~ to use water in a special ceremony to show that God has forgiven (washed away) a person's *sin.

baptism ~ the act when a person *baptizes someone.

Baptist ~ the title that we use for John, whom God sent to prepare people for the *Christ's arrival.

BC ~ years before Jesus Christ.

bless ~ to be especially kind to someone.

Caesar ~ a title of the *Roman ruler.

church ~ a group of Christians. The word 'church' has two main meanings. Sometimes the meaning is one church in a particular place; and the Christians who meet there. But sometimes the word 'church' means Christians everywhere, especially in the phrase 'the whole church'.

Christ ~ the Christ is the name for the person whom God would send to be the *Savior of his people. Jesus is the Christ and he was called Christ.

circumcise ~ to cut off the loose skin from the end of the sex part of a boy.

demons ~ evil *angels that serve the devil.

descendant ~ a future member of a family or nation.

disciple ~ a person who follows a leader, especially the 12 men that Jesus chose to be with him.

dove ~ a type of bird.

emperor ~ an important ruler, like a king. The *Romans called their ruler an emperor.

exile ~ When people have to live in a foreign country, they are in exile. Such a person is called an exile.

faith ~ trust in someone or something; belief and trust in God and in Jesus Christ his Son.

feast ~ a time to eat and drink. The special times of

*Jewish ceremonies are feasts.

glory ~ great honor and beauty.

gospel ~ the good news that God saves people from *sin because of Jesus Christ.

Gospel ~ The first 4 books of the *New Testament are called Gospels.

Greek ~ the original language of the *New Testament.

Hebrew ~ the language of the *Jews and of the *Old Testament.

Holy Spirit ~ God's Spirit whom Jesus sent to help his people. The Holy Spirit is another name for God, also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ and the Comforter. The Holy Spirit is a person but not human. He carries out God's work on earth. He is God, equal with God the Father and with God the Son.

incense ~ something that gives a sweet smell when it burns. The priests burned it when they praised God in the *temple.

Israel ~ the country of the *Jews.

Jewish ~ people or things that are from the *Jews.

Jews ~ people who were born from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and their *descendants.

kingdom ~ the place or territory where a king rules. In the *New Testament, we often read about God's kingdom. This nearly always means the people over whom God rules, and not a territory on earth.

lamb ~ a young sheep.

Lamb ~ a name for Jesus because he died as a *sacrifice for our *sin. He is called the Lamb of God.

Latin ~ an old language that Christians used in *worship.

leper ~ a person with a serious skin disease called leprosy.

Lord ~ a title for God, or Jesus, to show that he is over all people and things. In the *Old Testament, LORD was a special name for God. The word 'Lord' can also mean a master or a ruler.

miracle ~ a powerful deed that does not happen by natural means. Often, miracles seem impossible to explain. Miracles show God's power.

Most High ~ a name for God.

New Testament ~ the last part of the Bible, which the writers wrote after the life of Jesus on earth.

Old Testament ~ the first part of the Bible; the holy things that the writers wrote before Jesus' birth.

Passover ~ annual ceremony (*feast) to remember God's rescue of the *Jews from Egypt.

Pentecost ~ annual ceremony (*feast) when the *Jews thank God for the harvest.

Pharisees ~ A group of *Jews who tried to keep all God's rules. They thought that by this they could please God.

pigeon ~ a bird.

preach ~ to speak God's message in public, and to teach his word.

pregnant ~ the state of a woman who is expecting a baby.

prophecy ~ a message from God that a person speaks by the power of the *Holy Spirit.

prophecy ~ to speak a *prophecy.

prophet ~ a person who speaks for God. A prophet can sometimes say what will happen in the future.

repent ~ to change one's mind and heart. People who repent must turn their minds and hearts away from *sin. They ask God to help them so that they can now serve him.

repentance ~ the act of someone who *repents.

Roman ~ Rome was the capital city of the rulers at the time of the *New Testament. Anything that belonged to Rome was called *Roman.

Sabbath ~ the *Jewish day for rest and *worship. It is our Saturday.

sacrifice ~ something that people gave to God. It was usually an animal or a bird that the priests burned on an *altar. Sometimes people gave sacrifices in order

to thank God. And sometimes people gave sacrifices so that God could forgive *sin. When Jesus died, he was the perfect sacrifice for our *sins.

Sadducees ~ a group of *Jews who did not believe that people can live after death.

salvation ~ the result when God saves us from *sin and punishment; the new life that God gives to those people who believe in the *Lord Jesus.

Samaritan ~ Samaria was a region to the north of Judea. Samaritans are people from Samaria.

sandals ~ a shoe with a piece of leather underneath and leather pieces to fit to the foot.

Satan ~ a name for the devil. There are several other names for him in the *New Testament. In the *Hebrew language, Satan means 'the accuser'; that is, the enemy.

Savior ~ a title of Jesus. He is called the Savior because he saves us from our *sins.

Scripture ~ the books of the Bible.

shekel ~ *Jewish money.

shepherd ~ someone who takes care of sheep.

sin ~ the wrong things that we do. To sin is to do wrong, bad or evil deeds and not to obey God.

soul ~ the part of a person that we cannot see. It is in us during our life. And it continues to live after we die. It is our inner life (not the body).

temple ~ a special building for the *worship of God. The *Jews had a temple in Jerusalem for the *worship of the real God. But at other temples, people *worshipped false gods.

tempt ~ to test someone. The devil tempts someone when he tries to persuade that person to do wrong and evil things.

throne ~ the special chair for the king or for an important person.

tribe ~ a large family of people who have a common *ancestor. The nation called *Israel grew from the 12 sons of Jacob. Their 12 families became the 12 tribes of *Israel.

vision ~ like a dream. During a vision, a person seems to see something that has a special message or meaning for him. The person may or may not be asleep when he sees the vision.

worship ~ the act when someone shows honor to God (or to a false god). When a person worships, that person praises God. That person thanks God. And that person respects God.

yeast ~ a substance that makes bread rise before someone bakes it.

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SECTION 2

Luke: The Man Christ Jesus

Jesus in Galilee

Luke 4:14 to 9:50

Ian Mackervoy

A word list at the end explains words with a *star by them.

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The good news of the *kingdom – Luke 4:14–5:16

The people in Nazareth refuse to accept Jesus – Luke 4:14-30

v14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the *Holy Spirit. The news about him spread through all that territory. **v15** He taught in their *synagogues and everyone praised him.

v16 Jesus came to the town called Nazareth. He had grown up there. On the *Sabbath day, he went to the *synagogue, as he always did. And he stood up to read. **v17** The assistant gave him the *scroll of the *prophet Isaiah. He opened it and he read this passage.

v18 'The Spirit of the *Lord is on me. He has chosen me to tell good news to the poor people. He has sent me to tell the prisoners that they are free. He sent me to give sight to blind people. He sent me to free those people who suffer. **v19** And he sent me to announce the year of the *Lord's kindness.'

v20 Jesus closed the *scroll and he gave it back to the assistant. Jesus sat down and all the people in the *synagogue looked at him. **v21** Then Jesus began to speak. He said, 'I have read this from the Bible to you. And today it has happened.'

v22 Everyone said good things about him. They were surprised at the wonderful things that he said. Then they said, 'But he is the son of Joseph.'

v23 Jesus said to them, 'You will probably repeat the old story to me. "Doctor, cure yourself." And, "We have heard what happened in Capernaum. Do the same things here in your own town."'

v24 And Jesus said, 'I will tell you the truth. The people in his own town will not accept a *prophet.'

v25 I tell you that there were many widows in *Israel during the days of Elijah. It did not rain then for three and a half years. And many people were suffering without food across the whole country.

v26 But God did not send Elijah to any of those widows. God sent him to a widow in Zarephath, a town in the country called Sidon. **v27** Also, during the time of Elisha, there were many people in *Israel with *leprosy. God did not cure them. But he did cure Naaman who was from the country called Syria.'

v28 When all the people in the *synagogue heard these things, they became very angry. **v29** They rose up and they forced Jesus out of the town. They took him up the hill on which they had built the town. There they intended to throw Jesus from a cliff. **v30** But Jesus walked through the middle of them and he went away.

Verses 14-17 From the desert, Jesus returned to the region called Galilee. The *Holy Spirit's power was in him. Jesus taught in the *synagogues. And his fame spread through the entire region.

Then Jesus came to the town called Nazareth. As was his custom, he went to the *synagogue. He stood up to read and the assistant gave to him the Book of Isaiah. The book was in the form of a *scroll. He read from chapter 61 of that book. This may have been the passage for that day or Jesus may have chosen it.

Verses 18-21 In the *synagogue, it was the custom to stand to read. And it was the custom to sit to *preach. So, Jesus stood up and he read the passage. Then he closed the *scroll and he gave it back to the assistant. He sat down and all the people looked at him. Jesus began to *preach.

Jesus told the people that this *prophecy from Isaiah was about him. It was a *prophecy about what the *Christ would do. So, Jesus was telling them that he was the *Christ.

The year of the *Lord's kindness does not mean a calendar year. It refers to the period in which God offers *salvation to us. That period is now.

Verses 22-27 Jesus grew up in Nazareth. The people there knew him well. They all thought very highly of him because he was such a good person. They knew Jesus as the son of Joseph, a local workman who worked with wood. The way that Jesus taught surprised them. They wondered at the wisdom and authority in what he said. But they refused to believe that Joseph's son was the *Christ. Because of this, their attitude to Jesus would change.

It is not clear why Jesus told the old story about a doctor. But later in his life his enemies said, 'He saved other people. But he cannot save himself' (Matthew 27:42).

The people in Nazareth had heard about the *miracles that Jesus had done in Capernaum. They expected Jesus to perform *miracles for them. If the *prophecy in the Book of Isaiah referred to Jesus, he must prove it. But they did not believe him.

Jesus knew that the people in Nazareth would not accept him. People do not accept *prophets from their own district. People are always more ready to see greatness in strangers than in someone that they know well.

During the life of Elijah, there was no rain for three and a half years. Because of the lack of rain, there was very little food. God did not send Elijah to any widow in *Israel. He sent Elijah to a widow in the foreign town called Zarephath (1 Kings 17:3-24). While Elijah was with her, God supplied food for them. Also, during the life of Elisha, many people in *Israel suffered from the illness called *leprosy. But God did not send any of them to Elisha. He sent Naaman, a foreigner, for Elisha to cure (2 Kings 5:1-14). Jesus used these events to show that *prophets do not have much honour among their own people.

In the *Old Testament, it says that the rain came at the end of the third year (1 Kings 18:1 and 18:45). In the *New Testament, it says that there was no rain for three and a half years (Luke 4:25, James 5:17). In *Israel at that time, there were two seasons of rain. These were in April and October. So, there was an extra period of 6 months when there would usually be no rain. Then for the next three years, the rain failed. That explains why there was no rain for three and a half years.

The word *leprosy could include other skin diseases.

Verses 28-30 The people became very angry. There could be several reasons for this. They did not believe that Jesus was the *Christ. But he said that the *prophecy in Isaiah was about him. He had done many *miracles in other places. But he would not do any *miracles in their town. He spoke about how the *Lord had sent Elijah to foreigners rather than to *Jews. In those days, the *Jews believed that the *Lord was God of the *Jews alone. They could not agree that God would be kind to people from other nations.

Nazareth is on the southern slopes of the hills in the region called Galilee. All the people in the *synagogue took hold of Jesus. They forced him out of their town. They took him to a high place. They intended to throw Jesus down from a cliff. If they did throw him down, it would kill him.

But it was not yet the right time for him to die. And by some means, Jesus left that place safely. We do not know how he did this. He turned and he walked through the crowd. We do not read that he came to Nazareth again.

Jesus sends an evil spirit from a man – Luke 4:31-37

v31 Then Jesus went to Capernaum, a town in the region called Galilee. On the *Sabbath day, he taught the people. **v32** He taught with authority and this astonished the people.

v33 In the *synagogue, there was a man who had a *demon, an evil spirit. He shouted with a loud voice.

v34 'Jesus from Nazareth, what do you want with us? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the holy one of God.'

v35 Jesus spoke firmly to the *demon, 'Be quiet. Come out of the man.' The *demon threw the man down to the ground in front of all the people. It then left the man but it did not hurt him.

v36 This astonished all the people. And they spoke with each other. They said, 'What a powerful word! With authority, he commands evil spirits and they come out.' **v37** So, the news about Jesus spread to every place in the whole area.

Verses 31-37 Jesus returned to Capernaum. He had done *miracles there before (verse 23). Capernaum was on the north and west shore of the sea called Galilee.

On the *Sabbath day, Jesus went to the *synagogue and he taught the people there. What he said astonished the people. Perhaps this was because Jesus was not a teacher in their tradition. But he *preached with power and authority. This was not normal. Other teachers would use the traditions and the opinions of previous teachers (see Mark 1:22). But Jesus had his own authority. Jesus knew the truth of what he taught. He did not need to express the opinions of other men.

The man with an evil spirit shouted out. The evil spirit knew who Jesus was. Jesus from Nazareth was the holy one of God, that is, the *Christ. And the evil spirit was afraid of Jesus. The evil spirit knew that Jesus had the power to defeat him. Jesus did not answer the evil spirit's questions. 'What do you want with us?' means this: 'There is no connection between us and you!'

Jesus ordered the spirit to be quiet and to come out of the man. Jesus had such authority that the spirit had to obey him. The spirit threw the man to the ground and came out of him. The spirit did not hurt the man but he was free from the evil spirit.

The way that Jesus taught astonished the people. Also, his authority even over evil spirits astonished them. Nobody else had shown such power and authority. News of what Jesus had done spread quickly to the whole region.

This is the first of 21 *miracles in Luke's *Gospel. And it is the first of 5 *miracles in which Jesus cures a person on the *Sabbath day (4:38-39, 6:6-10, 13:10-13, 14:1-4).

Jesus cures many people – Luke 4:38-44

<p>v38 Jesus left the *synagogue and he went to the home of Simon. The mother of Simon's wife was sick with a very bad *fever. And they asked Jesus to help her. v39 Jesus bent over her and he ordered the *fever to leave. The *fever left her. She got up at once and she began to serve them.</p>

v40 The sun was going down. The people brought those people who were sick to Jesus. These sick people had various diseases. Jesus put his hands on each sick person and he cured them. **v41** *Demons came out of many people. The *demons cried out, 'You are the Son of God.' But Jesus ordered them to be quiet. They knew that he was the *Christ. Therefore, he did not allow them to speak.

v42 Early in the morning, Jesus went to a place where he could be alone. The crowds searched for him and they found him. Then they tried to keep him so that he would not go from them. **v43** But Jesus said to them, 'I must declare the good news about the *kingdom of God in other towns as well. That is what God sent me to do.' **v44** And he continued to *preach in the *synagogues in Judea.

Verses 38-39 Jesus left the *synagogue and he went with Simon, Andrew, James and John (Mark 1:29). They went to the house of Simon and Andrew. They found that the mother of Simon Peter's wife was sick with an illness. She lay in her bed. They asked Jesus for help. At his order, the *fever left her. He took her hand and he lifted her up. She got up and she served them.

Even as the *demon had to obey Jesus, so the *fever had to go. The *fever went immediately and she was completely well. Again, it showed Christ's authority and power.

Peter and Andrew were from the town called Bethsaida (John 1:44). That town was probably where they were born. It seems that later they moved to this house in Capernaum.

Simon was Peter's original name. Jesus gave to Simon the name 'Peter' (6:14).

Verses 40-41 The *Sabbath day starts on Friday evening and it ends on Saturday evening. The law in the *Old Testament said that the *Jews must not work on the *Sabbath. The *Jews thought that they could not carry anything on the *Sabbath day. The *Pharisees even thought that to cure a person on the *Sabbath day was against the law. So, the people waited until the *Sabbath day had ended. Then they brought the sick people to Jesus.

Jesus put his hands on each sick person. And he cured all their diseases. Jesus did not always put his hands on sick people. But it does show us that the power to cure flows from him.

There were many in the crowd who had *demons. As in the *synagogue, the *demons knew who Jesus was. They knew that he was the Son of God. They knew that Jesus was the *Christ. Again, Jesus told them to be quiet. And Jesus sent them out of the people.

Verses 42-44 Early in the morning, while it was yet dark, Jesus got up. He went to a place alone to pray (Mark 1:35). The people in Capernaum did not want Jesus to go from their town. They searched for him. When they found him, they tried to persuade him to stay with them. But Jesus would not stay there. He had to *preach in other towns. God sent him to declare the good news about the *kingdom of God.

Jesus left Capernaum. He went through Judea and he *preached in their *synagogues. Judea here probably includes Galilee.

The *kingdom of God is where God rules as king. The *kingdom had already come in the life of Jesus. His authority and power showed to us something of the *kingdom. The *kingdom of God is not a physical place. All who believe in Jesus are part of the *kingdom. They have accepted the rule of God in their lives. But the *kingdom of God has not yet come completely. It is still in the future. God will establish his rule over all who are in heaven and on the earth.

Jesus chooses the first *disciples – Luke 5:1-11

v1 One day Jesus stood by the Gennesaret Lake. The people crowded round him as they listened to God's word. **v2** Jesus saw two boats on the shore. The *fishermen had left the boats and they were washing their nets. **v3** Jesus got into one of the boats. It belonged to Simon. Jesus asked Simon to take the boat a short distance from the shore. Then Jesus sat down and he taught the people from the boat.

v4 Jesus finished his speech to the people. Then he said to Simon, 'Take the boat into deep water. And put your nets in the water to catch some fish.'

v5 Simon answered, 'Master, we worked all night. And we caught no fish. But because you tell me to do it, I will put the nets into the water.'

v6 They did this and they caught a large number of fishes. There were so many fishes that the nets began to break. **v7** So, they called to their partners in the other boat to come and to help them. They came and together they filled both boats with fishes. There were so many fishes that the boats began to sink.

v8 When Simon Peter saw this, he fell down at the knees of Jesus. And he said to Jesus, 'Go away from me, *Lord. I am a *sinful man.' **v9** What Jesus did astonished Simon. And it astonished all the men who were with him. They had caught such a large number of fishes. **v10** Also, this astonished Simon's partners, James and John. James and John were the sons of Zebedee.

And Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid. From now on, you will catch living people.' **v11** Simon and his partners brought the boats to shore. Then they left everything, and they followed Jesus.

Verses 1-3 Gennesaret Lake has two other names in the *New Testament. It is the Sea of Galilee and the Sea of Tiberias. That means, the sea called Galilee (or Tiberias). Gennesaret was the more ancient name of the lake. The name came from a small plain on its west border. The plain was between Tiberias and Capernaum. In *Hebrew, Gennesaret is Chinnereth or Kinnereth (Numbers 34:11). The plain called Chinnereth had very good soil and the people planted all kinds of fruit trees there.

The lake is about 13 miles long and 7 miles wide. It is about 700 feet below sea level.

A large crowd had come to hear Jesus as he taught. They wanted to hear what God said. They knew that Jesus was teaching the word of God to them.

The whole crowd pushed forward to hear Jesus. They pressed so hard upon him that Jesus needed some space. There were two empty boats on the shore. Jesus got into the one that belonged to Simon Peter. The other boat belonged to a man called Zebedee and his two sons, James and John. As Jesus was speaking, these men cleaned their nets. Jesus asked Simon to take his boat a short distance from the shore. Then Jesus sat in the boat and he taught the people. The people could all hear him as sound travels well over water.

Verses 4-7 Jesus told Simon to take the boat away from the shore and into deep water. Peter and his crew did so. Then Jesus told them to put their nets into the water. Simon and his friends were in business as *fishermen. They knew that this was not a good time to catch fish. The best time to catch fish was at night. They had been out all night and they had caught no fishes. They had worked hard all night and they were tired.

Of course, Jesus was not a *fisherman. But because it was Jesus, Simon agreed to put their nets into the water. He called Jesus 'master' for the first time. To fish was Simon's job but he accepted the authority of Jesus even in this.

Jesus told them where to put the nets into the water. Because they obeyed Jesus, they caught a large number of fishes. There were so many fishes that the nets almost broke. If the nets had broken, the fishes would have escaped.

The men in Simon's boat called for help to those in the other boat. Together they filled both boats with fishes. There were so many fishes that the two boats began to sink. This amount of fishes was clearly beyond what they would usually expect. This was a *miracle.

Luke does not tell us who and how many were with Simon Peter in his boat. It is probable that Andrew (Simon's brother) was among the crew. In the crew of the other boat were James and John, who were brothers.

Verses 8-11 Peter saw the quantity of fishes that they had caught. This *miracle astonished him and those men who were with him. It showed that Jesus had authority over the natural world. Peter now knew that Jesus was more than an ordinary man. He calls Jesus not just master but *Lord. Perhaps Peter already recognised that Jesus was the *Christ. '*Lord' is the word that Peter would choose to give honour to the *Christ.

This *miracle had a powerful effect on Peter. He became aware of his own *sinful character. He felt that he could not live with such a perfect person as Jesus. He fell down on his knees in front of Jesus. And he cried, 'Go away from me, *Lord.' The power of Jesus was too much for him. He was afraid.

Jesus understood Peter's reaction. So, he said to Peter, 'Do not be afraid.' Then Jesus showed Peter what would be his life's work from now on. Peter would catch people alive rather than fishes. This means that Peter would bring people to know Christ. He would be an *apostle to the *Jews (Galatians 2:8). And he would make it possible for people from other nations to become Christians (Acts chapter 10).

The crews of both boats got them to the shore safely. This incident impressed James and John in a similar way to Peter. So, these three men left everything and they followed Jesus.

A man with a serious skin disease – Luke 5:12-16

v12 One day Jesus was in a town. There was a man with *leprosy that was all over him. When he saw Jesus, he fell down with his face to the ground. He appealed to Jesus. ‘*Lord, if you want to, you can cure me.’

v13 Jesus reached out his hand and he touched the man. Jesus said, ‘I want to. I have cured you.’ At once, the *leprosy left the man.

v14 Then Jesus ordered him, ‘Tell nobody about it. But go and show yourself to the priest. Offer a *sacrifice as Moses ordered. This will show them that the disease has gone.’

v15 But the news about Jesus spread even more. Great crowds of people came to hear Jesus. Many sick people came to him that he might cure them.

v16 Often Jesus would go away to places where he could be alone for prayer.

Verses 12-13 *Leprosy is the word in the Bible for some serious skin diseases. The word included other diseases, as well as what we know as *leprosy. As the *leprosy spreads, it eats away the sick person’s body. And in those days, there was no way to cure *leprosy.

When a person had *leprosy, he was unclean in the *Jewish religion. That meant that the person with *leprosy had to keep away from other people. When other people were near, he had to cover his upper lip. And he had to cry, ‘unclean, unclean’ (Leviticus 13:45-46). A person with *leprosy could not work in order to earn the money that he needed. He had to depend on the kindness of other people to live.

Sometimes a disease does not spread and it clears up. A priest would then examine the person. If the disease has healed, the person must go to the priest. He would make a *sacrifice as the law ordered. Then the priest would declare that the person was clean again. The rules for this are in Leviticus chapter 14.

This awful *leprosy covered this man. He was very ill with this disease. Probably, he had heard about some of the *miracles that Jesus had done. He came to Jesus and fell down at his feet. He said, ‘*Lord, if you want to.’ He did not doubt Jesus’ kindness. Rather he felt that he had no value. He could not expect Jesus to pity him. But he did believe that Jesus could cure him.

Nobody would touch a person who had *leprosy. But Jesus did. He had pity on the man. By this act, Jesus showed this poor man that he cared. Jesus reached out and he touched the man. Jesus cured him from his *leprosy and the disease went immediately.

Verses 14-16 Jesus told the man to say nothing about it. But the man could not keep quiet. He told many people what had happened. So, news about Jesus spread. Crowds came to him. Many sick people came for him to cure them.

The man had to go to the priests. Jesus told him to obey the law. He had to do as Leviticus chapter 14 said. The priest had to examine him. Then the priest would declare that the disease had gone. This would be necessary for the man. People would know that he had been a *leper. They needed proof that the disease had gone. They would want to know that the priest considered the man to be well. Also, it would show the people that Jesus obeyed the law.

Jesus often had to go away from the crowds. He needed to have times of quiet. Private prayer was very important in his life.

The *Pharisees begin to oppose Jesus – Luke 5:17–6:11

Jesus cures a man who could not move – Luke 5:17-26

v17 One day as Jesus taught the people, some *Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village in Galilee, Judea and from Jerusalem. The power of the *Lord was with him, to cure sick people. **v18** Some men brought on a mat a man who could not move. They tried to take him into the house and to put him in front of Jesus. **v19** But they could not get him into the house because of the crowd. So, they went up on the roof and they made a hole in it. Then they let the man down on his mat into the middle of the crowd. He came down in front of Jesus.

v20 When Jesus saw their *faith, he spoke to the man on the mat. He said to him, ‘My friend, I forgive you your *sins.’

v21 The teachers of the law and the *Pharisees began to say to themselves, ‘Who is this man? He speaks such *blasphemy. God is the only one who can forgive *sins.’

v22 But Jesus knew what they thought. He said to them, ‘Do not think like that. **v23** Which of these statements is easier to say? “I forgive your *sins.” Or “stand up and walk.” **v24** I will show to you that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive *sins.’ He said to the man who was unable to move, ‘I tell you to get up. Take your mat and go home.’

v25 At once, the man stood up in front of them. He picked up his mat. And he praised God as he went home. **v26** This caused all the people to wonder and they praised God. With fear they said, ‘We have seen astonishing things today.’

Verses 17-19 Jesus had returned to Capernaum. He taught the people in a house there. Some *Pharisees and teachers of the law had come to hear what he taught. They had come from all over Galilee, Judea and even from Jerusalem. Probably they wanted to test what he taught. They wanted to know whether Jesus agreed with them about the law and their traditions.

Probably many of the people in the house had come because they were sick. They wanted Jesus to cure them. Jesus had the power to cure. In some way, that power was noticeable in the house. Perhaps as Jesus taught some people felt that power.

There were 4 men. They wanted to bring their sick friend to Jesus. The friend could not walk so they carried him on a mat. They believed that Jesus would cure their friend. But when they arrived at the house, they could not get in. There were so many people already there, both inside and outside the door.

Many of the houses had flat roofs. And they had outside stairs up to the roof. The typical roof was of wooden beams that the builders had placed across the mud brick or stone walls. They covered the wooden beams with various materials such as earth, grasses and mud bricks. In this house, they had used harder materials as well.

The 4 men took their friend up the stairs and onto the roof. Then they opened a hole in the roof. Such damage as they may have done was easy to repair. Then they carefully let the sick man down on his mat through the hole. They let him down until he landed at the feet of Jesus.

Verses 20-21 The man lay at the feet of Jesus. This showed to Jesus the *faith of the 4 friends of the man. Probably the man had *faith as well. The man had come because he needed Jesus to cure his body. But Jesus said to the man, 'I forgive you your *sins.'

There is nothing to suggest that *sin was the immediate cause of this disease.

Nobody can forgive *sins but God. No *angel or man could do that. If Jesus were an ordinary man, this would be *blasphemy against God. Jesus in effect showed that he is God. But the teachers of the law and the *Pharisees did not believe this fact. They began to reason among themselves that this was *blasphemy.

Verses 22-26 Jesus knew what they thought. He asked them which of these two statements was easier to say. It is easy to say either statement. We cannot see the result of the first one. But we can see the result of the second one. So, the effect of the second is evidence of the first. If the man walks, then Jesus has power to forgive *sins.

This is the first time that Jesus calls himself the Son of Man. In this, Jesus shows that he is a man. And he shows that he is more than a man. An ordinary man could not forgive *sins. Only God can forgive *sins. The *Jews would later recognise this phrase, the Son of Man, as a name for the *Christ (John 12:34).

The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive *sins. He proved this as he cured the man. At Jesus' command, the man got up immediately. He picked up his mat and he went home. The man praised God as he went.

This passage does not inform us about the effect that this had on the *Pharisees and teachers of the law. The people felt fear at the strange things that had happened. But they praised God.

Levi becomes a *disciple – Luke 5:27-32

v27 After this, Jesus went out and he saw Levi. Levi was a man who collected taxes. He sat in the place where he worked. Jesus said to Levi, 'Follow me.' **v28** Levi got up and he left everything. And he followed Jesus.

v29 Then Levi made a big dinner at his home for Jesus. A large crowd of the men who collected taxes and other guests ate with them. **v30** But the *Pharisees and their teachers of the law complained to Jesus' *disciples. 'You eat and drink with these people. They are men who collect taxes and *sinners. Why do you eat with them?'

v31 Jesus answered them, 'Healthy people do not need a doctor. But sick people do need one. **v32** I did not come to call good people. I came to invite *sinners to *repent.'

Verses 27-32 Jesus went down by the lake where he taught a large crowd of people. Then as he walked along, he saw Levi (Mark 2:14). Levi was the son of a man called Alphaeus. Another name for Levi is Matthew (Matthew 9:9). He was a man who collected taxes. He was at work when Jesus came to him. Jesus told him to follow him. Immediately Levi did as Jesus told him. Levi became one of the 12 *apostles of Jesus.

Levi had a party at his home with Jesus as the principal guest. Among the other guests, there were many of his friends who collected taxes. Other people did not like the men who collected taxes. They collected taxes for the *Roman government. They were able to collect more than they should from the people. In this way, they robbed the people and they often became wealthy. They were '*sinners'. There were other people there that the public called *sinners as well.

The *Pharisees and their teachers of the law tried to keep the *Jewish religion moral and good. For this purpose, they taught the law, as they understood it. Along with the law, they insisted on their traditions. They refused to be friendly to any people whom they considered bad *sinners. In their opinion, to eat with someone meant that you agreed with that person. Therefore, a *Pharisee would not eat with these '*sinners'.

So, these *Pharisees complained about Jesus because he ate with these '*sinners'. They asked the *disciples why Jesus did this. Jesus told them that he had come for *sinners. He came to offer to them the opportunity to *repent. The Bible teaches us that we are all *sinners (Romans 3:23). But these *Pharisees would not admit that they were *sinners too. Therefore, Jesus had nothing to offer to them.

When to go without food – Luke 5:33-39

v33 Some people said to Jesus, 'John's *disciples often go without food. At those times, they pray. The *disciples of the *Pharisees do the same. But your *disciples continue to eat and to drink.'

v34 Jesus said to them, 'A bridegroom's friends at his wedding do not go without food. They will eat while he is still with them. **v35** But the time will come when people will take the bridegroom away from them. And then they will not eat.'

v36 Jesus told them this story. 'Nobody tears a piece of cloth from a new coat to cover a hole in an old coat. If he does, he will have torn the new coat. And the cloth from the new coat will not match the old coat. **v37** Nobody pours new wine into old leather wine bags. If he does, the new wine will break the old wine bags. The wine will spill out and it will ruin the old wine bags. **v38** You must pour new wine into new leather bags. **v39** Nobody who has drunk old wine wants to drink new wine. He says, 'The old wine is better.'

Verses 33-35 The *disciples of John the *Baptist often went without food. The *disciples of the *Pharisees did the same. The *Pharisees often went without food two days in a week. Such periods with no food had become a tradition in their religion. God's law has only one definite day on which the *Jews should eat no food. That day is called the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:26-32). The *disciples of Jesus did not follow the *Pharisees' tradition.

Jesus replied, 'A bridegroom's friends at his wedding do not go without food.' In effect, guests at a wedding eat and drink. It is a time of joy and a good party. While the bridegroom is with them, they do not go without food. While Jesus was with his *disciples, they could not do it.

However, the time would come when Jesus was not there. Jesus knew that he had come to die. Then the *disciples would be sad. And they would have times when they did not eat. This would not be because Jesus told them to do it. It would be a reaction to the situation.

Many Christians do have times without food. But this is not just a tradition. They do it for special purposes. Often they do it to give themselves more time to pray.

Verses 36-39 To repair an old coat with cloth from a new coat would spoil both coats. It would tear the new coat. And the piece of cloth would not fit the old coat. In the Book of Mark, we read that the new piece of cloth would reduce in size. And this would tear the old coat (Mark 2:21).

What Jesus taught was new and different from the traditions of the *Jews. It was not possible to combine the two. By their traditions, they interpreted the law and they added their own rules to it. Jesus explained the *Old Testament. He showed us what it really means.

In those days, the people kept wine in bags that they made from the skins of animals. Most often, it was the skin of goats. At first, the skins were soft and they could stretch. But as they got older, they became harder and stiff. New wine increased in volume in the skin. Therefore, new wine needed new skins. New wine in an old skin would split the old skin. So the wine would flow out and it would break the skin.

A man drinks the old wine and he enjoys it. He would not want to drink the new wine. He believes that the old wine is better. So, it was with many *Pharisees and other people who followed the traditions of their religion. They would not follow the new way of Jesus Christ.

Jesus is *Lord of the *Sabbath – Luke 6:1-11

v1 Jesus walked through some fields of grain on a *Sabbath day. His *disciples started to pick heads of grain. They rubbed them in their hands and they ate the seeds. **v2** Some of the *Pharisees said, 'You should not do that on the *Sabbath day. The law says that it is wrong.'

v3 Jesus replied to them, 'You must have read about David. He and his men were hungry. **v4** So, David went into God's house and he took the holy bread. He ate the holy bread. The law says that only the priests could eat that bread. But David took it and he gave it to his men to eat.' **v5** Then Jesus said to the *Pharisees, 'The Son of Man is *Lord of the *Sabbath day.'

v6 On another *Sabbath day, Jesus went into the *synagogue to teach. There was a man there. This man could not move or use his right hand. **v7** The *Pharisees and teachers of the law hoped for a way to accuse Jesus. So, they watched him to see if he would cure this man on the *Sabbath day. **v8** But Jesus knew what they thought. He said to the man with the bad hand, 'Get up. Stand here in front of everyone.' The man got up and he stood there.

v9 Then Jesus asked them some questions. 'What does the law permit us to do on the *Sabbath day? May we do good things or evil things? Should we save life or destroy it?'

v10 Jesus looked round at them all. Then he said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' The man did so, and his hand became normal again. **v11** But the *Pharisees and the teachers of the law were very angry. And they discussed with each other what they could do to Jesus.

Verses 1-2 When in a field of grain, God's law allowed a person to pick the heads of grain by hand (Deuteronomy 23:25). The *disciples did not do anything wrong as they picked the heads of grain.

The *Pharisees did not complain about the *disciples' action. Their problem was that it was on a *Sabbath day. God's law said that they should do no work on the *Sabbath day. There were many traditions that tried to describe work. To the *Pharisees, these traditions had in effect become the law. To harvest grain on the *Sabbath was work. So, they thought that to pick grain was also work. The *disciples ate the grain. They had prepared food, which, in the opinion of the *Pharisees was work. So, because of these traditions, the *Pharisees considered that Jesus' *disciples were not obeying God's law about the *Sabbath.

Verses 3-5 Jesus did not answer directly the *Pharisees' protest. Instead, he reminded them of what David did (1 Samuel 21:1-6). David took the holy bread that only the priests could eat. He ate some of that bread. And he gave it to the men who were with him. That was against the law but the *Lord did not consider David guilty. David took the bread because he and his men needed food.

Already Jesus had called himself the Son of Man. The *Pharisees would know that Jesus spoke about himself. Jesus told those *Pharisees that he was the *Lord of the *Sabbath. His authority is above that of the traditions of the *Jews.

The rules of the *Sabbath were for the benefit of the people.

Verses 6-11 Jesus went into a *synagogue to teach on a *Sabbath day. A man was there who could not use his right hand. Some *Pharisees and teachers of the law were also there. They wondered if Jesus would cure the man on the *Sabbath day. Jesus knew their thoughts. If Jesus cured the man, that would be work on the *Sabbath day. In their minds, this was against God's law. Then they could accuse him.

Jesus called the man to come in front of the people.

The state of the man was not dangerous. He did not need Jesus to cure him that day. He could wait for another day. But Jesus, by his questions, showed them the true meaning of God's law. If we can do good things, we should do them. If we do not then, in effect, we have done evil things. If we can save life, we should do it. If we do not then, in effect, we destroy life. This refers to the *Sabbath as for any other day. It is right by the law to do good things on the *Sabbath day. Therefore, to cure this man was not against the rules for the *Sabbath.

Jesus did not touch the man. He told him to stretch out his hand. This was an impossible thing for him to do. But he obeyed Jesus and he did it. As he stretched the hand, it became healthy, like his other hand.

Those *Pharisees and teachers of the law were very angry with Jesus. He had cured the man. He had shown that their attitudes were wrong. They could not answer him. They looked for a way to stop Jesus.

Jesus teaches the crowd – Luke 6:12–49

The 12 *apostles – Luke 6:12-16

v12 At that time, Jesus went to a mountain to pray. He spent the whole night in prayer to God. **v13** When it was day, he called his *disciples to come to him. He chose 12 of them and he called them *apostles. **v14** They were Simon (whom Jesus named Peter) and his brother Andrew. There were James, John, Philip, and Bartholomew. **v15** Then there were Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon. People called him Simon the Zealot. **v16** Then there were Judas son of James and Judas Iscariot. Later, Judas Iscariot handed Jesus over to Jesus' enemies.

Verses 12-16 Jesus went up a mountain and he spent a whole night in prayer. Jesus now had powerful enemies. He knew that one day they would kill him. He needed to train some people to continue his work. So, in the morning he chose a group of 12 men to be with him. He chose them to send them out to *preach. And he gave them authority to command *demons to go out from people (Mark 3:14-15).

In the morning, he gathered his *disciples to him. These people followed him and they learned from him. Among those, he chose the 12. He called these 12 *apostles.

Jesus chose 12 men. Maybe there were 12 to match the 12 *tribes of *Israel. *Israel, the people of God, came from the 12 sons of Jacob, whose other name was Israel. Christians, the new people of God, came from the 12 *apostles. In the Book of Revelation, John describes the New Jerusalem. The names of the 12 *tribes were on the 12 gates to the city. And on the 12 bases of the walls, there were the names of the 12 *apostles (Revelation 21:12-14).

The first in the list is Simon. Jesus called him Peter, which means a rock or a stone. Another name for Peter is Cephas, which means the same (John 1:42). Peter is a *Greek name and Cephas is the same in the *Aramaic language.

Andrew was the brother of Peter and both of them were *fishermen. They came from the town called Bethsaida but Peter lived in Capernaum.

James and John were the sons of Zebedee. They were *fishermen and they were partners with Peter and Andrew.

Philip came from Bethsaida. He brought his friend Nathanael to Jesus (John 1:43-49). It could be that Bartholomew was another name for Nathanael. Nathanael came from the town called Cana in Galilee (John 21:2).

Matthew collected taxes. His other name was Levi. (See Luke 5:27-29.)

Thomas also had the name Didymus. This means a twin, in other words one whose brother or sister was born at the same time.

James the son of Alphaeus is sometimes called James the less.

Simon the Zealot was next. The name Zealot probably means that he was a member of the Zealots group. These Zealots tried to free *Israel from the *Romans.

Judas son of James has another name, Thaddaeus (Matthew 10:3, Mark 3:18).

Then the last of the 12 was Judas Iscariot. 'Iscariot' may mean 'man from Kerioth', a place in Judea. Probably Judas Iscariot was the only one of the *apostles that did not come from Galilee. When he died, Matthias took his place as one of the 12 *apostles (Acts 1:20-26).

Jesus teaches and cures – Luke 6:17-19

v17 Jesus came down from the mountain with his *apostles, and he stood on level ground. A large crowd of his *disciples was there. Also, there was a great number of people from all over Judea. Many came from Jerusalem, and from the coast of Tyre and Sidon. **v18** They had come to hear Jesus and so that he would cure their diseases. He freed those people who had evil spirits. **v19** All the people tried to touch Jesus because power came from him. And he cured all of them.

Verses 17-19 Jesus and the *apostles came down from the mountain and they joined with the other *disciples. Probably this was on a large level piece of land on the side of the mountain (Matthew 5:1). Also, there was a large crowd there. Some of these people had come a long way. They had come to hear Jesus as he taught. And there were many sick people who had come to ask Jesus to cure them.

Probably this was the same event as that in Matthew chapter 5 but it could be a different occasion.

Jesus freed all of those people who suffered from *demons. He cured them. All who were sick pressed upon Jesus. As they touched him, power from him cured them all.

Tyre and Sidon were ports on the Mediterranean Sea; they were north of *Israel.

Jesus teaches his *disciples – Luke 6:20-26

v20 Jesus looked at his *disciples. And he told them these things.

‘God *blesses you who are poor. This is because the *kingdom of God is yours.

v21 God *blesses you who are hungry now. This is because you will have plenty.

God *blesses you who weep now. This is because you will laugh with joy.

v22 God *blesses you when people hate you. They separate you from other people and they insult you. And they say that your name is evil. All this is because you follow the Son of Man.

v23 Be happy in that day and jump for joy. Do this because you have a great reward in heaven. Their *ancestors did the same things to the *prophets.

v24 How terrible it will be for you who are rich now. This is because you have already had an easy life.

v25 How terrible it will be for you who are full now. This is because you will be hungry.

How terrible it will be for you who laugh now. You will be sad and you will cry.

v26 How terrible it will be when everyone says good things about you. This is because their *ancestors said the same things about the false *prophets.’

Verses 20-23 Jesus spoke to his *disciples. He did not say that it is good to be poor. God will *bless those of his people that are poor. They may have nothing but they depend on the *Lord. The *kingdom of heaven belongs to them. This is not just for the future. The poor people who believe enter the *kingdom of heaven now.

Those of God’s people who are hungry, God will satisfy. This hunger can be the need for food. It can be the desire to be better persons. God will supply all that they need. God will satisfy their hunger.

Those of God's people who weep now will be able to laugh. When they see the terrible state of people in this world, they are sad. But they will see the purposes of God and then they will have real joy.

Those people who follow Christ will have enemies. Many people in this world hate Christians. They insult and they attack Christians. They speak evil things about Christians. The *prophets suffered in the same way from the people of their day.

Many people hated Jesus. So now, many people hate those people who follow Jesus. This attitude of other people may be painful to Christians. But Jesus says to them, 'Be happy. Jump for joy.' Christians can look forward to the great reward of heaven.

Verses 24-26 Here Jesus did not speak to his *disciples. They were not rich. He was not talking about all rich people. Rather, Jesus' words are for those people who have a selfish attitude. They care only about their wealth and about themselves. They do not care about poor people. They trust in their wealth. So, they will not come to trust in Christ. They have their easy life now but their future will not be easy.

It is the same for those people who are full now. These people have all that they want. They think that they need nothing. They think that they do not need Christ. They feel content now but they have nothing for the future.

The *Lord is not against laughter. The Christian life is one of joy. Jesus was speaking against the kind of laughter that is shallow and without care. Many people laugh without any thought for other people or for the future. They do not see any need for help from Christ. They enjoy life now but they will not enjoy the future. Then they will be sad and they will weep.

For some people, what other people think of them is most important. They have to be popular with other people. Always they want other people to respect them. They desire the highest honour for themselves. They may achieve that honour in this life. But they do not give honour to Christ as their *Lord. Those people love to receive honour, as the false *prophets did in the past. Neither they nor the false *prophets will have honour in the future.

Love your enemies – Luke 6:27-36

v27 'But I say this to you who hear me. Love your enemies. Do good things to those people who hate you. **v28** Ask God to *bless those people who curse you. And pray for those people who are cruel to you. **v29** If someone strikes you on the cheek, turn the other cheek to him. If someone takes your coat, let him take your shirt as well. Do not stop him. **v30** Give to everyone who asks you for something. If someone takes something from you, do not ask for it back. **v31** Do to other people what you would want them to do to you.

v32 Perhaps you love only those people who love you. You deserve no special thanks for that. Even *sinners love those people who love them. **v33** Perhaps you do good things only to those people who do good things to you. You deserve no special thanks for that. Even *sinners do such things. **v34** And perhaps you lend only to those people who will pay you back. You deserve no special thanks for that. Even *sinners lend to *sinners who will pay back the whole amount. **v35** Instead, love your enemies and do good things for them. Lend to them and do not expect to get anything back. Then you will have a great reward. You will be children of the *Most High because he is kind. He is kind to those people who do not appreciate him and to evil people. **v36** Be kind to all people, even as your Father is kind to you.'

Verses 27-31 The key to what Jesus taught is love. Christians must love the *Lord and they must love other people. This includes love even for those people who are their enemies. There are several words in the *Greek language for the English word 'love'. The word here is not that of natural human love. It is a genuine desire for the benefit of other people. It does not depend on whether those people are good or bad. It does not depend on their attitudes in return for that love. This love is the kind of love that the *Lord has for us.

Love is an active word. We do things for the benefit of those people that we love. So, Christians should do good things even to those people who hate them. They should pray that God would *bless these people.

Jesus gave some examples of how Christians should behave. When somebody hits them, they should not hit back. Rather they should allow a second blow. If someone takes a coat, let him or her take other clothes. Give to those who ask for something. And when you give, do not expect to receive it back. Christians would like other people to be kind to them. So, they must be kind to other people. Jesus gave these as examples, not as necessary actions. They are to show the attitude that should control a Christian's actions. That attitude is the attitude of love.

Verses 32-36 The kind of love that Christians should have is more than natural love. It is natural to love those people who love you. The most evil person will love his own friends. But Christians should love even those people that hate them.

It is natural to be kind to those people who are kind to us. It is not natural to be kind to people that we do not like. But Christians should be kind even to those people who attack them.

It is natural to lend to those people who will pay back the loan. People will lend to those people whom they trust. But Christians should be willing to lend even when they cannot expect anything back.

Such love even for enemies has a great reward from God. That kind of love comes from God. It is the character of God to love all people. Those people who are children of God should show that same character. Christians should be kind because their Father is kind to them and to all people.

Do not act as if you are a judge of other people – Luke 6:37-42

v37 ‘Do not look for wrong things in other people. Then God will not look for wrong things in you. Do not say that other people are guilty. Then God will not say that you are guilty. Forgive and God will forgive you. **v38** Be generous and give to other people. And you will receive a large and generous quantity. It will pour into your pocket like grain that someone has pressed down for you. It will be more than you can hold. In the same way that you give to other people, you will receive.’

v39 Also Jesus said this to them. ‘A blind man cannot lead another blind man. If he does so, they will both fall into a ditch. **v40** A student is not better than the teacher. But when he has completed his studies, he will be like the teacher.

v41 You look at the bit of dust in your brother’s eye. But you do not notice the beam of wood in your own eye. **v42** You say to your brother, “Brother, I will remove the dust from your eye.” But you cannot even see the beam of wood in your own eye. You *hypocrite, you should take the beam of wood from your eye first. Then you will see clearly to remove the dust from your brother’s eye.’

Verses 37-38 Our love for other people will show in our attitude to them. We should not act as if we were judges of other people. It is not our responsibility to blame them. God will be the judge of all people and that includes us. Our attitude should be to forgive rather than to blame. Then God will not blame us. And God will forgive us for the wrong things that we have done.

This is not about the legal process. It is about the attitude that finds fault with other people.

Those people who love will be generous. They will give to other people who need help. The generous person will receive much. This promise is not the reason that they give. They give because in love they want to. They may not receive material goods. But they will receive in some way from people or from God. In effect, they will receive more than they give.

In those days, men wore long, wide, and loose clothes with a belt round their middle. When they bought grain, they would lift up their skirt to make a large pocket. The merchant would pour the grain into that pocket.

In this story, the other person will press down the grain. He will shake the grain to make it denser. So, the pocket will be as full as it can be. Then he pours in more so that the grain flows from the pocket.

The generous person will find that God is even more generous to him.

Verses 39-40 A blind leader cannot see the way to go. The only future for that leader and those people who follow him is to fall into the ditch. Probably Jesus spoke this against some of the *Pharisees. Jesus compared them to blind leaders who led other blind people. They did not know the truth about God. So, they could not lead people to God.

No person can teach what they do not know. A student cannot learn more from a teacher than the teacher knows. In those days, there were not as many books for the student to read. The student depended on his teacher for all that he learned. So, the best that the student could be was to be like his teacher.

Jesus taught what he knew to be the truth. Those people who learn from Jesus will know the truth. Their purpose is to become like Jesus. Jesus is the way to God. Those people who follow him, he will lead to God.

The *disciples should become leaders to bring people to God. But they cannot do that if they do not know God. As they become more like Jesus, they will be more able to do it.

Verses 41-42 Jesus uses humour to teach a serious lesson. Here is a man with a large piece of wood in his eye. And he tries to take a tiny bit of dust from his brother's eye. A small fault in another person is more noticeable to us than the large faults in ourselves. Often we do not see our own faults.

We need to examine ourselves first. If the man removed the beam from his own eye, then he could see clearly. It is better to remove our own faults than to talk about the faults of other people.

We should not pretend to be the judges of other people, because we ourselves are not perfect.

A tree and its fruit – Luke 6:43-45

v43 'A good tree does not yield bad fruit. And a bad tree does not yield good fruit. **v44** You know a tree by the fruit that it yields. You do not pick *figs or *grapes from *thorn bushes. **v45** The good man has good things in his heart. So, from his heart he does good things. The evil man has evil things in his heart. So, from his heart he does evil things. The mouth speaks from what is in the heart.'

Verses 43-45 A good tree will produce fruit that one can use. A bad tree will produce fruit that one cannot use, for example poisonous fruits. Each fruit tree will produce its own kind of fruit. Jesus uses this as an example of good and bad people. A person may seem to be good. But the reality is in what he does.

A good person does good things. This comes from his inner nature. He does these good things because he is good. The evil person does bad things. His inner nature produces evil actions and evil words.

Wise and foolish builders – Luke 6:46-49

v46 'You call me “*Lord, *Lord”. But you do not do what I say. **v47** Some people come to hear my words. They do what I say. This is what they are like. **v48** They are like a man who built a house. He dug a deep hole and he built on the rock. When a flood came, the river rushed against the house. But the flood could not shake the house. This was because the man built the house on the rock. **v49** Some people come to hear my words. But they do not obey what I say. They are like a man who built his house on the ground. He did not fix his house to the rock. When a flood came, the water struck the house. Immediately, the house fell down and the water destroyed it completely.'

Verses 46-49 To call Jesus *Lord is to accept his authority. If he is the *Lord then his people must obey him. But some people who call him *Lord do not obey him. God is the judge of our hearts and minds. To him, our actions are more important than what we say. He wants us to obey him.

The person who obeys Jesus is like a good builder. He digs down and fixes his base into the rock. Then he builds his house on that base. The house is then safe from the effects of the storm.

The person who obeys the *Lord Jesus has a real *faith in him. When difficult things happen, they cannot easily defeat him. When the final test comes on the day of judgement, he will be safe.

Another person hears Jesus. But this person does not obey Jesus. He is like a bad builder. The base of his house is not on the solid rock. The base is on the ground. The storm will destroy that house.

The person who does not obey the *Lord is not safe. He does not have a solid base in which to trust. That person may call Jesus *Lord, but he is not a *disciple of Jesus. At the day of judgement, he will not be safe.

Examples of Jesus' good deeds – Luke 7:1–50

The belief of the *centurion – Luke 7:1-10

v1 Jesus finished what he wanted to say to the people. Then he went to the town called Capernaum. **v2** There a *centurion had a servant of whom he thought highly. The servant was sick and he was almost dead. **v3** The *centurion heard about Jesus and he sent some leaders of the *Jews to him. They asked Jesus to come and to cure the *centurion's servant. **v4** When they came to Jesus, they appealed to him. They said to Jesus, 'This man really deserves your help. **v5** He loves our nation and he built us a *synagogue.' **v6** Jesus went with them.

Jesus was not far from the house when the *centurion sent friends to him with this message. 'Sir, do not go out of your way. I do not deserve to have you come into my house. **v7** That is why I did not come to you myself. Just give the order, and my servant will get well. **v8** I am a man under authority as well. And I have soldiers over whom I have authority. I say to this one, "Go" And he goes. To another one I say, "Come." And he comes. I say to my servant, "Do this." And he does it.'

v9 When Jesus heard this, it astonished him. He turned to the crowd that followed him. He said to them, 'I tell you something. I have not found such belief even in *Israel.' **v10** The men that the *centurion had sent went back to the house. There they found that the servant was well again.

Verses 1-10 Jesus went again to the town called Capernaum. A *centurion (that is, an officer in the *Roman army) near there had a sick servant. This *centurion cared about his servant who was close to death. There were no medicines to cure him. But the *centurion had *faith that Jesus could cure his servant.

He heard that Jesus was there. The *centurion would not come to Jesus himself. He was not a *Jew. Maybe he thought that Jesus would not accept him. So, he asked the *Jewish leaders to go to Jesus on his behalf. They were happy to do this for him because the *centurion had built a *synagogue for them.

The leaders came to Jesus and they asked him to go with them and to cure the servant. They told him that this *Roman officer loved the *Jews. Jesus started to go with them.

The *centurion knew that a *Jew would not want to enter the house of a foreigner. So, while Jesus was still coming toward his house, he sent friends to stop him. It was not necessary for Jesus to go out of his way. Although the *centurion was an officer in the *Roman army, he was a humble man. He said that he did not deserve to have Jesus in his house.

The *centurion knew what authority was. He had to obey the officers who had a higher rank than himself. And his own soldiers and servants had to obey him. He believed that Jesus had authority over diseases. He believed that there was the power to cure in the words of Jesus. If Jesus told the disease to go, it would go. Jesus did not need to be with the servant.

The *faith of this *centurion astonished Jesus. He was not a *Jew but he believed so much in Jesus. Many people in *Israel did believe in Jesus. But this man's belief was extraordinary.

Jesus gave the order and he cured the sick servant.

The widow's son – Luke 7:11-17

v11 Soon afterwards, Jesus went to a town called Nain. His *disciples and a large crowd went there with him. **v12** When Jesus came near to the town gate, he saw a funeral. The dead man was the only son of a woman who was a widow. A large crowd from the town was with her. **v13** When the *Lord saw the widow, he had pity for her. He said to her, 'Do not weep.' **v14** Jesus walked over to the procession. He touched the open bed on which the body lay. The people who carried it stopped. Then Jesus said, 'Young man, I say to you: rise up'. **v15** The dead man sat up and he began to speak. Then Jesus gave him to his mother.

v16 All the people were afraid and they praised God. They said, 'A great *prophet has come among us. God has come to help his people.' **v17** This news about Jesus spread through the whole region called Judea and all the surrounding country.

Verses 11-17 Nain was a small town about 6 miles south and east of Nazareth. And it was about two miles to the south of the mountain called Tabor. It would have taken Jesus about a day to walk there from Capernaum. This is the only mention of Nain in the Bible.

A funeral procession had gone through the town. It was on its way to the place outside of Nain where its inhabitants buried dead people. The dead person was the only son of a widow. Probably now that her son was dead, she had no income to live. She would have to depend on the kindness of other people. A large crowd from the town came with the widow. It seems that the family was popular.

There was a large crowd of people with Jesus as he approached Nain. Jesus met the procession near the gate to the town. Immediately he felt sympathy and pity for the widow as she walked in front of the bed. He went over to her as she cried. Jesus said, 'Do not weep.' He touched the bed and the procession stopped. Then Jesus spoke to the dead body. He told the young man to get up. And the young man got up. Jesus gave the young man back to his mother.

The effect that this had on the people was to cause fear. To see a dead person rise up alive scared them. But they knew that it was the work of God. So, all the people praised God for what he had done. They called Jesus a great *prophet. But they did not know him yet as the *Christ.

Jesus spoke with such authority that even dead people obeyed him. He has the power of life and death. This is further evidence that Jesus is the *Christ, the Son of God.

The report of this astonishing *miracle spread through the whole region.

Jesus and John the *Baptist – Luke 7:18-35

v18 John's *disciples told him about all these things. John called to him two of his *disciples. **v19** He sent them to the *Lord with this question. 'Are you the one who is to come? Or should we wait for someone else?'

v20 The men came to Jesus. They said to him, 'John the *Baptist sent us to ask you. "Are you the one who is to come? Or should we expect someone else?"'

v21 At that time, Jesus cured many people who had diseases, illnesses, and evil spirits. And he gave sight to many people who were blind. **v22** Jesus answered John's *disciples, 'Go back to John. Tell him what you have seen. Tell him what you have heard. Blind people can see. People who could not walk can now do so. I have cured people who had *leprosy. Deaf people can hear. I have raised dead people to life again. I have given the good news to the poor people. **v23** God will *bless the person who does not lose his *faith in me.'

v24 After John's *disciples left, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John. 'You went into the desert to see John. You did not expect him to be weak like grass as the wind blows on it. **v25** You went into the desert to see John. You did not expect to see a man in fine clothes. Those people in splendid clothing who live in luxury are in kings' palaces. **v26** You went into the desert to see a *prophet. Yes, I tell you, John is even more than a *prophet. **v27** John is the one about whom the Bible spoke. It says, "Look! I will send my servant ahead of you. He will prepare the way before you." **v28** I tell you that John is greater than anyone else. No mother ever had a son as great as John is! But even the least important person in the *kingdom of God is greater than John.'

v29 (All the people heard what Jesus said. This included people who collected taxes. And they all agreed that God's way was the right way. This was because John had *baptised them. **v30** But the *Pharisees and experts in the law refused God's purpose for them. They did not let John *baptise them.)

v31 'I will describe the people who live now. This is what they are like. **v32** They are like children who sit in the market place. They shout to each other. They say, "We played music for you but you did not dance. We sang a sad song but you did not cry."

v33 John the *Baptist has come. He neither eats bread nor drinks wine. You say, "He has a *demon in him." **v34** The Son of Man has come. He both eats and drinks. You say, "Look at him. He eats too much food and he drinks too much wine. He is a friend of those people who collect taxes and of *sinners." **v35** But all who accept God's wisdom recognise its truth.'

Verses 18-20 Some of John's *disciples had seen the things that Jesus had done. They had seen that Jesus had cured many people. And they saw when Jesus raised the widow's son from death. They went and they told John about Jesus. So, John sent two of them to Jesus to find out if Jesus was the *Christ.

It seems strange that John should ask this question. He had *baptised Jesus. The voice from heaven said that Jesus was the Son of God (Matthew 3:16-17, Mark 1:11). John knew that Jesus would *baptise with the Holy Spirit and fire (Matthew 3:11, Luke 3:16). John told some of his *disciples that Jesus was the *Lamb of God. And he told them that Jesus would take away the *sin of the world (John 1:29).

For some reason John needed further proof that Jesus was the *Christ. Soon after John had *baptised Jesus, Herod put John in prison. So, John could not have seen Jesus as he did these *miracles. He could not have heard Jesus as he taught. In the prison, perhaps John began to doubt that Jesus was the *Christ. Perhaps John started to think that Jesus was just another *prophet. Perhaps the *Christ had not really come yet. Perhaps Jesus did not do what John expected the *Christ to do.

However, it is possible that John did not have these doubts. Perhaps John was using this question to show his *disciples that Jesus was the *Christ. They had remained loyal to John, but John was not trying to get *disciples for himself. His constant desire was to introduce people to Christ (John 3:26-30).

Verses 21-23 Even in the day that John's *disciples came, Jesus had cured many people. He had made people free from evil spirits. And he had given sight to people who were blind. So, Jesus sent his answer back to John. He told John's *disciples to tell John what they had seen. And he told them to tell John what they had heard. Then Jesus told them some of those things. All these things proved that Jesus was the *Christ (Isaiah 35:5-6, Isaiah 61:1: Luke 4:18-21). Those who accept this, God will *bless.

Verses 24-30 The *disciples of John the *Baptist went to report to him. Then Jesus spoke to the crowd about John. John was a *prophet and he was more than a *prophet. God sent him for a special task. John was the person that God promised to send on order to prepare for the *Christ (Malachi 3:1). John had to tell people to get ready for the *Christ to come. And he pointed to Jesus as the one who would take away the *sins of the world. John *preached in the desert and he *baptised people in the Jordan River.

The people knew that John was a *prophet. Crowds of them came to hear him speak. And he *baptised many of them as they *repented of their *sins. There was no person greater than John. Jesus came to bring in God's *kingdom. John was born before; in Jesus Christ the *kingdom came. So, the least person in the *kingdom of God is greater than John was.

The ordinary people heard what Jesus said. They believed that he was declaring God's message. John the *Baptist had *baptised many of them. And they expected the *Christ to come soon. But many of the *Pharisees and experts in the law did not *repent. They had not allowed John to *baptise them. And they would not believe what Jesus said.

Verses 31-35 The people failed to understand either John the *Baptist or the *Lord Jesus. Jesus compared the people with little children at play. The children shout at each other. The game was to act to the music. They should dance to the happy song as at a wedding. And they should cry to the sad song as at a funeral. But the other children would not play the game. So, the people, especially many *Pharisees and leaders, did not accept either John the *Baptist or Jesus. They would not accept John or Jesus because of opposite reasons:

(1) John the *Baptist was too serious for them. He was like the sad song. He did not eat much normal food. He did not drink wine. They said that he had a *demon. They thought that he was mad. They would not accept him or what he taught.

(2) Jesus did eat normal food and he drank wine. He was like the happy song. But they said that he ate too much. They said that he drank too much. And he had the wrong type of friends. They would not accept him or what he taught.

Really, these were just foolish excuses. They were not even true. John was not mad and he did not have a *demon. Jesus did not eat or drink too much. The reality was that both John and Jesus declared the same message from God. It was that message from God which the people really did not like. That was the reason why they made these excuses.

But God's wisdom is for those people who accept it. And they prove how right it is. They can accept what God taught them by John the *Baptist. Also, they will believe in Jesus, who is the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:30).

The *Pharisee and the *sinful woman – Luke 7:36-50

v36 One of the *Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him. So, Jesus went into the *Pharisee's house and he sat down to eat. **v37** There was a woman in that town who had lived a *sinful life. She heard that Jesus was eating at the *Pharisee's house. So, she brought an *alabaster bottle of *perfume. **v38** She stood behind Jesus at his feet. She cried and her tears washed his feet. She wiped his feet with the hair of her head and she kissed them. And she poured the *perfume on them.

v39 The *Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw this. He said to himself, 'This man is not really a *prophet. A *prophet would know who touches him. He would know what sort of woman she is. He would know that she is a *sinner.'

v40 Jesus answered him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' He said to Jesus, 'Teacher, tell me.'

v41 Jesus said, 'A certain man lent money to two other people. One owed him 500 *denarii and the other one owed him 50 *denarii. **v42** Neither of them had the money to pay back what they owed. So, the man cancelled both the debts. Which of the two will love him more?'

v43 Simon (the *Pharisee) answered him. 'I suppose the one who owed the most. For him, the man cancelled a larger debt.'

Jesus said, 'Yes, you have given the right answer.'

v44 Jesus turned toward the woman. He said to Simon, 'Look at this woman. When I came into your house, you did not give to me water to wash my feet. But this woman washed my feet with her tears and she dried them with her hair. **v45** You did not greet me with a kiss. But from the time I came in, she has kissed my feet. **v46** You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured *perfume on my feet. **v47** I tell you that God has forgiven her many *sins. Therefore, she loves much. But the person that God has not forgiven much will not love much.'

v48 Then Jesus said to the woman, 'I have forgiven you for your *sins.'

v49 The other guests began to say among themselves, 'This man does not have authority to forgive *sins.'

v50 But Jesus said to the woman, 'Your belief in me has saved you. Go and be *at peace with God.'

Verses 36-38 Simon, a *Pharisee, invited Jesus to have a meal with him. Jesus came to the house and he sat down to eat. Rather he placed himself ready to eat. In those days, some rich people followed a *Roman custom. They did not actually sit for a meal. They lay down on the left side with their feet away from the low table.

In that town, there was this woman. All the people there knew of her character. Probably she was a *prostitute. However, they all knew her to be a *sinner by the way that she lived. It seems that this woman had heard Jesus teach. She had *repented of her *sins and Jesus had forgiven her. She wanted to thank Jesus for what he had done for her. She had heard that Jesus was in Simon's house. So, she came in.

It was quite normal for poor people to come into such a meal. There they could receive what the guests had left.

The woman came behind the feet of Jesus. Jesus would have removed his *sandals so his feet were bare. She wept and her tears fell onto the feet of Jesus. She wiped his feet with her hair and she kissed his feet. Also, she had brought with her an *alabaster bottle of expensive *perfume oil. She broke the bottle and she poured the *perfume on his feet.

*Alabaster was a type of soft stone. It was common to put expensive *perfumes in bottles that people had made out of *alabaster. The stone bottle would keep the *perfume oil pure. The top of the bottle was a long narrow section. To pour the *perfume oil, she had to break that long narrow section.

Verses 39-43 The *Pharisee saw what the woman did. He thought about it. He thought that Jesus could not be a *prophet. If Jesus were a *prophet, he would know about this woman. He would have known her bad character. He would have known that she was a *sinner. He would not allow her to do these things. A *prophet would not allow such a *sinner even to touch him. He would not let her waste expensive *perfume in this way. But Jesus did know about this woman. And he did allow her to wash his feet with her tears and to pour the *perfume on his feet.

Jesus knows what is in the hearts and minds of people. He knew the thoughts of Simon the *Pharisee. Simon did not speak aloud, but Jesus answered the thoughts of Simon.

Jesus told this story. A man lent some money to two other men. To one, he lent 500 *denarii, and to the other man, he lent 50 *denarii. One *denarius was a coin worth about a day's wages for a farm worker. Neither man could pay what he owed. So, the man cancelled both debts.

Then Jesus asked Simon which of the two would love the man most. Simon had to give the right answer. The word 'love' here probably means to give thanks and to be grateful. There is no definite word 'to thank' in the *Hebrew or the *Aramaic languages.

Verses 44-47 Jesus then explained the purpose of the story. He drew Simon's attention to the woman again. He showed Simon what the woman had done. And he contrasted that with what Simon had neglected to do.

It was the custom in that country to wash feet when you went into a house for a meal. People there either wore *sandals, or they walked with bare feet. And the roads were very dusty. When they entered a house, they took off their *sandals. Then the host would wash the feet of his guests or he would provide water for this purpose. Simon did not wash the feet of Jesus. He did not even provide water for Jesus to wash his own feet. In this, Simon did not respect his guest. However, the woman washed the feet of Jesus with her tears. And she wiped his feet with her hair as the towel. She did respect Jesus when Simon had neglected his duties to his guest.

It was the custom to greet a guest with a kiss, usually on the cheek. People did this as a friendly greeting. Simon did not greet Jesus in this way. The woman kissed the feet of Jesus continuously, since the time that she came in.

Among the *Jews, it was common to pour a little oil on the head of a guest. The oil that they used had a sweet *perfume. Simon did not do this for Jesus. He did not even use the ordinary oil. But the woman poured expensive *perfume over the feet of Jesus.

Often in a town, people did not follow these customs. So perhaps Simon did nothing wrong except that he did not respect Jesus.

Jesus told Simon that the woman had *sinned much. But God had forgiven her many *sins. Therefore, she had much love for God. Jesus did not complete the story to say whether God had forgiven Simon. A person's love for God will be in proportion to his opinion of his *sins. If in his opinion his *sin is small, his love for God will also be small. Those people whom God has forgiven should love him much. In God's opinion, all *sins are great. The size of one *sin against another *sin does not matter. The price that Jesus paid to forgive us was his death. We all need God to forgive our *sins, so we all should be very grateful to God for the death of Christ.

Verses 48-50 Jesus spoke to the woman. He said to her that he has forgiven her all her *sins. He did not forgive because she loved much. She loved much because he had forgiven her. The *Lord Jesus saved her because she believed in Him.

The woman knew that God had forgiven her. Perhaps Jesus spoke these words for the benefit of the other guests. They heard what Jesus said to the woman. This caused them to ask questions in their minds. They wondered whether Jesus really could have authority to forgive *sins. No man has authority to forgive *sins. But Jesus said that he had done that. In this, he declared that he is God. Only God can forgive *sins.

Jesus teaches in stories – Luke 8:1–21

The story of the seeds – Luke 8:1-15

v1 After this, Jesus went through all the towns and villages. He taught the good news about the *kingdom of God. The 12 *disciples were with him. **v2** Also, with him were some women whom he had cured of evil spirits and diseases. Among these was Mary Magdalene from whom 7 *demons had gone out. **v3** And there was Joanna, the wife of Chuza. Chuza was the manager of Herod's house. And there was Susanna and many other women. These women used their own resources to help Jesus and his *disciples.

v4 A great crowd gathered. People came to Jesus from every town. Jesus told them this story. **v5** 'A farmer went out to sow his seeds. As he scattered the seeds, some seeds fell along the path. People walked on the seeds, and the birds of the air ate the seeds. **v6** Some seeds fell on rocks. These seeds began to grow. But they died because they had no water. **v7** Some of the seeds fell among weeds with *thorns. The weeds grew up and caused the plants to die. **v8** And some seeds fell on good soil and they grew well. They yielded a crop 100 times more than the farmer had planted.' Jesus finished the story. Then he called out to the crowd. 'Everyone that is able to hear, listen.'

v9 Jesus' *disciples asked him what this story meant. **v10** He said to them, 'God has allowed you to know the secrets of his *kingdom. But I speak to other people in stories. "So, they will look but they may not see. They will hear but they may not understand."

v11 This is what the story means. The seed means God's word. **v12** Those along the path are people who hear God's word. Then the devil comes and he takes that word from their hearts. So, they do not believe and God does not save them. **v13** Those on the rocks are people who receive God's word with joy. They believe for a short period of time, but they are like plants without roots. But when troubles come, they give up. **v14** Those among the weeds are people who hear God's word. But as they go, the worries, wealth and joys of this life replace the word. The word does not achieve any successful result in their lives. **v15** The good soil is like those people who receive God's word with good and honest hearts. They continue to be loyal to God's message. They are patient and their lives produce good results.'

Verses 1-3 Jesus and his 12 *disciples went through all the towns and villages in Galilee. In each place, Jesus spoke about the *kingdom of God.

Several women travelled with Jesus. Some of these he had cured of diseases and evil spirits. Among them was Mary. They called her Magdalene because she came from Magdala. Magdala was a small town on the Sea of Galilee about three miles from Tiberius. Jesus had sent away 7 *demons from this woman. She became a close friend of Jesus. She was present at the death of Jesus (John 19:25). She was among the women who prepared *spices for his body (Mark 16:1). Early on the morning that Jesus rose from death, she came to his grave. She discovered that the stone was not at the entrance. And she ran to tell Peter and the other *disciples about this. She went back to the grave and there Jesus met her (John 20:11-18). There is a tradition that links her with the woman in Simon the *Pharisee's house (see Luke 7:36-50). But there is nothing in the Bible to suggest this.

Joanna was the wife of Chuza. He was the manager of Herod's house. This Herod was Herod Antipas. Herod Antipas was the son of Herod the Great. Herod Antipas ruled over the regions called Galilee and Perea from 4 *BC to *AD 39. We know nothing more about Chuza. Joanna was probably there when Jesus hung on the cross of wood (Luke 23:55). She was with the 11 *apostles at the time when Jesus rose from death (Luke 24:10).

Susanna with the other women helped Jesus. We know nothing else about her. These women used their own resources as they served Jesus and his *disciples.

Verses 4-8 A very large crowd came to Jesus on the shore of the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 13:2, Mark 4:1). They came from all the towns in the region. As Jesus taught them, he told them a story. It was about a farmer who sowed his seeds. The farmers in that country scattered the seed on the ground. Then they covered the seed with soil.

There was a path across the plot of land. Some of the seeds fell on this path. People walked on the seeds. And birds came and ate the seeds. There were areas of rock in the field where there was not much soil. The seeds that fell there started to grow. But there was not enough soil and it was too dry for them. They soon died. Other seeds fell among weeds. The weeds grew faster than the seeds. And the weeds stopped their growth. The seeds in the good soil grew well. This situation was familiar to the people. This is what happened in their fields.

Then Jesus called to the crowd. He asked the crowd to consider what the story meant. But he did not tell them what it meant.

Verses 9-15 Even the *disciples did not know what the story meant. So, they asked Jesus to explain it to them. He told them that they could know the secrets of the *kingdom of God. The word 'secret' here means that which we cannot know by natural means. These secrets are those things about the *kingdom of God that God shows to his people. The people who did not believe in Jesus would not understand these stories. In Luke 8:10, Jesus repeats words from Isaiah 6:9 to explain that fact.

The story was about the seed rather than the farmer. The seed means the word of God. The farmer scatters the seed. Those who hear the word of God receive it in different ways.

Many people hear the good news about God's *kingdom but they do not take it in. The devil takes the truth away from them. And they soon forget it. So, they do not believe it.

Some people hear the word of God and they accept it. But it does not change their hearts and minds. This temporary belief does not last. Soon the effect becomes weaker. When difficulties come, they turn away from the *Lord.

Other people hear the word of God and they let the word change them for a time. But then they get too busy to think much about God.

The shallow belief of these three groups cannot last. And it has little effect in their lives. Such belief is of no use. It produces nothing worthwhile.

Then there are those people who hear the word of God. They believe it and it changes their lives. The word of God lives in their hearts. They live for God and they continue firm in their belief. So, they grow strong in the *Lord. And the results of their lives please God.

This story teaches us an important lesson. We must not only hear the word of God but we must believe it. We must not only believe the word of God but we must act on it. We must allow the word of God to change our whole life.

The purpose of a lamp is to give light – Luke 8:16-18

v16 Nobody lights a lamp to hide it under a bowl or to put it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a lamp holder. Then those people who come in can see the light. **v17** You may try to hide something but someone will find it. He will tell other people where it is. You may try to keep a secret but someone will discover it. And he will tell your secret to other people. **v18** So, be careful how you listen. Whoever has will receive more. Some people may think that they have something. However, they do not and they will lose it all.'

Verses 16-18 The lamp here was an oil lamp. It gave light by a flame as the oil burned. It would be foolish to hide such a light under a bowl. The light would go out for lack of air. It would be foolish to put such a light under a bed. It could burn the bed if it did not go out first.

The purpose of the light was so that people could see. If we cover the light, it will not help us to see in the dark. We put the light where it lights up the dark places. In the light, nothing can be secret. The light shows up all the things that the darkness hides.

Those people who believe in Jesus should not hide that fact. They should be like a light to show other people the way to Christ.

We can hide nothing from God. We can have no secrets from God. He will show all that we try to hide. He will tell all our secrets. When the *Lord comes as the judge, he will see everything whether good or evil.

As in the story of the seeds, it is important to listen to what Jesus says (verse 8b). Those people who accept the word of God receive from God. We must use what God has given to us. If we do, he will give to us more. If we do not accept the word of God, we will receive nothing from God. We may think that we have something. But we will lose all that we have.

Jesus' mother and brothers – Luke 8:19-21

v19 Then Jesus' mother and brothers came to him. But they could not reach him because of the crowd.
v20 Someone told Jesus, 'Your mother and your brothers are standing outside. They want to see you.'
v21 But Jesus answered, 'My mother and my brothers are these people. They hear the word of God and they do it.'

Verses 19-21 Jesus taught the people probably in a house. His mother Mary and his brothers wanted to speak with him. But they could not get in because of the crowd that was already there. Someone told Jesus that his mother and brothers were outside.

Then Jesus told the crowd a strange thing. His mother and brothers were already round him, he said. They were listening to his words and they had become like his mother and brothers. And they did what God said.

Jesus was not refusing his family. He respected his mother very much. But he taught that we could become his family. This is not in the normal physical sense. We can be his family when by *faith we accept the word of God. We must hear the word of God and we must obey it.

Jesus works *miracles – Luke 8:22–56

Jesus orders the storm to be calm – Luke 8:22-25

v22 One day Jesus got into a boat with his *disciples. He said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side of the lake.' So, they set off across the lake. **v23** As they sailed, Jesus slept. A storm and strong winds blew over the lake. The boat began to fill with water and they were in danger. **v24** The *disciples went to Jesus and they woke him up. They said, 'Master, Master, we will drown.' Jesus woke up. He ordered the wind to stop and the waves to be calm. The wind stopped and the sea became calm. **v25** Jesus said to his *disciples, 'You should have *faith.' They were afraid. And what Jesus had done astonished them. They said to each other 'We do not know what kind of man Jesus is. He even gives orders to the winds and waves, and they obey him.'

Verses 22-25 It was late in the day (Mark 4:35). Jesus and his *disciples started to go across the lake, which was the Sea of Galilee. Jesus went to sleep in the back of the boat.

They were part of the way across the lake when a fierce storm began. Such storms happen often on the Sea of Galilee. The wind was so powerful that it caused the waves to crash against the boat. And water began to fill the boat. There was a danger that the boat would sink.

The *disciples could do nothing to save themselves and they were afraid. Jesus was still asleep so they woke him up. Several of them were *fishermen; they understood how to control a boat. But perhaps they thought that Jesus could do something. Maybe somehow he could save them.

Jesus had already shown his power over *demons, diseases and death. Now he shows his control over the forces of the natural world. He stood up and he spoke to the wind and the waves. The wind and the waves obeyed him and they became calm.

Jesus asked the *disciples why they were afraid. They ought to have had more *faith. Then the situation would not have frightened them. They should have trusted God, even in this frightening situation.

They knew that Jesus was someone special. But this display of power made them afraid. It astonished them. They wondered what kind of man Jesus was.

In the Psalms, God has the power to control the wind and the waves (see Psalm 107:23-32). Jesus shows that he has this same power. This event is evidence that Jesus is God.

The man with many *demons – Luke 8:26-39

v26 They sailed across the lake from Galilee to the region of the people called Gerasenes. **v27** When Jesus stepped out of the boat, a man from the town came to him. This man had *demons inside him. For a long time he had worn no clothes. He lived among the graves and not in a house. **v28** The man screamed when he saw Jesus. He threw himself down in front of Jesus. He shouted, 'Jesus, Son of the Most High God, what do you want with me? I appeal to you, do not punish me.' **v29** He said this because Jesus had ordered the evil spirit to go out of him. Many times, it had taken hold of him. He had been a prisoner, with chains that bound his hands and his feet. But he broke the chains and the *demon forced him out into a lonely place.

v30 Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?' He answered, '*Legion,' because many *demons were in him. **v31** The *demons appealed to Jesus not to send them to the deep hole.

v32 A large group of pigs were eating there on the hill. The *demons asked Jesus to allow them to go into the pigs. Jesus let them do this. **v33** When the *demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs. Then all the pigs ran down the hill and into the lake. And the pigs drowned in the lake.

v34 The men who fed the pigs saw that event. Then they ran away and they reported it in the town and among the farms. **v35** The people went to see what had happened. They came to Jesus. There they found the man from whom the *demons had gone out. He was sitting by the feet of Jesus. The man was wearing clothes and he was quite normal. This made the people afraid. **v36** Some people saw how Jesus had sent the *demons out of the man. They told the other people how Jesus had cured the man. **v37** All the people of the Gerasene region asked Jesus to leave because they were so afraid. So, Jesus got into the boat and he left them.

v38 The man from whom the *demons had gone out asked to go with Jesus. But Jesus sent him away. **v39** Jesus said to him, 'Go back home. Tell people how much God has done on your behalf.' So, the man went all over the town. There he told the people how much Jesus had done on his behalf.

Verses 26-29 Jesus and the *disciples arrived in the region of the people called Gerasenes. There are three names for this region in the *Gospels. The first one is the region of the Gerasenes. But Gerasa was about 40 miles south and east of the lake and it probably had no border on the lake. The second name is the region of the people called Gadarenes. But Gadara was a town 6 miles from the lake with a deep valley between it and the lake. The third name is the region of the people called Gergesenes. Gergesa was probably a small town near the lake. We do not know from which of these towns the man came.

As Jesus stepped out of the boat, a naked man came towards him. Many *demons lived in this man. He came from the town in that region. But he had made his home among the graves. The man, or rather, the *demons recognised Jesus. They knew who Jesus was. They knew that Jesus was the Son of God. And they were afraid of him. The man cried out with fear. The *demons knew that the *Lord would punish them one day (Matthew 8:29). But they appealed to Jesus not to punish them now. Jesus had ordered the *demons to come out of the man.

Often the *demons took control of the man. The people tried to control the man with chains. But with the power of the *demons, he broke the chains. Then the *demons caused him to go to live in lonely places.

Verses 30-39 Jesus asked the man what his name was. He called himself Legion. The word legion means a large number of people or things. Also, a legion was a group of several thousand soldiers in the *Roman army. The man called himself Legion because many *demons were in him.

The deep hole here is the final prison for *demons (Revelation 20:1). So, they appealed to Jesus not to send them there. They knew that they could not stay in the man. Instead, they asked that they might go into the pigs. Jesus let them go into the pigs. The pigs ran into the lake. And the pigs all drowned in the lake. There were about 2000 pigs (Mark 5:13).

The men who looked after the pigs ran away to the town. They reported what had happened. And people came out to see what the men had told them. They came to Jesus.

There they saw the man whom Jesus had freed from the power of the *demons. He sat there and he had dressed himself. Clearly, someone had given some clothes to him. The man was now completely normal. The people saw this and they were afraid.

The men who had seen the event told the people about it. They described what had happened. They told how the *demons had gone into the pigs. They described how Jesus had authority over the *demons. They told the people how Jesus had cured the man.

Because they were so afraid, the people in that region asked Jesus to go away from them. Jesus got into the boat with his *disciples and he left them.

Before Jesus went away, the man asked to go with him. But Jesus sent him back to his home to declare the good news. He obeyed Jesus and went to his town. He told the people, there and in the whole region, what God had done on his behalf. Jesus had done it, so therefore God had done it. Jesus and God are one.

A dead girl and a sick woman – Luke 8:40-56

v40 When Jesus got back, a crowd came to meet him. Everyone was expecting him to come. **v41** Then a man called Jairus, a leader of the *synagogue, came to Jesus. He fell down at Jesus' feet. He appealed to Jesus to come to his house. **v42** Jairus' only daughter, who was about 12 years old, was dying.

While Jesus was on his way to Jairus' house, people crowded all round him. **v43** A woman in the crowd had suffered a loss of blood for 12 years. And nobody was able to cure her. **v44** She came up behind Jesus and she touched the edge of his clothes. Immediately the loss of blood stopped.

v45 Jesus asked, 'Who touched me?' All the people denied it. Peter said to him, 'Master, the crowds surround you and they press against you.' **v46** But Jesus said, 'Someone did touch me. I know it because power has gone out from me.'

v47 The woman knew that she could not hide. She came to Jesus. She trembled and she fell down in front of him. Then she told him and the crowd why she had touched Jesus. She told them how that touch had cured her immediately. **v48** Then Jesus said to her, 'Daughter, your belief in God has cured you. Go and be *at peace with God.'

v49 While Jesus was speaking to the woman, someone came from the house of Jairus, the *synagogue leader. He said to Jairus, 'Your daughter has died. Do not bother the teacher any more.'

v50 Jesus heard this. He said to Jairus, 'Do not be afraid. Just believe and your daughter will be well.'

v51 Jesus arrived at the house. He would not let anyone go in with him, except Peter, John, James and the child's father and mother. **v52** All the people wept and they cried out with sad cries. Jesus said to them, 'Do not cry. She is not dead. She is asleep.'

v53 The people laughed at Jesus. They knew that the girl was dead. **v54** But Jesus took hold of the girl's hand. He said to her, 'Child, get up.' **v55** Her spirit came back into her. Immediately she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her some food. **v56** This *miracle astonished the girl's parents. But Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened.

Verses 40-42a (Verse 42a means the first part of verse 42.) Jesus returned from the region of the people called Gerasenes, and he came back to Galilee. Probably he came to Capernaum, which was then his own town (Matthew 9:1). When he arrived, a crowd came to meet him. Jairus, a leader of the *synagogue, came to Jesus. His 12-year-old daughter was dying. She was his only daughter. He asked Jesus to come to his house before she died. He believed that Jesus could cure her.

Verses 42b-44 (Verse 42b means the second part of verse 42.) Jesus started to go with Jairus along the narrow streets. They were in the middle of the crowd. In the crowd, a woman forced her way through to get to Jesus. She came up behind him and she touched his clothes.

This woman had been ill for 12 years. All that time, she suffered a loss of blood. She had been to many doctors. But none of them could cure her. This had cost her all her money (Mark 5:26). Her state made her unclean in the *Jewish religion (Leviticus 15:25). In other words, she could not join in public *worship. She could not go to the *temple. And she could not even touch other people. She was now desperate. But she believed that Jesus could cure her. She thought, 'I will touch his clothes. That will cure me.' She touched his clothes. Immediately power from Jesus cured her.

Verses 45-48 Jesus was aware that someone had touched his clothes. He asked who had touched him. In the crowd, as they went along, many people would have touched Jesus. So, this seemed to be a strange question to ask. But Jesus felt power go from him. He knew that a particular person had touched his clothes. Jesus would have known who had touched him. But he wanted the woman to come forward. At first, everybody denied it. But the woman knew that she could not hide. She had to admit it.

Jesus felt power go from him. This does not mean that it reduced the power in him. His power was God's power in him.

The woman had come in secret. She did not want to make public her problem. She would have been afraid to speak about it. Now she trembled and she fell down in front of Jesus. Perhaps she was afraid that Jesus would be angry. Then she told him and the crowd the whole truth. And she told them that the power of Jesus had cured her.

Jesus spoke to her in a gentle manner. He told her that her belief in God had cured her.

Verses 49-50 Probably because of the delay, Jesus did not get to the little girl in time. She had just died. Someone came to tell her father, Jairus, the sad news. It was too late. There was now no reason for Jesus to come to the house.

Jesus heard that the child was dead. Either he heard the conversation with Jairus or Jairus told him the news. The news did not worry Jesus at all. But it would have greatly upset Jairus. So, Jesus told him not to be afraid. Jairus believed that Jesus could cure his daughter. But that was before she died. Now Jesus told Jairus to believe that he would bring the girl back to life.

Verses 51-56 Jesus and the people who were with him arrived at Jairus' house. As was the custom in those days people gathered in and outside the house. There were family, friends, servants and people whose job was to weep for the dead person. They were all weeping and they made a loud noise. Jesus said to them all, 'Do not cry.' (This probably means that they must not continue to make all that noise.) 'She is not dead. She is asleep.' But they knew that she was dead. So, they laughed at Jesus. None of them believed that he could bring the girl back to life.

Jesus said that she was only asleep. Jesus was not pretending that she was not dead. Rather, he meant that her death was like sleep. This death was not permanent. The girl would wake up as from sleep.

Jesus told all the people to go out. Then with the parents of the girl, Jesus went into the room where the girl was. Also, he took with him Peter, James and John. But he did not allow anyone else to go in.

Jesus took the hand of the girl. He said to her, 'Little girl, get up.' Immediately the girl's life returned. She got up and walked (Mark 5:42).

Jesus told the parents to give some food to the girl. It may be that during her illness she was not able to eat. Now she was alive and her illness had gone. Jesus raised her to good health.

What had happened astonished the parents. Clearly, they were full of emotions and very happy. They would have felt great excitement. But Jesus asked them not to tell anyone what had happened. The people knew that the girl was dead. Now they will know that she is alive again. But what happened in that room was in private.

Jesus and the 12 *disciples – Luke 9:1–50

Jesus sends out the 12 *disciples – Luke 9:1-9

v1 Jesus called the 12 *disciples together. He gave to them power and authority over all *demons and to cure diseases. **v2** Then he sent them to tell about God's *kingdom and to cure ill people. **v3** And he said to them, 'Take nothing for your journey. Do not take a stick or a bag. Do not take any bread or money. Do not take any extra clothes. **v4** When you enter a house, stay there. Stay in that house until it is time to leave. **v5** The people may not receive you. If so, leave their town. But shake the dust off your feet as evidence against them.' **v6** The *disciples left, and they went through the villages. They told the people the good news. And everywhere that they went, they cured people.

v7 Herod was the ruler of a fourth part of the nation. He heard about all that happened. Some people said that John the *Baptist had come back from death. This caused Herod much confusion and doubt. **v8** Some people said that Elijah had appeared. Other people said that one of the old *prophets had risen from death. **v9** But Herod said, 'I cut off John's head. But I hear so much about this man. I want to know who he is.' And he tried to see Jesus.

Verses 1-6 Jesus gave to his 12 *disciples power and authority. Then he sent them to the villages of that region. They went in 6 teams of two (Mark 6:7). They would use that power and authority to free people from *demons. And they had the power to cure diseases. But the main purpose was to *preach and to speak about the *kingdom of God.

Perhaps Jesus knew that he would soon leave Galilee. And he wanted people in the whole region to hear the good news. And maybe he wanted to give his *disciples experience for the future.

The *disciples must take nothing for their journey. They had to depend on God and the kindness of the people. In those days, it was a custom for people to receive travellers into their houses. It was the custom to offer them a bed and food while they were there. So, the *disciples could expect such kindness in each place. And while they remained in that town or village, the *disciples should stay in one house. Jesus did not intend that his *disciples should follow these instructions on every future occasion. These instructions were just for that trip.

They may come to a place where the people would not receive them. Then they must leave that place. But they should shake the dust from their feet. The *Lord will consider that as evidence against the people of that place. And that action would warn the people that it is a very serious matter to refuse God's message (Matthew 10:14-15).

The *disciples did what Jesus had told them. They *preached the good news and they cured the people.

Verses 7-9 The area that Herod Antipas ruled included Galilee. He had heard what had happened in this area. He heard about Jesus and what he had done. Herod thought that perhaps John the *Baptist had come back to life. And he thought that perhaps Jesus was John the *Baptist (Matthew 14:1). Some other people thought the same as Herod. This was a strange idea. Jesus was already *preaching and he did *miracles before John's death. And earlier John had *baptised Jesus. But such an idea made Herod uneasy because he had killed John. So, Herod wanted to meet with Jesus. He wanted to know who Jesus was.

Many people were curious to know who Jesus really was. Some people thought that Jesus was Elijah. They believed that Elijah would come again (Malachi 4:5). And they believed that Elijah would come before the *Christ. But other people saw that Jesus was a great *prophet. Perhaps Jesus was one of the old *prophets who had come back to life. That was what they thought.

Jesus feeds 5000 men – Luke 9:10-17

v10 The *apostles returned to Jesus. They told him everything that they had done. He took them on a private journey to a town called Bethsaida. **v11** But the crowds found out about this and they followed him. Jesus did not send them away. He spoke to them about the *kingdom of God. And he cured those people who were sick.

v12 Late in the afternoon, the 12 *disciples came to him. They said to him, 'Send the crowd away to the villages and farms near here. They need to get food and to find somewhere to stay. We are in a desert place here.'

v13 Jesus replied to them, 'You must give them something to eat.' They said, 'We have only 5 loaves of bread and two fishes. We have nothing more, unless we go to buy food for all these people.' **v14** (There were about 5000 men there.) But Jesus said to his *disciples, 'Tell the people to sit in groups of about 50 people.' **v15** The *disciples did this, and all the people sat down. **v16** Then Jesus took the 5 loaves and the two fishes and he looked up to heaven. He thanked God for the food. He broke the loaves and the fishes. He gave the pieces to his *disciples for them to give the food to the people. **v17** All the people ate as much as they wanted. The *disciples collected the food that remained. They filled 12 baskets with the pieces.

Verses 10-17 The 12 *disciples came back to Jesus. They told him all that they had done. Then Jesus took them across the Sea of Galilee by boat to a place near Bethsaida. Bethsaida was a town on the east of the river Jordan. It was near to where the river flowed into the Sea of Galilee. This was on the north and east side of the Sea of Galilee and it was outside of the territory of Herod Antipas.

Jesus intended that he and his *disciples should have a quiet time away from the crowd. But the crowd followed them. So, Jesus talked to the crowd about the *kingdom of God. And he cured those people who were sick.

They were in a desert place near to Bethsaida. It was late in the day. The people needed to get food to eat and somewhere to spend the night. The *disciples asked Jesus to send the people away. But Jesus told them to feed the crowd. He did not want to send the people away while they were still hungry.

The *disciples had 5 small loaves of bread and two fishes. Even if they could have bought food for the crowd, it would have cost a lot of money. However, it would be very difficult to find the amount of food that they needed.

The crowd was much more than 5000 people. There were about 5000 men plus women and children. Jesus told the *disciples to tell the people to sit in groups, with about 50 people in each group. Then he took the loaves and the fishes and he thanked God for them. He broke the food and he gave it to the *disciples. From that small meal, everybody in the crowd had more than enough food. At the end of the meal, the *disciples collected 12 baskets full of the food that the people had not eaten.

This was a great *miracle. It shows us that nothing is impossible to God. In Jesus Christ, God can supply all that we need.

Peter says that Jesus is the *Christ – Luke 9:18-22

v18 Once when Jesus prayed in private, his *disciples were with him. At that time, he asked them a question. ‘Who do the people say that I am?’

v19 They answered, ‘Some people say that you are John the *Baptist. Other people say that you are Elijah. Some other people say that you are one of the ancient *prophets. They say that one of the *prophets has become alive again.’

v20 Then Jesus asked them, ‘What about you? Who do you say that I am?’ Peter answered, ‘You are the *Christ of God.’

v21 Jesus warned them that they must not tell this to anybody. **v22** And he told them, 'The Son of Man must suffer many things. The leaders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law will refuse to accept him. People will kill him. But three days later, God will raise him to life.'

Verses 18-22 Jesus and his *disciples were in the region of Caesarea Philippi (Matthew 16:13). Caesarea Philippi was a town in the north of *Israel near the mountain called Hermon. There Jesus prayed with his *disciples. Then he asked about the opinion of the people. He wanted to hear what the people said about him. Who did they think that he was?

The answer to that question was the same as before (Luke 9:7-8). Some said that Jesus was really John the *Baptist. Herod had killed John. Those people thought that John had come back to life in Jesus. Some people said that he was Elijah. Elijah had not died. He went up to heaven in a strong wind (2 Kings 2:11). And the people believed that he would come to earth again. Some people considered Jesus to be one of the *Old Testament *prophets who had become alive again.

Then Jesus asked the *disciples what they thought. They had seen all that Jesus had done already. They had listened to all that he had taught. They could see that Jesus was more than a *prophet. He was greater than John the *Baptist or Elijah. So, Peter gave the answer: 'You are the *Christ of God.' This was the first time that any of the *disciples called him *Christ. The *Jews expected God to send the *Christ. But when he came, most of them did not recognise him. Jesus was not the sort of person that many *Jews expected to be the *Christ (John 1:10-12). Peter knew who the *Christ was. This knowledge could only come from God (Matthew 16:17).

Jesus did not want the *disciples at this time to tell the people that he was the *Christ. If they spoke about Jesus as the *Christ, it would have caused political problems.

This is the first time that Jesus spoke clearly about his death. From this time on, Jesus taught the *disciples about what would happen. He told them that he would suffer many things. The leaders of the people would not believe that he was the *Christ. They would cause the *Romans to kill Jesus. He would die on a wooden cross. But death was not the end. Three days afterwards, God would make him alive again.

How to follow Christ – Luke 9:23-27

v23 Then Jesus spoke to all the people that were there. ‘Those people who want to follow me must say “no” to themselves. They must take up their cross each day. Then they can follow me. **v24** Those people who want to save their lives will lose them. But those people who lose their lives for me will save them. **v25** A person may gain the whole world. But it will not benefit him if he loses himself. He will suffer the loss of his life. **v26** Some people may be ashamed of me and of what I say. The Son of Man will be ashamed of those people when he comes in his *glory. Also, he will come in the *glory of the Father and of the holy *angels. **v27** Some of the people here will see the *kingdom of God before they die. I tell you that this is true.’

Verses 23-26 Before a person died on a cross, that person had to carry that cross. All who want to follow Jesus must be ready to lose their lives. They will not do just what they want. But they will do what Jesus wants. Each day, it is as if they carry their cross. Then they can follow Jesus. This is the attitude in life of a person who gives his life completely to the *Lord. It is the only proper attitude for a person who truly wants to serve God. Nothing in his life is as important as his relationship with God.

Here Jesus contrasts life on earth and *eternal life. Those people who want to satisfy their desires in this life will lose that life in death. All that is in the world is not worth the cost of a life. All those things are of no value to a person who loses his life. Those people who live for themselves will not have *eternal life. But those people who live for Jesus will have *eternal life.

If we are ashamed of Christ now, he will be ashamed of us in the future. That future will be when Jesus comes again in his *glory. Whatever other people may do to us, we must always be loyal to Jesus. Then we will share in the *glory of Jesus.

Verse 27 Some of those people who lived then would see the *kingdom of God. They would see the Son of Man come in his *kingdom (Matthew 16:28). They would see the *kingdom of God come with power (Mark 9:1).

There are several different ideas as to what Jesus meant. The first one is what happened a week later. Then Jesus showed his *glory to Peter, James and John (Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:2-8, Luke 9:28-36). The three *disciples saw the *glory of Jesus on that mountain. And Jesus received honour and *glory from God (2 Peter 1:16-18).

Another idea is that Jesus spoke about *Pentecost. Then the *kingdom of God came with power. And the *Holy Spirit came to those people who believed. That was the first time that a large number of people became Christians (Acts chapter 2).

When Jesus died, he defeated *Satan. Jesus took all our *sins upon himself. And he died to free us from our *sins. Then he became alive again and many people saw him. In him, they saw the power of the *kingdom of God.

When people trust Jesus to save them, they become citizens of God's *kingdom. Perhaps that was what Jesus was referring to here. Their bodies may die, but in their spirits they have *eternal life. So, their spirits will never die.

Jesus shows his *glory – Luke 9:28-36

v28 About 8 days after he had said these things, Jesus went up a mountain to pray. He took Peter, John, and James with him. **v29** As Jesus prayed, his face seemed to change. And his clothes shone as with a bright white light. **v30** Two men appeared and they talked with Jesus. These men were Moses and Elijah. **v31** Their appearance was of bright *glory. They spoke about the death that Jesus would soon achieve at Jerusalem. **v32** Peter and the men who were with him were very sleepy. But then they awoke completely. So they saw the *glory of Jesus and the two men who stood with him. **v33** When Moses and Elijah were leaving Jesus, Peter spoke to Jesus. Peter said, 'Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' Peter did not know what he said.

v34 While he said these things, a cloud came. It covered them all. And they were afraid as they went into the cloud. **v35** A voice came from the cloud. It said, 'This is my Son. I have chosen him. Listen to him.' **v36** When the voice had spoken, Jesus was there alone. Then Peter, John and James kept quiet. In those days, they told nobody what they had seen.

Verses 28-36 A week later, Jesus went up a mountain to pray. He took with him Peter, James and John. As Jesus prayed, they saw him change. His face shone like the sun (Matthew 17:2). And his clothes shone with a bright white light. They were seeing his *glory with their own eyes. Then they saw two men in bright white clothes. These were Moses and Elijah, and these men talked with Jesus.

The three *disciples heard some of the conversation. Moses and Elijah spoke to Jesus about his death. They spoke about it as something that Jesus would achieve. Jesus would die soon at Jerusalem. But that death was not a defeat. That death was the purpose for which Jesus had come. The word for death here means a departure. Jesus would pass through death and then he would rise (become alive) again.

The three *disciples were sleepy. Perhaps they were asleep when Jesus began to pray. And they woke up to find that Moses and Elijah were there. They probably missed much of the conversation that Jesus had with Moses and Elijah.

Moses was the great leader of *Israel. He led them out of Egypt. And by him, God gave the law to *Israel. Elijah was a great *prophet.

Moses and Elijah were just leaving. The *disciples were afraid. And Peter did not know what to say. So, he said to Jesus, 'Master, it is good for us to be here.' Then he suggested that he should make three tents. These would be one tent for Jesus, one tent for Moses, and one tent for Elijah.

As Peter spoke, a cloud came on them all. It covered Jesus, Moses and Elijah. This was not an ordinary cloud. The cloud increased the fear of the *disciples. Then they heard the voice of God, which came from the cloud. God said that Jesus was his Son. God had chosen Jesus and he had sent him. Therefore, they (the *disciples) must listen to what Jesus says.

When they heard the voice, the *disciples fell down to the ground. The voice frightened them so much (Matthew 17:6-7).

When the cloud moved away, Moses and Elijah had gone. Jesus was alone with the three *disciples. The sight of his *glory had passed. Jesus came to them and he touched them. He said, 'Get up. Do not be afraid' (Matthew 17:6-7). Jesus was as they usually saw him. The *disciples did not speak about this experience until after Jesus had come back from death.

Jesus cures a boy with an evil spirit – Luke 9:37-45

v37 The next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met Jesus. **v38** A man in the crowd shouted to Jesus, 'Teacher, I appeal to you. Look at my son, because he is my only child. **v39** A spirit seizes him and it makes him scream. It shakes him so that he loses control of himself. Bubbles burst from his mouth. The spirit hurts him and it almost never goes from him. **v40** I appealed to your *disciples to force the evil spirit out of him. But they could not do it.

v41 Jesus answered, 'You people today have no *faith. You have turned away from the truth. I do not know how long I could stay with you. I do not know how long I could deal with you. Bring your son here.'

v42 While the boy was coming, the *demon threw him on the ground. It shook him so hard that he lost control of himself. Jesus ordered the evil spirit to leave. Jesus cured the boy and he gave him back to his father. **v43** The greatness of God astonished all the people.

They all wondered at the things that Jesus did. But Jesus spoke to his *disciples. **v44** 'Give careful attention to what I tell you. Someone will turn against me and he will give the Son of Man into the hands of men.' **v45** But the *disciples did not know what this meant. It seemed as if a curtain covered their minds. So, they could not understand it. And they were afraid to ask Jesus about it.

Verses 37-40 Maybe Jesus and the three *disciples had stayed on the mountain overnight. The next day, they came down and they saw a large crowd there. In the crowd was a man with his son, his only child. The son was sick because an evil spirit took control of him. This was not a normal physical disease. Luke was a medical doctor. He recognised the difference between a normal disease and the work of an evil spirit. Luke was not there. But he had studied what happened.

The man cried out to Jesus. He described to Jesus what the spirit did to his son. The man had appealed to the *disciples to free his son from the evil spirit. But they did not have that power. They were not able to send the spirit out of the boy. A short time before this, Jesus had given to the *disciples the power over *demons (Luke 9:1). It seems that they had lost the *faith to use that power. Now the man appealed to Jesus.

Verses 41-43a (Verse 43a means the first part of verse 43.) Jesus spoke to the crowd. Some of the teachers of the law were in that crowd. They argued with the *disciples (Mark 9:14). However, nobody there had the *faith to cure the boy. Many of the people with the *disciples had seen the *miracles that Jesus did. They heard what he taught. But many of them did not believe the truth. It seems that Jesus was sad because of their lack of belief.

Then Jesus asked the boy's father to bring him. As the boy came, the *demon attacked him. Jesus asked the father how long the boy had suffered in this manner (Mark 9:22). The boy had suffered from the *demon since he was a young child. The father then asked Jesus if he could do something. The father said to Jesus, 'If you can, take pity on us. And help us.' Jesus replied to him that, with *faith, all things are possible. The man said that he did believe. But he asked Jesus to help him with his lack of *faith (Mark 9:20-23).

Then Jesus ordered the *demon to go. The boy was there on the ground. He seemed as if he was dead (Mark 9:26). Some people said that he was dead. But Jesus took the boy by his hand and lifted him up. Jesus cured the boy and he gave the boy back to his father.

The greatness of God's power in this *miracle astonished all the people.

Verses 43b-45 (Verse 43b means the last part of verse 43.) Jesus then spoke with his *disciples. He told them about his death. Someone who was close to him would turn away from him. That person would hand Jesus over to his enemies. The *disciples did not understand what Jesus said. And they were afraid to ask him to explain it.

A question of importance – Luke 9:46-50

v46 The *disciples started to argue about which of them was the most important. **v47** Jesus knew their thoughts. So, he took a child and he stood the child next to him. **v48** Then Jesus said to his *disciples, 'Whoever receives this child because of me receives me. Also, that one receives him who sent me. For the one who is least among you all, this one is great.'

v49 John answered, 'Master. We saw a man force *demons out of people. He did it in your name. We stopped him because he does not follow you with us.'

v50 Jesus said, 'Do not stop him. Whoever is not against you is for you.'

Verses 46-48 The *disciples knew that Jesus will rule as king. They discussed which of them would be the most important in his *kingdom. Jesus was not in this conversation. But he knew what they thought.

Jesus caused a little child to stand next to him. A little child had no rank in that society. The child was not an important person. It was just a child. But if one receives a child because of Christ, he receives Christ. To receive Christ is to receive God the Father as well. That is because God the Father sent Christ to this world.

The one who considers himself the least among God's people will be great. Those people who are great in their own eyes will become of little importance (Luke 1:51-53; Luke 6:20-26).

Jesus was teaching that Christians, and especially their leaders, should have humble attitudes. In other words, they must not allow themselves to become proud because of their own importance. A truly important Christian must serve other people - even little children - on God's behalf. As Christians do that, they are serving Christ. And when they serve Christ, they are doing God's work (Mark 9:33-37, Mark 10:42-45).

Verses 49-50 The *apostle John now told Jesus about a man who freed people from the power of *demons. This man forced the *demons out in the name of Jesus. But the man was not with the *disciples who followed Jesus. John and some other *disciples saw this man, and they told him to stop. To do this work, the man should be one of their group. That is what John and the other *disciples told that man.

Jesus told John that they were wrong to stop the man. Someone who does a *miracle in the name of Jesus will not soon say anything bad about Jesus (Mark 9:39). This man was not against Jesus and his *disciples. People are either on the side of Christ, or they are against him.

Word List For Section 2

AD ~ years after Christ.

alabaster ~ a soft stone that people used to make small bottles.

ancestors ~ people in history from whom your family has come.

angel ~ a servant of God from heaven. God made angels to serve him and to take his messages. So, angels are God's servants from heaven. But there are evil angels who opposed God. These evil angels now serve the devil.

apostle ~ someone whom God sends; especially one of the 12 men whom Jesus chose to be his helpers.

Aramaic ~ the language that Jesus spoke.

at peace ~ a right relationship with God, or with other people.

baptise ~ to use water in a special ceremony to show that God has forgiven (washed away) someone's *sin.

Baptist ~ a title for John, who prepared for Christ's arrival, because he *baptised people.

BC ~ years before Christ

blasphemy ~ to say things against God; to curse and to insult God.

bless ~ to show kindness.

centurion ~ an officer in the *Roman army.

Christ ~ the Christ is the name for the person whom God would send to save his people. Jesus is the Christ and he was called Christ.

demons ~ evil *angels that serve the devil.

denarius ~ a coin. The plural is denarii.

disciple ~ a person who follows a leader, especially the 12 men that Jesus chose to be with him.

eternal life ~ life of a new quality for those people who believe in Jesus. This new life will be with Jesus always.

faith ~ trust in someone or something; belief and trust in God and in Jesus Christ his Son.

fever ~ an illness that makes the body very hot.

fig ~ a kind of sweet fruit.

fishermen ~ men whose job is to catch fish.

glory ~ great honour and beauty.

Gospel ~ one of the four Bible Books about the life of Jesus.

grapes ~ the fruit of a plant called a grapevine.

Greek ~ the language in which the authors wrote the *New Testament.

Hebrew ~ the language of the *Jews and of the *Old Testament.

Holy Spirit ~ God's Spirit, whom Jesus has sent to help his people. The Bible also calls the Holy Spirit: the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ and the Comforter. The *Holy Spirit is a person but not human. He carries out God's work on earth. The Holy Spirit is God, equal with God the Father and with God the Son.

hypocrite ~ someone who pretends.

Israel ~ the country of the *Jews.

Jewish ~ people or things that are from the *Jews.

Jews ~ people who were born from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the families of their children.

kingdom ~ the place or territory where a king rules. In the *New Testament, this word nearly always refers to the people over whom the king rules and not a territory on earth.

Lamb ~ a lamb is a young sheep. The title 'Lamb of God' is a name for Jesus because he died as a *sacrifice for our *sin.

legion ~ a group of several thousand soldiers in the *Roman army; a large number of people or things.

leper ~ a man with a serious skin disease called *leprosy.

leprosy ~ a serious disease of the skin.

Lord ~ a title for God, or Jesus, to show that he is over all people and things. In the *Old Testament, LORD was a special name for God.

miracle ~ a powerful deed that does not happen by natural means. Often, miracles seem impossible to explain. Miracles show God's power.

Most High ~ a title for God.

New Testament ~ the last part of the Bible, which the writers wrote after the life of Jesus on earth.

Old Testament ~ the first part of the Bible; the holy things that the writers wrote before Jesus' birth.

Pentecost ~ annual ceremony when the *Jews thank God for the harvest.

perfume ~ oil with a sweet smell.

Pharisees ~ a group of *Jews who tried to keep all God's rules. Many Pharisees did not approve of Jesus.

preach ~ to speak out God's message in public and to teach his word.

prophecy ~ a message from God that a person speaks by the power of the *Holy Spirit.

prophet ~ a person who speaks for God. A prophet can sometimes say what will happen in the future.

prostitute ~ a woman who sells her body to men for sex.

repent ~ to change one's mind and heart. People who repent must turn their minds and hearts away from *sin. They ask God to help them so that they can now serve him.

Roman ~ Rome was the capital city of the rulers at the time of the *New Testament. Anything that belonged to Rome was Roman.

Sabbath ~ the 7th day of the week (Saturday) which was special to the *Jews as a holy day.

sacrifice ~ a gift to God to ask him to forgive *sins or to thank him for something.

salvation ~ the result when God saves us from *sin and punishment; the new life that God gives to those people who believe in the *Lord Jesus.

sandals ~ a shoe with a piece of leather underneath and leather pieces to fit to the foot.

Satan ~ the name of the devil.

scroll ~ a book in the form of a roll of paper or other material.

sin ~ sin is the wrong things that we do. To sin is to do wrong, bad or evil deeds and not to obey God.

sinful ~ a person who *sins is sinful.

sinner ~ people who *sin.

spice ~ a sweet substance or a substance with a strong smell.

synagogue ~ a building where *Jews gather for prayer; a place where the *Jews meet for the purpose of their religion.

temple ~ a special building for the *worship of God. The *Jews had a temple in Jerusalem for the *worship of the real God. But at other temples, people *worshipped false gods.

thorns ~ sharp hard points on a tree or bush.

tribe ~ a large family from one man. The nation called *Israel grew from the 12 sons of Jacob. These 12 families became the 12 tribes of *Israel.

worship ~ the act when someone shows honour to God (or to a false god). When a person worships, that person praises God. That person thanks God. And that person respects God.

Section 3

Luke: The Man Christ Jesus

Jesus on his way from Galilee to Jerusalem

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Ian Mackervoy

This commentary **has been** through Advanced Checking.

Words in boxes are from the Bible.

A word list at the end explains words with a *star by them.

No welcome in a *Samaritan village – Luke 9:51-56

v51 The time was coming soon when Jesus would go back to heaven. So, he decided that he would go to Jerusalem. **v52** He sent some men ahead of him. They went into a *Samaritan village to arrange a place for him to stay. **v53** The people there would not receive him because he was on his way to Jerusalem. **v54** James and John, two of Jesus' *disciples, saw this. They asked Jesus, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to burn them up?" **v55** But Jesus turned to them. He told them that they had a wrong attitude. **v56** So, they went to another village.

Verses 51-56 Jesus was in the north of *Israel. He knew that the time of his return to heaven would be soon. Therefore, he set out to go to Jerusalem. There he would die and he would rise from death. Then 40 days later he would go up from the earth into heaven (Acts 1:1-9).

The journey to Jerusalem would take about three days by the most direct route. Jesus' route went through Samaria. He sent some *disciples ahead of him to find a place to stay. The *Samaritans and the *Jews were not friends. The *Samaritans knew that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. So, they would not give him a place to stay in their village.

James and John were angry because of this. It seems that these two *disciples had bad tempers. Jesus called them 'sons of thunder' (Mark 3:17). Thunder is the loud noise that that you may hear in a storm. James and John wanted to call fire down from heaven on this *Samaritan village. Some translations add 'as Elijah did.' Elijah had called fire down from heaven on the soldiers that had come to arrest him (2 Kings 1:10-12). But Jesus told James and John that their attitude was wrong. Those people who follow the *Christ should not have such angry reactions. They should love their enemies and they should not want to hurt them.

The cost to be a *disciple – Luke 9:57-62

v57 As they walked along the road, a man spoke to Jesus. The man said, 'I will follow you wherever you go.'
v58 Jesus replied, 'Foxes have holes. Birds of the air have nests. But the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head.'
v59 Jesus said to another man, 'Follow me.' However, that man said, '*Lord, first let me go to bury my father.'
v60 Jesus answered him. 'Leave dead people to bury their own dead people. You must go and tell about the *kingdom of God.'
v61 Another man said, 'I will follow you *Lord. But first let me say goodbye to those at my home.'

v62 Jesus replied to this man. 'Nobody who starts to plough should look back. If he does, he is no use in the *kingdom of God.'

Verses 57-62 These three incidents show that to follow the *Christ can be difficult. These three men did not understand what it meant to follow Jesus. There is a cost to pay if we would follow him.

The first man approached Jesus. If this is the same event as in Matthew, the man was a teacher of the law (Matthew 8:19). He spoke to Jesus. He said that he would follow Jesus. He would go wherever Jesus went. The man had not understood what this might mean.

Jesus replied that animals and birds have their homes. Jesus, as the Son of Man, had no home in this world. To follow him would mean to share his way of life.

Jesus asked the second man to follow him. This man is called a *disciple in Matthew 8:21. Jesus called him to *preach the good news. But this man was not yet ready to come. He wanted to bury his father first. If his father had died, the man would not have been with Jesus. He would have been busy until he had buried the father. So probably the meaning is that the father was still alive. The man wanted to stay at home until his father died. Then he would follow Jesus.

Whether the father was dead or not, the work of God's *kingdom must come first. Let those who are at home bury that father. Not even this family matter is a sufficient excuse not to obey Jesus. This man must obey Jesus now. When Jesus tells a person to do something, he expects there to be no delay.

The third man said to Jesus that he would follow him. He asked that first he might say goodbye to his family at home. This sounds like a reasonable request. But perhaps in this case he was delaying his decision. Later he might follow Jesus or maybe he will not follow Jesus.

Jesus shows that the work of the *kingdom will not wait. Those people who start this work must not turn back. The man who starts to plough must go forward to finish the task.

Jesus sends 72 *disciples ahead of him – Luke 10:1-24

v1 After this, the *Lord chose another 72 *disciples and he sent them ahead of him. They went in teams of two to every town and place where Jesus intended to go. **v2** He said to them, 'There is a large harvest. But there are only a few workers to gather it. Therefore, ask the *Lord of the harvest to send workers that they may gather his harvest. **v3** Go, I send you like young sheep among *wolves. **v4** Do not take a purse, a bag or shoes with you. Do not stop to greet anyone on the way.'

v5 When you enter a house, first say, 'I pray that there will be *peace in this house.' **v6** If a *peaceful man lives there, your *peace will rest on him. If not, then your *peace will return to you. **v7** Stay in that house. Eat the food that they give to you. And drink what they give to you. These are your wages and the worker deserves his wages. Do not move from house to house.

v8 You will go into towns where the people receive you. There eat the food that they give to you. **v9** Cure the sick people who live there. Tell them, "The *kingdom of God is near to you." **v10** But you may go into a town where the people do not receive you. Go into the streets and say this to the people. **v11** "Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. But know this: that the *kingdom of God has come near." **v12** I tell you, on that day it will be easier for Sodom than for that town.

v13 How terrible it will be for you, Chorazin. How terrible it will be for you, Bethsaida. I have done many *miracles in you. If I had done them in Tyre and Sidon, those people would have *repented long ago. They would have put on rough clothes and they would have sat in ashes. **v14** It will be easier for Tyre and Sidon than for you on the day when God is the judge. **v15** And you Capernaum, you have been almost up to heaven. But you will go down to hell.

v16 Whoever listens to you (the 72 *disciples), listens to me. Whoever refuses to accept you, refuses to accept me. And whoever refuses to accept me, refuses to accept God. He is the one who sent me.'

v17 The 72 *disciples came back very happy. They said, '*Lord, even the *demons obey us in your name.'

v18 Jesus said to them, 'I saw *Satan fall like lightning from heaven. **v19** Listen, I have given to you authority to walk on snakes and *scorpions. I have given to you authority to overcome all the power of the enemy. So, nothing will hurt you. **v20** However, do not be happy because evil spirits obey you. Rather be happy because God has written your names in heaven.'

v21 In that hour, the *Holy Spirit filled Jesus with joy. He said, 'Father, you are the *Lord of heaven and earth. I praise you because you hid all this from wise and intelligent people. But you showed it to little children. Yes, Father, that is what pleased you.'

v22 'My Father has given all things to me. Nobody knows who the Son is, except the Father. Nobody knows who the Father is, except the Son. But those people to whom the Son shows the Father, they will know him.'

v23 Jesus turned to his *disciples and he spoke to them in private. 'God has *blessed you to see the things that you see. **v24** Many *prophets and kings desired to see what you now see. I tell you that they did not see it. They desired to hear what you now hear. But they did not hear it.'

Verses 1-4 The *Lord Jesus sent a number of *disciples ahead of him on his journey to Jerusalem. It is difficult to say how many there were. Many Bibles have 70 rather than 72. The word 'another' may mean that these were in addition to the 12 *apostles. So the total could be as many as 84. But it is more likely that the 12 *apostles stayed with Jesus.

People have tried to interpret the number 72. The *Jews thought that there were 72 nations in the world. So, the good news is for the entire world. Other people have tried to interpret the number 70. The Sanhedrin had 70 members. The Sanhedrin was the government of the *Jews. The 70 leaders of the people ought to be ready for the *Christ to come. They should have prepared the people for the *Christ. Another idea is that there is a reference to the 70 leaders of Israel in Numbers 11:24-30. After the *Holy Spirit came upon them, they shared Moses' work (Numbers 11:16-17).

Jesus spoke of a large harvest. There was a lot of work to do. But there were only a few workers to gather it. Once the harvest is ready, there must not be any delay. A delay could spoil the harvest. The harvest here means the people who need to hear the good news about the *kingdom of God. This is true in every age. People need to hear the good news about Jesus.

Jesus sent these teams ahead of him. But the need was for many more workers. So, Jesus told them to pray that God would send more workers to work for the *kingdom of God. This should be the prayer of Christians in all ages.

The work of the *kingdom of God is often dangerous. Jesus told these *disciples that they were like young sheep among *wolves. *Wolves are wild animals. They look like large dogs. *Wolves are natural enemies of sheep. *Wolves will scatter the sheep. And they kill those sheep that they catch. The people who follow Jesus will have many enemies. Many Christians have died because they belong to Jesus. The Bible tells us that we should expect to suffer on behalf of Jesus (Philippians 1:29).

These *disciples had to depend on God and the kindness of people for all that they needed. They did not take money, food or spare clothes for the journey.

It was the custom to stop and to talk with anyone whom you met on the way. This was not just to say hello. It could be a long conversation. These *disciples must not spend the time in unnecessary conversation. They had urgent work to do.

Verses 5-7 When the *disciples came to a town or village, they would find a place to stay. Then they would ask the *Lord to *bless that house and the people who live there. If their hosts have the right attitude, the *Lord will *bless them. He would show them kindness as they had shown kindness to his servants. But the *Lord will not *bless those people who refused to receive them.

While the *disciples were in that place, they should not move from house to house. They should stay in the house that they entered first. As the *Lord's workers, they deserve the food and drink that the hosts give to them. These things are their wages.

Here is a right principle. Those people who work for the *Lord deserve their wages (1 Timothy 5:18).

Verses 8-12 The *disciples would go into towns or villages where people would receive them. There the *disciples should accept the kindness of the people. In a wealthy home, the food may be very good; elsewhere the food may be poor. But the *disciples should eat whatever the people give to them. In these places, the *disciples would have the power to cure sick people. And they should *preach the good news of the *kingdom of God.

The people in other towns and villages would not receive the *disciples. The *disciples should tell the people about the *kingdom of God. But the people in these places would not believe the *gospel. The *disciples must warn these people that God will punish them. To show this, the *disciples must wipe the dust of that place from their feet.

You can read about Sodom in Genesis 18:16 to 19:29. At the last day, God will punish Sodom. But these towns will receive worse punishment. There is no hope for anyone that refuses to accept the *Lord Jesus.

Verses 13-15 Then Jesus spoke about some towns where he had done many *miracles. These towns were at the north end of the Sea of Galilee.

This is the only reference to Chorazin (or Korazin) in the Bible. Bethsaida was the home of Peter, Andrew and Philip (John 1:44; John 12:21). It was on the north west side of the sea. Jesus made Capernaum his home while he was in Galilee (Matthew 4:13).

The people from these towns will suffer because they did not *repent. They opposed God as they refused to accept Jesus.

Jesus did many *miracles in all of these places. We read about only a few of them at Capernaum. He did many more powerful works in addition to the ones that the *New Testament mentions (John 21:25).

Tyre and Sidon were towns on the coast to the north of *Israel. Ezekiel chapters 26 to 28 describe how God would punish Tyre. If Jesus had done these *miracles there, the people would have *repented. Rough clothes and ashes were a sign of *repentance. The punishment for these people will be less severe than for the inhabitants of the towns in Galilee.

Verse 16 The *disciples must speak as from the *Lord Jesus. Jesus gave to them authority to speak on his behalf. So, people who listen to the words of the *disciples in effect listen to the words of Jesus. To refuse the *disciples is to refuse Jesus who sent them. To refuse Jesus is to refuse God. As God sent Jesus, so Jesus sent his *disciples.

Verses 17-20 The *disciples came back to Jesus. They gave to him an account of their experiences. They had done many things by the authority that Jesus had given to them. Even *demons had to obey them because of the power of the *Lord Jesus. Without that power, they could not have done these things.

Jesus saw *Satan fall like lightning from heaven. This seems to mean the defeat of *Satan. And that defeat was sudden, like lightning from the skies. The power of Jesus in his *disciples broke the power of *demons.

Jesus had given to the *disciples authority over the enemy. The enemy is *Satan and his power is like that of snakes and *scorpions. The bites of snakes and the sting of *scorpions could be poisonous. But even these could not hurt the *disciples. So, nothing that the enemy would do could hurt them. As they carried out this special task for Jesus, the *disciples had authority over the enemy.

A *scorpion has 8 feet, 8 eyes and a long tail. It is up to 4 inches (10 centimetres) in length. At the end of the tail is its sting. Its sting is extremely poisonous, and sometimes it can kill a person.

The *disciples were excited that they had sent *demons away. But they should be happier that God had accepted them. Their future was in heaven. It was the custom in each city to keep a register of all the citizens. So, the *disciples were citizens of heaven.

Verses 21-23 What Jesus had done by means of the *disciples excited him. The *Holy Spirit filled him with this joy. So, Jesus praised God his Father who is the *Lord of heaven and earth.

Jesus does not say what 'all this' is. It probably refers to what the *disciples learnt. God had shown the truth to these ordinary people. Without God's help, even intelligent people with their wisdom and education cannot find the truth about God. But God can show it even to little children.

God the Father has given to Jesus power and authority over all things. Jesus is the Son of God. Nobody can really know who Jesus is. Only God the Father has a full knowledge of Jesus the Son. Nobody can know God the Father. But Jesus shows us who God is. It is by means of Jesus and only by means of Jesus that we can know God the Father.

Jesus told the *disciples how God had *blessed them. They had seen that Jesus is the *Christ. They had heard what he said. They had seen his *miracles. The *prophets and many of the kings in the *Old Testament wanted to see the *Christ. But they did not see him. They wanted to hear him but they did not hear him.

The good *Samaritan – Luke 10:25-37

v25 An expert in the *Jewish Law came to test Jesus. 'Teacher', he asked, 'what must I do to receive *eternal life?'

v26 Jesus answered him, 'What does the law say? What do you read in the law?'

v27 The man answered, 'You must love the *Lord your God with all your heart. You must love him with all your *soul, with all your strength and with your entire mind. And you must love your neighbour as yourself.'

v28 Jesus said to him, 'Your answer is right. Do this and you will live.'

v29 However, the man wanted to defend himself. So, he asked Jesus, 'Who is my neighbour?'

v30 Jesus replied, 'A man was going from Jerusalem to Jericho. On the way, thieves attacked him. They stripped him of his clothes and they hit him many times. Then they left him almost dead. **v31** By chance, a priest came down that road. He saw the man but he went by on the other side of the road. **v32** Then a *Levite came to that place. He saw the man. But he too went by on the other side of the road. **v33** Then a *Samaritan came to the man as he travelled down that road. He saw the man and he pitied him. **v34** He went over to the man and he cleaned his injuries with oil and wine. He covered those injuries with bandages. Then he put the man on his own animal. He took the man to a hotel where he took care of him. **v35** The next day, the *Samaritan took out two silver coins and he gave them to the hotel manager. He said to the manager, "Take care of this man. I will come back. Then I will pay you any extra that you spend on his behalf."'

v36 Jesus then asked, 'What do you think? Which of these three men was a neighbour to the man that the thieves had attacked?'

v37 The expert in the law replied, 'The one who showed kindness to the man.' Jesus told him, 'Go. Do what he did.'

Verses 25-29 This man was an expert in the *Jewish religion. He came to test Jesus. This does not mean that he was against Jesus. He asked Jesus how he could earn *eternal life. Probably he wanted to find out what Jesus would say to this question. He did not ask it because he needed the answer for himself. But Jesus turned the question back to him.

Jesus asked the expert what the law said on this subject. He asked him what he understood from the law. The answer from the law is that a person must love the *Lord. That love must be with the whole person. And a person must love his neighbour as much as he loves himself. Jesus agreed with this answer. If a person could obey the whole law, he would have *eternal life. Jesus told the man to do it. But such a standard is not possible for us to achieve. We cannot save ourselves. We cannot obey the whole law (Romans 3:20).

The law expert tried to obey the law. He wanted people to think that he had succeeded in it. So, he asked Jesus, 'Who is my neighbour?' That was an important question. The *Jewish law clearly taught that *Jews had a duty to look after other *Jews (Leviticus 19:18). But people argued about whether they also had a duty to look after foreigners. Especially people would not want to consider the *Samaritans, who were often the enemies of the *Jews, as neighbours.

Verses 30-37 Jesus told the man a story to show him what a neighbour would do. Jesus made the expert decide who was the neighbour. The expert had to say that a *Samaritan was the true neighbour.

From Jerusalem to Jericho is a distance of about 17 miles (about 27 kilometres). Jericho is on a plain near the Jordan River. It is a few miles north of the Dead Sea. The road in those days was very steep. It went down about 3000 feet (900 metres) through rocks in which thieves could easily hide. It was dangerous to travel that road alone.

A man went from Jerusalem to go to Jericho. Jesus expected the expert to understand that the man was a *Jew. Thieves attacked the man and they almost killed him. They took all that he had, even his clothes. And they left the man there at the side of the road.

Priests and *Levites served in the *temple in Jerusalem. There were 24 groups of priests. Each group was on duty for a week. A large number of these priests and *Levites lived in Jericho. So there would often be priests and *Levites on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho.

In the story, a priest came down that road. He had finished his duties in the *temple. He was on his way home. He saw the man but he went by on the other side of the road. That was a terrible thing to do. A priest should be a holy man; he certainly should not neglect such an important duty. If the priest was going up to Jerusalem, he would have a special reason to be careful. If he touched a dead person, he could not serve in the *temple with his group. He would be unclean for 7 days (Numbers 19:16). However, that would not be a proper excuse. The duty to help someone in a desperate situation was more important even than the work in the *temple.

Then a *Levite came by. He came and he looked at the man. Then he passed by on the other side of the road. The same was true of the *Levite as with the priest. He had no proper excuse.

Jesus now says that a *Samaritan came down that road. The *Jews and the *Samaritans were often enemies. The *Samaritan came to the man and he pitied him. Jesus contrasted the attitude of the *Samaritan with that of the priest and the *Levite. They would not help another *Jew; but the *Samaritan helped an enemy.

The *Samaritan did what he could on behalf of the man. He cleaned the injuries with oil and wine. In those days, they used oil and wine as medicine to heal injuries. Then he covered the injuries with bandages. He put the man on his own animal and he took the man to a hotel. The *Samaritan took care of the man for the night. Then in the morning, he paid the hotel manager the money to take care of the man. Maybe the hotel would have to spend more. The *Samaritan promised to pay to them what they had spent.

The *Samaritan gave to the hotel manager two silver coins. These coins were probably enough to keep the man for perhaps a month in the hotel.

Jesus asked the expert in the *Jewish law which of the three persons was a neighbour to the man. The expert had to answer, 'The one who helped the man.' Perhaps his prejudice would not allow him to say, 'The *Samaritan.'

The original question that the expert in the *Jewish law asked, was, 'Who is my neighbour?' The *Samaritan showed himself to be the neighbour to the man. Jesus did not say who was a neighbour to the expert. But the expert should be a neighbour. Now Jesus told the expert to do the same kind of thing. Show kindness to all whether they are friends or enemies.

Martha and Mary – Luke 10:38-42

v38 Jesus and his *disciples travelled to a certain village. There a woman called Martha took him into her home. **v39** Martha had a sister. Her name was Mary. Mary sat by Jesus' feet. She listened to what Jesus said. **v40** Martha worried about all the work that she needed to do in order to serve her guests. Then she went to Jesus and she spoke to him. '*Lord, does it not bother you that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to come and to help me.'

v41 The *Lord replied to her. 'Martha, Martha, you worry and you bother about many things. **v42** Only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen what is good. And nobody will take it away from her.'

Verses 38-42 Jesus and his *disciples went to Bethany village where Martha and Mary lived. Bethany was about two miles from Jerusalem. Martha invited them into her home. Martha lived there with her sister Mary.

With such a large group of guests, Martha was very busy. To provide for them all, there was a lot of work to do. And Martha was anxious about it. Probably she would rather have listened to Jesus but she was too busy. But Mary did not help her in her work. Mary just sat at the feet of Jesus to listen to what he said. It seems that she was eager to learn from Jesus. And Jesus encouraged her to learn from him. This was not usual in those times. Not many *Jewish teachers would teach a woman.

It upset Martha that Mary did not help her in the work. It upset her that Jesus did not seem to care about it. She asked Jesus to tell Mary that she should come to help her. Jesus understood what Martha felt. He was gentle in his reply to her. Martha was anxious because she was so busy in her work for Jesus. Mary had not joined in that work, but she was still doing something good. Only one thing is really necessary for us: to receive a right relationship with God. Mary had done that and Jesus would not stop her. Our work for God should be the result of that relationship.

We can be so busy that we fail to hear the *Lord. It is better to hear the *Lord first. Then we can do what is necessary.

Jesus teaches us how to pray – Luke 11:1-13

v1 One day Jesus prayed in a certain place. When he had finished, one of his *disciples said to him, '*Lord, teach us to pray. Teach us like John taught his *disciples.'

v2 Jesus told them, 'This is how you should pray. "Father, your name is holy. Let your *kingdom come. **v3** Give to us each day the bread that we need. **v4** Forgive us our *sins. We forgive everyone who has done wrong deeds to us. Do not allow anyone to *tempt us." '

v5 Then Jesus said to them, 'One of you may have a friend, to whom you go at midnight. You say to this friend, "Lend me three loaves of bread. **v6** A friend of mine has come on a journey to visit me. But I have nothing for him to eat." **v7** Your friend inside the house may answer, "Do not bother me. I have locked the door and my children are in bed with me. I cannot get up to give anything to you." **v8** I tell you that he may not want to get up. He may not want to give you bread because you are his friend. But if you continue to ask, he will get up. He will give to you as much as you need.

v9 So, I tell you to ask and you will receive. Search and you will find. Knock and the door will open for you. **v10** Everyone who asks will receive. Everyone who searches will find. And to everyone who knocks, the door will open.

v11 You fathers, if your son asks for a fish, you would not give to him a snake instead. **v12** If your son asks for an egg, you would not give to him a *scorpion. **v13** Although you are evil, you know how to give good gifts to your children. But your Father in heaven is even more ready to give the *Holy Spirit to anyone who asks.'

Verses 1-4 Luke often records that Jesus prayed. Jesus prayed at his *baptism (Luke 3:21). He often went alone to pray or he prayed with his *disciples (Luke 5:16; Luke 9:18). He prayed all night before he chose the *apostles (Luke 6:12). And he prayed on the mountain when Moses and Elijah came to him (Luke 9:29).

Leaders of religion often taught their *disciples how to pray. John the *Baptist had taught his *disciples. One of Jesus' *disciples saw how Jesus prayed. So, he asked Jesus to teach them.

Then Jesus gave to them this prayer. We know it as the *Lord's prayer. This prayer is similar to the one in Matthew (Matthew 6:5-15). That prayer is a bit longer than the one in Luke. Probably Jesus taught the prayer in Matthew some time earlier than this occasion. Both prayers have the same arrangement.

This prayer is a model of how we ought to pray. It is not enough just to repeat the words. But when Christians pray together, we often say these words. In prayer, by *faith we talk to our God. This prayer is a pattern for our own prayers.

Jesus starts the prayer with 'Father'. When we pray we call God our Father. This is true for all who believe in the *Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Son of God and by *faith, we become children of God.

The 'name' of God means God himself. It includes the whole character of God. God is holy. We praise God because of who he is. This is the proper attitude when we come to God in prayer. We praise him before we ask for anything. And our first request is for his *kingdom to come. In effect, we ask that he will rule as king in us and in the world. He is the *Lord and we are his servants.

Then there are three requests for us.

(1) The first request is for bread each day. We depend on God to provide for us. We ask God to supply all that we need for each day.

(2) The second request is that God would forgive us. First, we need to forgive those people who have done wrong deeds against us. We cannot expect God to forgive us if we do not forgive other people. But God does not forgive us because we forgive other people. He forgives us because he loves us. God can forgive us because Jesus died for our *sins. When we *repent of our *sins, God forgives us. But if we ask God to forgive us, we ought to forgive other people.

(3) God does not *tempt us (James 1:13). We should run away from the wrong deeds that *tempt us. But we are weak. So, we ask God to save us from all that *tempts us. In particular, we ask God to save us from the evil one, the devil.

Verses 5-8 Jesus tells a story to show that we should continue in prayer.

In the villages, each family would bake bread every day. By the evening, this particular family did not have any bread. A friend arrived in the middle of the night. The family did not expect this friend to come. But the host must feed this guest. In that society, people considered that to be an important duty. He could not then buy bread. So, the host went to the house of another friend to ask for three small loaves. But this other friend was in bed with his children. They all slept in one room. To get up would disturb the children. This friend would not get up even to help his friend. The man who needed the bread would not go away. He continued to ask for bread. So, in the end, the friend got up and gave him the loaves. He was ready to give more than the man had requested.

If we really want something from God, we will continue in prayer. God wants to answer our prayers. But he does not always answer immediately.

Verses 9-10 Jesus tells his *disciples to ask, to search and to knock. All three of these are continuous. Continue to ask. Continue to search and continue to knock. To each of these actions, there will be success. God will always hear true prayer. He will answer those prayers in the way that is best. The answer may be different from the request. Prayer must be in *faith and for the right purpose (James 1:5-8; James 4:3).

Verses 11-13 God is our Father in heaven. He is so much better than even the best human father. No human father would give a snake instead of a fish to his child. He would not give a *scorpion instead of an egg. An evil father knows how to give good gifts to his children. God is even more ready to give good things to his children.

God has promised to give the *Holy Spirit to his people when they ask him.

Jesus and the prince of *demons – Luke 11:14-28

v14 Jesus forced a *demon to leave a man. The *demon had made the man unable to talk. When the *demon had gone out, the man began to talk. And this event astonished the people. **v15** But some of them said, 'By Beelzebul, the prince of *demons, he forces *demons to leave people.' **v16** Other people wanted to test Jesus. So, they asked him to show them a *miracle from heaven.

v17 But Jesus knew their thoughts so he said to them, 'A *kingdom that fights against itself will destroy itself. And a house that fights against itself will fall. **v18** If *Satan fights against himself, his *kingdom will not continue. You say that I force out *demons by the power of Beelzebul. **v19** If I force out *demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your people force them out? So, your people will be your judges. **v20** However, if by the finger of God I force out *demons, then the *kingdom of God has come to you.

v21 When a strong man, with his *weapons ready, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. **v22** But a stronger man than he may attack him and defeat him. The stronger man will take away the *weapons that the strong man had trusted. Then he will divide with other people the *weapons that he has taken.

v23 Anyone who is not with me is against me. And anyone who does not gather with me, scatters.

v24 When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it travels through dry places. It looks for a place to rest but it will find no place to rest. Then it says, "I will return. I will go back to the house that I left." **v25** It comes back to the man. It finds him like a house that is clean and in order. **v26** Then the spirit goes and it brings along 7 other spirits more evil than itself. They go in and live there. And the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.'

v27 As Jesus said these things, a woman in the crowd called out loudly. 'How happy is the mother who gave birth to you. How happy is she who fed you at her breasts.'

v28 He replied, 'Yes. But rather, those people who hear and obey the word of God are happy.'

Verses 14-16 There was a man who was dumb because of a *demon in him. Jesus ordered the *demon to come out of the man. It came out and the man was able to speak. Nobody doubted that Jesus had done this *miracle. It astonished them. But they did not know the power by which Jesus had done it. Some of the people said that the power came from Beelzebul. Other people wanted to see evidence that the power was from heaven. They had not understood what this *miracle meant. It was evidence that Jesus was the *Christ. Jesus Christ had freed this man from the power of the *demon.

Beelzebul was the prince of *demons. The name probably comes from the name of a false god. It became another name for *Satan.

Verses 17-20 Jesus knew what was in the minds of the people. So he explained that it would not be reasonable for *Satan to force out *demons. If he did, he would defeat himself. *Satan tries to destroy what is good. He does not destroy what is evil.

There were *Jews who tried to force *demons to leave people. Jesus asked if they did it by the power of *Satan. The answer must be no. If they were able to free people from *demons, they could only do that by the power of God.

The 'finger of God' means the power of God. If Jesus forced out *demons by the finger of God then God's *kingdom had come. In other words, Jesus' success against *demons was evidence of God's rule.

Verses 21-23 Jesus then told a story about a strong man. This man was ready to guard his house, in other words, his palace. The palace was safe until a stronger man came along. Then that stronger man defeated the man who was guarding his own palace.

*Satan was like the strong man who guarded his possessions. *Satan cannot stand against the power of God. *Satan has a strong grip on people. But when God's *kingdom comes, it breaks that grip. The *Lord Jesus is that stronger man. By God's power, he defeated *Satan.

People have to make a choice. Either they accept Jesus Christ or they refuse him. Either they are with him or they are against him.

Verses 24-26 Jesus had just sent a *demon (an evil spirit) out of a dumb man. This little story does not mean that the *demon will return to that man. Of course Christ did not make people free so that evil spirits could enter their lives again. But people have a choice whether they will serve God or not. In the story, the man chose not to allow God to rule his life. That wrong decision gave the *demon the opportunity to return to that man.

The evil spirit thinks of a person as its home. If it leaves that home, it will wander in dry places. People thought of dry deserts as the place where there were evil spirits. This evil spirit looks for a place of rest in the dry desert places. It does not find such a place of rest. So, it returns to the person that it calls its 'house'.

Without the evil spirit, the person's life had improved. When the evil spirit returns, he finds the person in a better state. But the person has not permitted God to rule his life. So that person is available for the evil spirit to come in again. The evil spirit finds 7 worse evil spirits. And they all make their home in the person. So, the person is in an even worse state than before.

In this story, the evil spirit had come out of the person. But it is not enough just to send an evil spirit away. There is an empty place in that person's life; it is necessary to fill that empty place. But the person had not allowed God to rule his life; he had not allowed God's *Holy Spirit to enter that place. So, he was open to the return of the evil spirit. When the *Holy Spirit rules a person's life, no evil spirit can return.

Verses 27-28 The woman thought that it would be wonderful to be the mother of Jesus. She would be happy if her son was as great as him. His mother must be happy because God had *blessed her with such a son. That was true but Jesus spoke of something more important. The natural relationship with him is not so important. But God *blesses those people who have a right attitude to his word. They hear the word of God and they obey it.

A lesson from Jonah – Luke 11:29-32

v29 The crowds gathered round Jesus. He said to them, 'The people who live today are evil. They look for *miracles as evidence of the truth. But the only evidence that they will get is the evidence of Jonah. **v30** Jonah was evidence for the people who lived in Nineveh. Even so the Son of Man will be to the people of today. **v31** The queen of the south will rise at the judgement with the men who live now. She will show that they are guilty. She travelled a very long way to hear Solomon's wisdom. Look! Someone very much greater than Solomon is here. **v32** The men from Nineveh will rise at the judgement with those people who live now. They will show that the people of today are guilty. They *repented when Jonah *preached to them. Look! Someone very much greater than Jonah is here.'

Verses 29-32 The people had asked Jesus for evidence. They wanted him to show them *miracles from heaven (verse 16). As the crowd increased, Jesus replied to their request. Because the people of that time wanted such evidence, Jesus called them an evil people. They should trust God; they should not merely ask for *miracles. And Jesus would not do any *miracles in order to satisfy them. People have a duty to trust God whether or not they see his *miracles.

The story of Jonah will be evidence for them. As Jonah *preached to the people in Nineveh, so Jesus *preached to the people of his time. The people in Nineveh *repented and they turned to God. God was doing a greater work by means of Jesus than he did by means of Jonah. But most of the people to whom Jesus *preached did not *repent. They did not believe him and they did not accept him as the *Christ. At the time of the judgement, the people from Nineveh will show that these people are guilty.

Luke does not talk about the time that Jonah was in the big fish. Jonah was three days and three nights in the big fish (Jonah 1:17). So, the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the earth (Matthew 12:40). Jonah came out of the big fish as from death to life. So, Jesus would rise from death. That will be the proof that Jesus is the *Christ, the Son of God.

Jesus talks about the queen of the south. We know her as the queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1-13). Sheba was probably the country that we now call Yemen. She heard of the wisdom of Solomon. From Sheba to Jerusalem was a long and difficult journey. But she came all that way to hear Solomon. God was showing more wisdom in Jesus than he did in Solomon. But the people of his day did not believe Jesus. At the time of the judgement, the queen of Sheba will show that the people of Jesus' day are guilty.

The eye is as the lamp of the body – Luke 11:33-36

v33 'Nobody lights a lamp and then hides it. A person does not put a lamp under a bowl. He puts it on a lamp holder. Then those people who come in will see the light. **v34** Your eye is as the lamp for your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body is full of light. But when your eyes are bad, your body is full of darkness. **v35** So, be careful that the light in you is not darkness. **v36** If your whole body is full of light, without any darkness, it will all be bright. It will be as if a lamp shines on you.'

Verses 33-36 The purpose of a lamp is to give light. The eye receives light for the body. Jesus calls the eye the 'lamp of the body'. The body here means the person rather than just his body. When the eyes are good, the whole person gets the benefit of the light. If the eyes are not good, the person cannot see properly. It affects all that the person does.

Jesus uses the idea of light and darkness to mean what is good and evil. People can choose the right way to live, or they can choose an evil way. The good things in a person are like the light that shines. The bad things in a person are like the darkness.

We should take care that the light in us is good. In other words, we must always choose good things, and never evil things. We are responsible for the light or darkness that we receive. In other words, we are responsible for what we accept into our hearts and minds. We can be full of light and without darkness. In other words, we should obey God completely, because he is completely good. God's word is like a bright light that shines into our lives (Psalm 119:105). It directs how we should live.

With the *Pharisees and experts in the law – Luke 11:37-54

v37 After Jesus had said this, a *Pharisee invited him to have a meal with him. So, Jesus went and he took his place at the table. **v38** Jesus did not wash before the meal and this surprised the *Pharisee. **v39** The *Lord said to him, 'You *Pharisees clean the outside of cups and dishes. But inside you are thieves and you are full of evil things. **v40** You foolish people, the one who made the outside also made the inside. **v41** So, give what is inside to the poor people. Then everything will be clean for you.

v42 It will be terrible for you *Pharisees. You give to God a 10th of your *mint, *spices, and every garden *herb. But you neglect to do what is right. You neglect the love of God. You ought to have done these things and you should still have given the 10th to God.

v43 It will be terrible for you *Pharisees. You love the most important seats in the *synagogues. And you love it when people greet you in the markets.

v44 It will be terrible for you. You are like graves that people cannot see. People walk on them. But they do not know that the graves are there.'

v45 Then one of the experts in the law said to Jesus. 'Teacher, when you say these things, you insult us, too.'

v46 Jesus replied, 'And you experts in the law, it will be terrible for you. You place a heavy load on the people. You make life difficult for them, but you do not help them. It is as if you do not touch their load with even one finger.'

v47 It will be terrible for you. You built the graves in memory of the *prophets. But your *ancestors killed the *prophets. **v48** So, you show that you approve of the deeds of your *ancestors. They killed the *prophets and you build their graves. **v49** Because of this, God in his wisdom said, "I will send them *prophets and *apostles. Some of these they will kill and some they will *persecute." **v50** So, the people who live now will be responsible for the blood of all the *prophets. They are responsible for the murder of all the *prophets since the start of the world. **v51** This includes the blood of Abel. And it includes the blood of Zechariah. Zechariah's murder was between the *altar and the holy place. Yes, I tell you that you people will be responsible for all of it.

v52 It will be terrible for you experts in the law. You took away the key of knowledge. You did not enter. And you have stopped other people who wanted to enter.'

v53 Jesus left there. The *Pharisees and the teachers of the law were very angry. They began to oppose Jesus and they asked him many questions. **v54** They waited to catch Jesus by means of something that he might say.

Verses 37-41 A *Pharisee invited Jesus to have a meal with him. The *Jews had two main meals in a day. The first one was lunch. The other meal was dinner in the evening. Jesus accepted this invitation to lunch. He took his place at the table. When he came in, Jesus did not wash before the meal. The *Pharisees washed their hands in a special way before they ate. They poured water over their hands and half way up their arms. To them this was an important and necessary ceremony. It was not that Jesus had dirty hands. But Jesus did not wash them in the special way. Jesus could see that this surprised the *Pharisee.

Jesus then began to speak about the wrong ways that many people use religion. He spoke about the actions of the *Pharisees and the experts in the law to explain this. However, his words are also true about many kinds of wrong religion. Many *Pharisees genuinely wanted to serve God; Jesus was not speaking about them. He was speaking against those leaders of religion who make it difficult for people to obey God. Such leaders insist that people must follow unimportant rules. But they will not do what God wants them to do.

The *Pharisees had many rules that came from their traditions. But these rules were all about outer things like how they washed cups and dishes. It was possible to obey all their rules but still to be wicked. People who follow such rules may seem to be good persons when really they are thieves and full of evil things. In such a system of religion, what a person does is most important. But to God, it is much more important what a person is. In other words, God cares about our attitudes and thoughts, not just our actions.

The person who made the cup made both the outside and the inside. God made both our outer body and inner *soul.

When our inner *soul has a right relationship with God, God helps us to have right thoughts and attitudes. So we are clean on the inside. The result is that we will do good deeds. For example, we will give to the poor people.

Verses 42-44 Jesus warns severely here about the wrong behaviour of many of the *Pharisees. They tried so hard to appear to be good. But they failed to love God and to have *faith in him. When the *Lord comes as the judge, it will be terrible for them.

To give a 10th to God was part of the *Old Testament law (Leviticus 27:30). The *Pharisees had interpreted this law in unnecessary detail. It should be a joy to give to the *Lord. But they had made it a heavy duty. They were not wrong to give a 10th in this way. But they missed the more important parts of the law. The first command in the law was to love God. Love for God would cause them to love other people. This is what they should have done.

*Mint and *herbs are plants that people grow in their gardens. They use the leaves to give flavour to food.

Jesus often had to warn *Pharisees who wanted to be superior to other people. In the *synagogue, the most important seats were at the front. People who wanted to be important strongly desired these seats. In the market places, they wanted people to see them and to respect them. They were so proud of themselves. But God opposes people who have proud attitudes (Luke 1:51).

Jesus then says that they are like graves. These graves have no marks. People walk on these graves but they do not know it. To walk on a grave made a person unclean in their religion. So, Jesus meant that the effect of this wrong kind of religion was to lead people away from God.

Verses 45-46 Jesus spoke against the *Pharisees. But what he said referred to many of the experts in the law also. (That is, the experts in the laws and rules of religion.) One of them thought that Jesus' words were an insult against them.

These experts in the law interpreted the *Old Testament rules. But they added many rules and traditions of their own to God's commands. So, the many laws that they made were too much for people to obey. There were so many minor rules that an ordinary person could not know them all. The experts found ways to make it easier for themselves to follow all these rules. But they would not help the people.

When the *Lord comes as the judge, it will be terrible for these experts in the law.

Verses 47-51 These experts in the law, together with some other leaders of their religion, built graves for the *prophets. Their *ancestors had killed the *prophets. Now these men pretended to show honour to the *prophets. But they would not obey what the *prophets had taught them to do. So, they were behaving like their *ancestors. In effect, they approved of what their *ancestors had done. They built the graves. In this, they showed that they were guilty too. This would become even plainer in the near future. With the *Romans, they would cause the death of Jesus. And God would send other *apostles and *prophets. The same people who built graves to give honour to the *prophets, would *persecute the *apostles and *prophets. And they would kill some of them.

It was in the purpose of God to send *prophets and *apostles. He knew that people would refuse these, his servants. He knew that they would kill many of these *apostles and *prophets. So, the people of that day would be as guilty as their *ancestors were. The blame for the deaths of all the *prophets would fall on the people of that time. They had the same attitude as those people who killed the *prophets. So, they would share the same punishment.

Cain, the brother of Abel, murdered him (Genesis 4:8). Cain and Abel were sons of Adam and Eve. Abel was the first to die in this way. The people under King Joash killed Zechariah in the area of the *Lord's *temple. They threw stones at him until he died (2 Chronicles 24:21). This was the last incident of this nature that the *Old Testament records. (The two Books of Chronicles were one book in the *Hebrew Bible. And the Book of Chronicles was the last book in the *Hebrew Bible.)

Verse 52 In the day of judgement, it will be terrible for the experts in the law who had behaved in this wicked manner.

The purpose of a key is to lock or open a door. It was as if they had the key to the truth in the *Old Testament. They could have opened up the knowledge of God. In other words, they could have shown the people what God wanted. But they closed the door of the *Old Testament by their own rules and traditions. In other words, they had taken away the true meaning of God's law. They did not obey God's law. And by their rules and traditions, they stopped other people who wanted to know God.

They shut the *kingdom of heaven from the people. They did not go in themselves. And they stopped other people, so that those other people could not go in. (Matthew 23:13). In other words, they were making it difficult for other people to understand the *Old Testament. And the result was that those people could not have a right relationship with God.

Verses 53-54 Among the *Pharisees and experts in the law were many people who genuinely wanted to serve God. They would agree with what Jesus said. They did not approve of anyone who used religion to impress people or to control people.

However, many of the *Pharisees and the experts in the law became angry with Jesus. Jesus had explained clearly what was wrong with their behaviour, their attitudes and their use of religion. From now on, these men opposed Jesus. They wanted to find something with which they could accuse him. So, they asked him all kinds of difficult questions. They needed to defend their position with the people and to damage that of Jesus. The people had respected them but now the people were turning from them to Jesus.

Jesus teaches the people – Luke 12:1-59

Jesus warns against *hypocrisy – Luke 12:1-3

v1 Thousands of people crowded together, so that they were stepping on each other's feet. Jesus began to speak to his *disciples first. He said, 'Be cautious about the *yeast of the *Pharisees. By this, I mean their *hypocrisy. **v2** Everything that people hide, the *Lord will show. Every secret, the *Lord will make public. **v3** What you have said in the dark, people will hear in the light. What you whisper to an ear in a private room will be like a shout from the roof.'

Verses 1 The word for thousands really means more than 10 thousand. Here it does not mean that actual number. Luke used the word to mean a very large crowd. The whole crowd pushed in to hear Jesus. But Jesus spoke first to his *disciples.

Jesus told his *disciples to be cautious about the *yeast of the *Pharisees. He warns them not to let this kind of *yeast affect their lives. Most people in those days baked their own bread. They knew that a small amount of *yeast would affect the whole lump of the bread. In the same way, *hypocrisy can affect a person or a church. The effect of *yeast is good in bread but the effect of *hypocrisy is bad for people or the church.

Many *Pharisees did not do what they taught. This was their *hypocrisy. And they preferred to teach their traditions rather than the word of God.

Verses 2-3 We may try to keep secrets but in the end, nothing will be secret. The *Lord knows even the thoughts that we have. We can hide nothing from the *Lord. The *Lord will show in public all that people try to hide (1 Corinthians 4:5).

Houses were often of one floor, with a flat roof. A flat roof made a good platform from which to speak to a crowd.

Be loyal to the *Lord – Luke 12:4-12

v4 'My friends, do not be afraid of those who can kill the body. After they have killed the body, they can do nothing more. **v5** But I will show you of whom you should be afraid. Be afraid of God, who after your death has the power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you: be afraid of him.

v6 You can buy 5 *sparrows for two *assaria but God does not forget any of the *sparrows. **v7** God has counted all the hairs on your head. So, do not be afraid. You are worth more than many *sparrows.

v8 Declare to other people that you belong to me. And I, the Son of Man will tell God's *angels that you are mine. **v9** But if a person denies me to other people, I will deny that person to God's *angels. **v10** If you speak against the Son of Man, the *Lord can forgive you. But if you speak *blasphemy against the *Holy Spirit, the *Lord will not forgive you.

v11 People will accuse you in *synagogues, in front of rulers or other judges. Do not worry about how you will defend yourselves. Do not worry about what you will say. **v12** At that time the *Holy Spirit will teach you what you ought to say.'

Verses 4-5 It is natural to be afraid of those who can kill the body. Jesus tells his friends not to be afraid of them. They can do nothing more after they have killed the body. The death of the body is not the end of the person. Beyond death, there is heaven and hell. God has the authority to send a person to heaven or to hell. God controls the final fate of all people. Therefore, it is important to be afraid of God. So, Jesus tells his friends to be afraid of God rather than men.

Hell comes from the *Greek word: Gehenna. Gehenna was another name for the Valley of Hinnom. The Valley of Hinnom is outside Jerusalem city. In *New Testament times, this was the place where people burned their rubbish. It seems that a fire burned there at all times. So, it began to mean a place of *eternal punishment.

The Valley of Hinnom had been the place where people *sacrificed children to false gods (Jeremiah 7:31, 2 Chronicles 28:3). King Josiah stopped that practice (2 Kings 23:10). But the *Jews continued to consider that valley as an evil place.

Verses 6-7 Jesus tells them that God cares about his people. He speaks about the *sparrows. A person could buy these common little birds. Poor people bought small birds for food. They cost very little: just two *sparrows for one *assaria or 5 *sparrows for two *assaria (see Matthew 10:29). And God cares about each one of those little birds.

An *assaria was a very small *Roman coin. It was worth a 16th of a *denarius. A *denarius was equal to a day's wage for a farm worker.

God knows each hair on the head of each of his people. He has such knowledge of each person. He knows more about us than we can know about ourselves. Therefore, his *disciples should not be afraid. They are worth more than many *sparrows to God. They can trust God to take care of them.

Verses 8-9 Our attitude to Jesus is very important. A Christian must not be afraid to say that he belongs to Christ. Then Jesus will tell the *angels that this person belongs to him. If a person denies Christ now, Christ will deny him in the future.

Verse 10 There is a *sin that is too serious for God to forgive. God will forgive all other *sins if we *repent of them. But this *sin, he will never forgive.

We cannot talk of one *sin as less bad than another *sin. *Sin is *sin and all *sins are bad. God can forgive us even if we *sin against Jesus. But God will not forgive the *sin of *blasphemy against the *Holy Spirit. It is important for us to understand what that *sin is.

The enemies of Jesus said that he did good deeds by the power of the devil (Mark 3:29-30). They called evil good and good evil. People who say these things have chosen on purpose to oppose God. They deny that God is good. If they continue with this attitude, they are guilty of the final *sin. These persons are not able to *repent because they will never change their minds. They cannot believe in the *Lord Jesus for *salvation because their final choice is to be God's enemies.

God can forgive all kinds of *sin if people *repent. He can even forgive the *sin of *blasphemy. But it is possible for a person to continue with *sin until he is completely unwilling to *repent. Because that person will not *repent, God will never forgive that person.

Verses 11-12 However, the *Holy Spirit is with those who believe in Jesus. Their enemies will accuse them in front of rulers and judges. These enemies may be in the *synagogues or in the courts of law. When this happens, the Christians should not worry about it. They do not need to prepare to defend themselves. They can depend on the *Holy Spirit to teach them what to say. He will teach them at the right time when they need it.

He does not promise to free them from the situation. But in their defence, they will serve the purposes of God. They will declare the truth.

The rich fool – Luke 12:13-21

<p>v13 Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Teacher, tell my brother to give me my share of my father's property.'</p>

v14 But Jesus replied to him, 'Man, nobody has appointed me to be a judge in this matter. It is not my work to divide the property between you and your brother.' **v15** He told the people, 'Be careful. Do not be greedy for material things. A person's life does not consist in how much he possesses.'

v16 Jesus told them this story, 'The land of a certain rich man produced a good harvest. **v17** He thought to himself, "I must do something. I do not have enough room to store my harvest."

v18 Then he said, "I know what to do. I will tear down my sheds. I will build bigger sheds. And there I will store all my grain and my other good things. **v19** Then I will say to myself, 'I have stored up many good things. They will last for many years. Life will be easy. I will eat and I will drink. I will enjoy myself.' "

v20 However, God said to him, "You are a fool. You will die tonight. Someone else will get what you have stored up."

v21 Some people store up wealth for themselves but they are not rich in their relationship with God. They will suffer the same fate as the man in this story.'

Verses 13-15 A person in the crowd had a problem with his brother. Their father had died and the brother had taken the father's property. He asked Jesus to tell his brother to share the property with him. The person asked for a decision for his own benefit. Perhaps he expected the brother to hand over the property if Jesus told him to that.

There are rules in the *Old Testament about what the first son in a family should receive (Deuteronomy 21:17). These rules gave the first son twice as much as the other sons. A father had to give the first son his proper share. Maybe the brother here was the first son; if so, he had the right to a larger share of the property. However, he should not take everything. It seems that he had acted unfairly.

Jesus refused to make a decision in this personal matter. Nobody had appointed him to act as a judge of such matters. He warned the people to be careful about greedy attitudes. They must not be greedy for material things. Many people constantly worry about their possessions. But our life does not depend on what we own.

Verses 16-21 Then Jesus told a story to show what he meant. The story was about a wealthy farmer. The farmer had a very good harvest. His sheds were full and he had nowhere to store his harvest. So, he decided to replace his sheds with bigger sheds. Then he could relax and enjoy his wealth. He had enough for many years.

In all of this, there was no thought about other people or about God. He thought only about himself. He supposed that he would live for many years. He thought that he would live in luxury.

God called this man a fool. The man was stupid to think that he had control of his future. No man can know how many years he will live on this earth. God told this man that he would die that night. Then the man would have to give an account of his life to God. And all his wealth would belong to someone else. The man who depends on his wealth alone is a fool.

It is foolish to store up wealth on earth without God. What really matters is our relationship with God. We must store up wealth in heaven rather than on earth (Matthew 6:19-21).

Do not worry – Luke 12:22-34

v22 Jesus said to his *disciples, 'I tell you this. Do not worry about the food that you need to live. Do not worry about the clothes that you need for your body. **v23** Life is more than food and the body is more than clothes. **v24** Think about the *ravens. They do not sow and they do not harvest grain. They do not have buildings to store grain. They do not put the harvest into sheds. However, God feeds them. And you are much more valuable than birds. **v25** You cannot add any time to your life even if you worry about it. **v26** Because you cannot do a small thing like that, do not worry about other things.

v27 Think about how the *lilies grow. They do not work. They do not make their own clothes. I tell you that Solomon's magnificent clothes were not as beautiful as one of these flowers. **v28** That is how God dresses the grass. The grass is in the field today and tomorrow people burn it in the fire. If he dresses the grass like that, he will certainly provide clothes for you. Your *faith is so small. **v29** Do not worry about what you will eat. And do not worry about what you will drink. Do not be anxious about these things. **v30** People in every nation across the world try to get these things. But your Father knows that you need them. **v31** But look for God's *kingdom and he will give these things to you.

v32 I consider you as my little group of sheep. So do not be afraid. It pleased your Father to give the *kingdom to you. **v33** Sell your possessions and give to the poor people. Get for yourselves purses that will not wear out. Make sure that your wealth is safe in heaven. There thieves cannot approach to steal it and *moths cannot destroy it. **v34** Where your wealth is, there your heart will be also.'

Verses 22-26 Jesus told the story in Luke 12:16-20 to the crowd. Now he spoke to his *disciples. What he said to them follows from that story. The greedy person can never get enough to satisfy his own desires. Other people worry that they may not have enough. The *disciples of Jesus should not be greedy for possessions on earth. And they should not be anxious that they might not have enough. It is important in all circumstances to trust the *Lord. The *Lord knows that his people need food and clothes.

Birds like ravens do not farm for their food. Ravens are large black birds. God has provided for the birds. People are of more value to God than birds. He will take care of those people who trust him.

People cannot extend their life. The rich farmer (in Luke 12:16-20) could not change the time of his death even by one hour. It is not certain whether verse 25 refers to time or height. The verse could be, 'You cannot add one cubit to your height even if you worry about it.' A cubit was about 18 inches. Either way it shows that worry is of no use. These things are beyond the control of men. They are small things to God but they are impossible for men.

Verses 27-28 Jesus had used the birds as an example. Now he talks about the plants in the field. *Lilies grew in the grass. We do not know anything about these flowers, except that they were beautiful flowers. The word 'lilies' could mean flowers in general rather than one type of flower. Flowers do not have to work to be beautiful. They do not make their clothes as people do. They do nothing to achieve their own beauty. God gives to them their beauty. The skill of people made magnificent clothes for King Solomon. But they could not make anything as beautiful as a flower.

Flowers do not last long. They are in the grass. People cut the grass and they burn it. These flowers are so temporary. They are alive one day and they are in the fire the next day. God does so much for the flowers that last for such a short time. Certainly, he will give clothes to his own people. They are worth much more to him than the flowers. The *disciples do not need to be anxious about clothes. They need to have *faith in God.

Verses 29-31 Jesus commands his *disciples not to be anxious about food or drink. Life is so much more important than these things. They should give their attention to the *kingdom of God. God is their Father. And he knows what they need. God will take care of his people and he will provide these things for them.

Verses 32-34 Jesus calls his *disciples his 'little group of sheep'. He is their *shepherd and the *shepherd takes care of his sheep. They do not need to be afraid because he will protect them. He has told them to look for the *kingdom of God. God their Father is happy to give that *kingdom to them.

We do need some possessions. Jesus does not say that his *disciples should have no possessions. He was speaking about our attitude to material possessions. They are not the most important things in life. It is better to sell our possessions than that we should allow them to take control of our lives. Trust in material wealth prevents trust in God.

What we possess on earth cannot last. We cannot have the benefit of such things permanently. Thieves can steal our possessions. *Moths are insects that fly. Some *moths eat clothes. *Moths spoil clothes when they make holes in them. In those days, clothes were valuable. When we die, we cannot take anything with us. Our true wealth is what we have with Jesus. God's people have a new life now and a safe home in heaven. God is giving to them his *kingdom.

Where our wealth is will be the centre of (the most important thing in) our life. Our attitude to wealth governs our desires and thoughts. Our wealth can be the material things on earth that will fail. Or, our wealth can be the *kingdom of God in our life now and for the future in heaven.

Be ready – Luke 12:35-48

v35 'Dress ready for action. And light your lamps. **v36** Be like servants who wait for their master to come home from a wedding party. When he comes, he knocks at the door. The servants immediately open the door for him. **v37** It will be good for those servants whom the master finds ready for him. I tell you the truth, the master will dress himself to serve. He will tell the servants to sit at the table. And he will come to serve them. **v38** The master may come in the second or third part of the night. It will be good for those servants whom the master finds ready at that time.

v39 You can be sure about this. If the house owner knew when to expect the thief, he would not let the thief break into his house. **v40** So, be ready. The Son of Man will come at a time when you do not expect him.'

v41 Peter asked, '*Lord, did you tell this story to us, or to everyone?'

v42 The *Lord answered, 'This is the loyal servant and the wise manager. He is the person that the master makes responsible for his servants. He will give them their share of food at the proper time. **v43** The master will return. And it will be good for that servant who is doing his work properly. **v44** I tell you the truth. The master will appoint that servant to take care of everything that he owns. **v45** But the servant may be less loyal. He thinks, "My master will not come back soon." That servant starts to hit the other male and female servants. He eats and he drinks a lot. And he drinks too much alcohol. **v46** The master of that servant will come at a time when the servant does not expect him. The servant will not know the day or the hour in which the master will come. The master will cut him in pieces. The master will cause him to suffer with those people who do not believe.

v47 The servant knew what his master wanted. But he did not get ready. And he did not do what his master wanted. So, the master will strike him with many blows. **v48** However, a servant may not know what his master wants. And he may do things that deserve punishment. But the master will strike him with few blows. From everyone who has received much, the master will demand much. And from the one to whom people have given much, they will demand much more.'

Verses 35-40 People wore long clothes that were not good for physical work. To dress ready for action, they would lift the skirts of the clothes into their belts. This would free their legs for easier movement. Their lamps burned oil. To be ready, they would need to light their lamps. We too need to be ready. In particular, we need to be ready for the time when Jesus will come again.

To show what he meant, Jesus told a story. The good servants were ready for the master to return home. As soon as he knocked on the door, they were ready to open it. It pleased the master very much to find that his servants were ready for his return. This master did something that was not usual. Most masters would expect the servants to prepare the master's meal first. Then the servants could get their own meal. But this master changed his clothes. And he prepared a meal for his servants.

The servants did not know when the master would come. The *Jews divided the night into three parts. The first part was from sunset to about 10 o'clock in the night. The second part was until 2 o'clock in the morning. And the third part was until sunrise. The master may come very late, even after midnight. The good servants will be ready for him at all times. They would stay awake all night if necessary, because they did not know when to expect him.

Jesus spoke about a house owner. If he knew when to expect the thief, he would be able to stop the thief. If he did not know, he would have to be ready to defend his house at all times.

The *disciples do not know when Jesus will come again. The fact that he will come again is certain. So, we need to be ready for when he does come. We should live as if we expect him to come at any time.

Verses 41-46 Peter wanted to know if the story referred to the *disciples or to everybody. Jesus did not give Peter a direct answer. Instead, Jesus answered him with two examples.

In both examples, the servant was the manager of his master's house. He was responsible for the other servants. And he had control of the house while the master was away.

The loyal servant was a wise manager. He took care of the other servants. And he did all that the master wanted him to do. The master came back home. He found that the servant had done a good job. So, he rewarded that servant.

The other servant was not a wise and good manager. The master was away for a long time. So, the manager could do what he wanted. He beat the other servants and he did not do his job. He ate too much and he drank too much. The master came back home when the servant did not expect him. The master saw what the servant had done. So, he punished that wicked servant. The wicked servant would suffer a terrible punishment. He would suffer as one who did not have *faith in Jesus.

Jesus was talking about the people who followed him. The story refers especially to those people who are leaders. But the same principles are true for all who follow Jesus.

We cannot know when Jesus will come back again. But we must look for his return, and we must be ready for him to come.

Verses 47-48 Punishment is certain for those people who do not do their duty. Here the punishment is not because of wrong deeds. It is because of failure to do what is right. A master expects much of those servants who have received much. They will receive the greater punishment for their failure. Those people who did not know will receive less punishment. A servant should try to find out what his duties are. That is why these servants deserve punishment. But their punishment is not as severe as if they had acted on purpose.

In those days, the punishment for a serious crime was up to 40 blows with a whip. For a smaller crime, the punishment may be just a few blows with a whip. Jesus uses this to express the idea of different levels of punishment. He does not mean that God will use a whip. So the answer to Peter's question (verse 41) was this. Everyone should be ready for Christ's return. But people who know more about it have greater responsibility. If someone with knowledge refuses to be ready for Christ's return, that is a very severe matter. When we understand Christ's message, it is very important to obey him.

Jesus separates people – Luke 12:49-53

v49 'I have come to bring fire on the earth. And I desire that it were already on fire. **v50** But I must go through a *baptism. And I suffer much until I have completed it. **v51** Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. No, I did not. Rather I came to separate people. **v52** From now on there may be five people in one house. Three of these will be against the other two. And two will be against the other three. **v53** A father will be against his son and a son against his father. A mother will be against her daughter and a daughter against her mother. A son's mother will be against his wife and his wife will be against his mother.'

Verses 49-50 Jesus came to bring fire on earth. It is not clear what this means. Fire may mean to make pure or it may mean punishment. In a sense, it could mean both. Jesus came to die for the *sins of the world. In his death, he took the punishment for our *sins. Through his death and by *faith, God can make us pure. In other words, he can forgive us and he can give us a right relationship with him. But those people who refuse to believe will suffer the punishment because of their own *sins.

The water in *baptism is a picture of death (Romans 6:3). People rise from the water to live a new life (Romans 6:4). So, Jesus uses *baptism as a word-picture here. The *baptism that Jesus talks about means his death and his life beyond death. He looks forward to the time when that *baptism will be complete. Until that time, Jesus suffered with the knowledge of what was to come. He knew the awful and painful death that he would go through.

Verses 51-53 There is a way in which Jesus does bring peace. We can have peace (a right relationship) with God through *faith in Jesus. But that peace is not what he meant here.

The good news of Jesus Christ separates people. Some people accept the death of Jesus and they believe in him. Other people refuse to believe that Jesus died on their behalf. And the division often causes strong feelings. It can cause family members to fight against each other. Parents can turn against their children. Children can turn against their parents. There can be trouble between mothers and their sons' wives.

You do not understand the time – Luke 12:54-59

v54 Then Jesus said this to the crowd. 'You see a cloud come up in the west. Immediately you say, "It will rain." And it does rain. **v55** You feel the wind that blows from the south. You say, "It will be hot." And it is hot. **v56** You are *hypocrites. You can look at the earth and the sky and you know what weather to expect. But you do not understand this present time.

v57 You should decide for yourselves what is right. **v58** Suppose that you have done something wrong to someone. That person may take you to the courts in front of a ruler. Try hard to settle with him before you get there. Otherwise, he will bring you in front of the judge. Then the judge will hand you over to the officer. And the officer will put you in prison. **v59** I tell you, it will not be easy to get out of there. First, you will have to pay all that you owe.'

Verses 54-56 The people in *Israel had learned how to interpret the clouds and the wind. From these, they could tell what the weather would do. The clouds from the west came over the sea and they brought rain. The wind from the south came from hot dry regions and it brought hot weather.

Jesus calls them *hypocrites. They understood what the clouds and the wind meant. But they were not able to see what was happening on earth. They did not understand that Jesus had come from God. They did not realise that judgement would come upon them. They did not see that this was a time of opportunity and responsibility.

Verses 57-59 It is better to settle out of court than to lose in the court. The one who owes money would be wise to make an agreement rather than to go to court. The judge would send the guilty person to prison. There would be no escape unless someone paid the debt.

We have all *sinned against God. Therefore, we would be wise to come to him now, before the day of judgement. He has made an agreement for us in Jesus. In this agreement, Jesus has paid the debt because of *sin on behalf of us all. If we accept this agreement by *faith then, by his death, Jesus paid the debt on our behalf. But if we do not accept it, we will have to pay for our own *sins. That is an impossible task. God as our judge will declare that we are guilty. We will have to suffer the punishment because of our *sins.

*Repentance – Luke 13:1-9

v1 At that time, some people there told Jesus about some men from Galilee. Those men from Galilee were giving animals as *sacrifices to God. Pilate killed the men and he mixed their blood with the blood of the animals. **v2** Jesus replied, 'What do you think? Did these men from Galilee suffer these things because they *sinned more than anyone else from Galilee? **v3** I tell you that the answer is no. But unless you *repent, you too will all die. **v4** The *tower at Siloam fell on 18 people and it killed them. Were they worse *sinners than all the other people who live in Jerusalem? **v5** I tell you that the answer is no. But if you do not *repent, then you too will all die.'

v6 Then Jesus told this story. 'A man planted a *fig tree in his *vineyard. When he came to look for fruit on it, he did not find any. **v7** So, he said to the gardener, "For three years, I have come to look for fruit on this *fig tree. But I have not found any fruit. Cut it down. It should not take up space in this good soil." **v8** The gardener replied, "Master, leave it for one more year. I will dig round it and I will feed it. **v9** If the tree produces fruit next year, that will be all right. But if not, then cut it down."'

Verses 1-5 We have no further details about this incident. These men had come from Galilee to Jerusalem to *worship God. As they made their *sacrifices, the *Roman soldiers killed them. Pilate was the *Roman ruler of Judea. He was in command of these soldiers; perhaps he ordered the soldiers to kill the men. The occasion could have been at the *Passover. That is the only time that the people killed their own animals.

We do not know why the people told Jesus about this incident. Many people believed that such events were a punishment because of *sin.

Jesus was himself from Galilee. He did not say anything about the action of the *Romans. But he used the incident to speak about *repentance.

Those men from Galilee did not suffer that fate because they were worse *sinners than other people. But their sudden death should warn everyone that we all need to *repent. We do not know the time of our own death. It could be as sudden as theirs was.

Jesus then spoke about an accident in which 18 people died. The *tower at Siloam fell down and it fell on them. They were not more guilty than other people in Jerusalem. But they suffered a sudden death. Our death could be as sudden and we need to be ready. If we do not *repent, we too will die. That death refers to the future judgement rather than the death of the body.

The *tower at Siloam formed part of the wall of ancient Jerusalem. It was above the pool of Siloam where the south and east walls join.

Verses 6-9 Then Jesus told a story about a *fig tree. A man had planted it because he wanted fruit from it. For three years, it failed to have any fruit. The man told the gardener to cut it down. The gardener wanted to give the tree another chance. But after another year, if it did not have fruit, the man could cut it down.

The man planted the *fig tree in a vineyard. A vineyard is a farm where people grow the fruit to make wine.

God is kind to us. He gives us many opportunities to *repent and to turn to him. But the time of our death will come. And after that, there will be the judgement.

Jesus cures a woman on the *Sabbath – Luke 13:10-17

v10 Jesus taught in one of the *synagogues on the *Sabbath day. **v11** A woman was there who suffered from an evil spirit. The spirit had made her ill for 18 years. It had bent her back so that she could not stand up straight. **v12** When Jesus saw her, he called her to come to him. He said to her, 'Woman, you are free from your illness.' **v13** Then Jesus placed his hands on her. Immediately she stood up straight. And she praised God.

v14 The *synagogue leader was angry because Jesus cured on the *Sabbath day. He said to the people, 'There are 6 days in which to work. Come on one of those days for someone to cure you and not on the *Sabbath day.'

v15 The *Lord answered him. He said, 'You are *hypocrites. On the *Sabbath day, each of you unties his *ox or his *donkey. You take it from the place where it eats. Then you lead it out to give water to it. **v16** This woman is a *descendant of Abraham. *Satan has bound her like this for 18 years. It is right that I should free her from his control on the *Sabbath day.'

v17 When Jesus said this, he made his enemies ashamed. But everyone else in the crowd was happy about all the wonderful things that he did.

Verses 10-13 Jesus taught in a *synagogue on the *Sabbath day. In the *synagogue, there was a woman who had been ill for 18 years. The cause of her illness was an evil spirit. As a result, she could not stand up straight. She did not ask Jesus to cure her. He saw her and he called her to the front of the *synagogue. She obeyed him and she came forward. Then he put his hands on her and he cured her. Immediately she stood up straight for the first time in 18 years.

Jesus did not put his hands on people who had evil spirits. Here it seems that he freed her from the spirit first. Then he put his hands on her to cure her from the illness.

The woman did not praise Jesus. She praised God.

Verses 14-17 The right use of the *Sabbath was a cause of disagreement between Jesus and the *Pharisees. Here the leader of the *synagogue was angry that Jesus had cured the woman on the *Sabbath. Also, it may have annoyed him that Jesus acted without his agreement. He was in charge of the *synagogue meeting and of all that happened there. He did not speak to Jesus directly. Instead he spoke to the people. He said in effect that it was wrong to cure people on the *Sabbath day. To cure a person was work and the law forbade work on the *Sabbath day (Exodus 20:9-10).

Jesus answered him. The purpose of the *Sabbath was for the benefit of the people. So, to cure on that day was in the purpose of the *Sabbath. The *Jews did look after their animals on the *Sabbath. They freed their animals on the *Sabbath. They would lead the animals with a chain but they would not carry anything. They would draw water from a well for them. But they would not hold the bucket for the animals to drink. If it is right to take care of animals, it must be right to cure this woman. By this illness, *Satan had bound her for 18 years. It must be right to free this *Jewish woman even on the *Sabbath. That was why Jesus called the leader of this *synagogue a *hypocrite. The man's own actions showed that his words about the *Sabbath were wrong. If it is right to free an animal, clearly it is right to free a person - especially a *descendant of Abraham. If it is right to give water to an animal, then it is right to cure a person. God gave the *Sabbath to help people, not so that they would suffer.

What Jesus said made his enemies ashamed. The people were happy because of the good things that Jesus did.

This was perhaps the last time that Jesus taught in a *synagogue.

The *kingdom of God – Luke 13:18-30

v18 Then Jesus said, 'Let us describe the *kingdom of God. Let me tell you what it is like. **v19** It is like a *mustard seed that a man planted in his garden. The seed grew and it became like a tree. And the wild birds built nests in its branches.'

v20 Again he said, 'The *kingdom of God is like this. **v21** It is like *yeast that a woman took. She mixed it in three bowls of *dough. The *yeast caused all the *dough to rise.'

v22 Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. As he went, he taught the people in the towns and villages. **v23** Someone asked him, “*Lord, will God save only a few people?” **v24** He said to them, ‘Try hard to enter through the narrow door. I tell you that many people will try to enter. But they will not be able to enter. **v25** The owner of the house will get up and he will close the door. If then you stand at the door, it is too late. You will knock at the door. You will call out, “*Lord, open the door for us.” But he will answer, “No. I do not know you or where you come from.”

v26 Then you will begin to say, “We ate with you. We drank with you and you taught in our streets.”

v27 But he will reply, “I do not know you. I do not know where you come from. Go away from me, all of you who do evil deeds.”

v28 There you will weep and you will bite your teeth together because of the pain. You will see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the *prophets in God's *kingdom. But the *Lord will throw you out. **v29** People will come from the east, west, north, and south. They will sit down at the *feast in the *kingdom of God. **v30** In fact, some people who are last now will be first then. And some people, who are first, will be last then.’

Verses 18-21 A mustard seed is a very small seed. In Matthew and Mark, there is a contrast between the tiny seed and the large bush (Matthew 13:31-32, Mark 4:30-32). The mustard plant could grow up to 10 or 12 feet high. It grows big enough for birds to have their nests in its branches. The *kingdom of God will be so large that people from all nations will come into it.

Women used to make bread for their family. They would put a small amount of *yeast in with the dough. Dough is the mixture of flour and water from which a person makes bread. The *yeast affects the whole lump of dough. This causes the bread to rise. The small quantity of *yeast affects a large quantity of dough. The *kingdom of God is like that. Its citizens, God's people, are in the world and they have a powerful effect across the whole world.

In these stories, there is power in the seed and in the *yeast. So, the *kingdom of God comes with power. From a small start, it becomes a great and powerful *kingdom.

Verses 22-25 Jesus taught in all the towns and villages that he went through. He was on his way to Jerusalem. In reaction to what he taught, someone asked him this question. Many of the *Jews believed that God would save all the *Jews except a few bad *sinners. And they did not believe that God would save the people from other nations.

Jesus does not answer the question. He urges the people to make sure that they enter the *kingdom. Entry into the *kingdom is not certain even for the *Jews. By our own efforts, we cannot get into the *kingdom. But there must be that desire to do so now while there is still time. The way in is not easy. It is like a narrow door.

The door will not always be open. At some future time, God will say that it is too late. Many people will try then but they will fail to enter. They will fail because they are too late. They will knock on the door but the *Lord will tell them to go away. He will not know them.

Jesus came to announce the year of the *Lord's kindness (Luke 4:19). The year refers to the period in which God offers *salvation to us. The opportunity to receive *salvation is open to all people now.

The door means Jesus (John 10:9). There is no other way to get in. *Salvation is in Jesus and no one else (John 14:6).

Verses 26-30 Some of those to whom Jesus refuses entry will argue against that decision. They will say that they did know Jesus. They even ate and drank with him. They heard him as he taught in their streets. They were there but they did not believe in Jesus.

To be there and to hear Jesus is not enough. Without *faith in Jesus, there is no way into the *kingdom of God. He will send these people away. He calls them 'people who do evil deeds'. In the end, there will be just two types of people, those inside and those outside. Both types are *sinners. But those inside have *repented and they have believed in Jesus.

Jesus will say that he did not know those other people. He does know all about each person. But here it means that he does not have a relationship with them. All who believe in Jesus become children of God. He knows them as members of the same family.

Away from the *kingdom of God will be a terrible place. In that place, people will be sorry and angry. They will regret that they did not accept the good news of Jesus. But then it will be too late.

Many *Jews at that time thought that the *kingdom of God was only for the *Jews. Every *Jew expected to sit with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the *feast in the *kingdom of God. It will surprise them to see people from all round the world go into the *kingdom. They are the people from every nation who have accepted the good news of Jesus. These people who are not *Jewish will be at home in the *kingdom. These people, whom many *Jews considered without hope, will be there. But some *Jews will not be able to go in. Nobody who refuses to accept the good news of Jesus will be able to enter the *kingdom of God.

Jerusalem, the city where people killed many of the *prophets – Luke 13:31-35

v31 At that same time, some *Pharisees came to Jesus. They said to him, ‘Go away from here. Go somewhere else because Herod wants to kill you.’

v32 Jesus replied to them, ‘Go and tell this message to that fox. I will force *demons to leave people and I will cure people today and tomorrow. I will finish my work on the third day. **v33** But I must be on my way today, tomorrow, and the next day. It cannot be right for a *prophet to die outside of Jerusalem.

v34 Jerusalem, Jerusalem, your people have killed the *prophets. The *Lord sent these *prophets to them. But they threw stones and they killed those *prophets. I have often wanted to gather your people, as a mother bird gathers her *chicks under her wings. But you would not let me. **v35** God has gone from your house so that it is completely empty. I tell you that you will certainly not see me again for some time. You will not see me until you say, “God *bless you, because you have come in the name of the *Lord.”’

Verses 31-33 It is strange that the *Pharisees warned Jesus about Herod. But they did warn Jesus that Herod wanted to kill him. This was Herod Antipas, a son of Herod the Great. Herod Antipas was the ruler in the regions called Galilee and Perea. Perea was to the east of the Jordan river. The *Pharisees suggested that Jesus should go somewhere else. It could be that Jesus was at this time in one of those regions. He was on his way to Jerusalem, which is in the region of Judea. Pontius Pilate was responsible for Judea.

Jesus referred to Herod as ‘that fox’. The *Jews used the term ‘fox’ for a person who was clever in a bad way. Herod was a clever and a cruel man. Also, they used ‘fox’ for a person that they could not respect. Jesus would not respect such a person as Herod.

Jesus told the *Pharisees to go to Herod. He told them to tell Herod that Jesus would complete his task. It did not matter to Jesus what Herod tried to do. God had chosen his time and Herod could not change it. Jesus would continue to free people from the power of *demons and to cure sick people. ‘Today, tomorrow and the third day’ mean a short time. Jesus had a short time in which to complete his work. God, and not Herod, would decide when Jesus would die.

In the purposes of God, Jesus must die in Jerusalem. Jesus expected to suffer as a *prophet. And it would not be right for Jesus the *prophet to die elsewhere.

Verses 34-35 Jesus probably spoke these words as he approached Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37-39). Maybe Luke has recorded them earlier to fit in with the design of his book. But perhaps Jesus said these things on more than one occasion. In this passage, the word 'you' means Jerusalem and its inhabitants.

The people in Jerusalem had killed many of the *prophets. They had thrown stones at some of them until they died. Jesus knew that he too would die there.

The fate of that city upset Jesus deeply. He knew what would happen to it in the future. He loved the people in Jerusalem and he wanted to save them from that future. He wanted them to come to him for his protection. But he knew that they had refused him. They would not come to him.

In a special way, God had been at home in Jerusalem. Now however, he had gone away from it. He did not live there still. The 'house' was empty without God. The 'house' probably means the city called Jerusalem. But it could refer to God's *temple that was in Jerusalem.

People did cry out in this way when Jesus entered Jerusalem (Luke 19:38). That event is not what Jesus was referring to here. The people who cried out then were not the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Matthew records these words after Jesus had entered Jerusalem (Matthew 23:39). Jesus has promised to come again. That event is still in the future. When he comes, the people of Jerusalem will accept Jesus as the *Christ. Then they will say these words, which come from Psalm 118:26.

Dinner with a *Pharisee – Luke 14:1-24

v1 One *Sabbath day, Jesus went to the house of a leader of the *Pharisees. He went to eat a meal with the *Pharisee. The other guests were carefully watching Jesus to see what he would do. **v2** There in front of Jesus was a man who was sick. The cause of the illness was too much liquid in his body. **v3** Jesus spoke to the lawyers and *Pharisees. He asked whether or not it was legal to cure a person on the *Sabbath. **v4** But they would not answer his question. So, Jesus took hold of the man. Then Jesus cured him and he sent him away.

v5 Then Jesus said to the people, 'You have sons and *oxen. Suppose your son or your *ox falls into a well. You would pull him out at once even on the *Sabbath day.' **v6** And they were not able to argue with him.

v7 Jesus saw how the guests had tried to take the best seats. So, he gave to them this advice. **v8** 'When someone invites you to a wedding, do not sit in the best place. Maybe someone else, who is more important than you, is also a guest at the wedding. **v9** The host, who invited both of you, will come. He will say to you, "Let this man sit here." Then with shame, you will take the least important place. **v10** Instead, when someone invites you, sit in the least important place. Your host will come to you. He will say, "My friend, come up to a better place." Then you will receive honour in front of all the other guests. **v11** If people make themselves great, God will make them to be as nothing. But everyone who is humble, God will make to be great.'

v12 Then Jesus spoke to the man who had invited him. 'When you make a dinner or supper, do not invite your friends and your family. Do not invite your other relatives and your rich neighbours. If you do, they may invite you back. And so they will reward you. **v13** But when you have such a meal, invite poor people. Invite people with sick bodies. Invite people who are unable to walk or unable to see. **v14** These people cannot pay you for what you have done. However, God will *bless you. You will have your reward when good people rise from death.'

v15 One of the men at the table with Jesus heard this. He spoke to Jesus. 'Truly happy is the person who will eat the food in God's *kingdom.'

v16 Jesus replied with this story. 'A certain man made a great supper and he invited many guests. **v17** When it was time to eat, the man sent his servant to tell the guests. His message was: "Come because it is now ready."

v18 But all the guests made excuses. The first one said, "I have just bought a field. I must go and look at it. Please excuse me."

v19 Another one said, "I have just bought 5 pairs of *oxen. I am going to test them. Please excuse me."

v20 Then another one said, "I have just got married. So, I cannot come."

v21 The servant came back and he reported these things to his master. Then the owner of the house was angry. He told his servant, "Go quickly into the streets and passages of the town. Bring in the poor people and the people whose bodies are sick. Bring in the blind people and the people who cannot walk."

v22 The servant said, "Master, I have done what you ordered. But there is still room."

v23 Then the master told his servant, "Go out, to the roads and country paths. Urge the people to come to my house. I want it to be full. **v24** I tell you this. None of those men whom I invited first will taste of my supper."'

Verses 1-4 It was a *Sabbath day. This is the 4th time that Luke records a disagreement about the *Sabbath (6:1-5, 6:6-11, 13:10-17). A leader of the *Pharisees invited Jesus and other guests to a meal. The host was an important man. He may have been a member of the *Jewish government. It seems that the other guests were enemies of Jesus. They had come to see what he would do. They hoped to find something with which to accuse him.

At the meal, there was a man who was sick. Maybe the *Pharisee had invited him in order to tempt Jesus to cure this man. In their tradition, that would be work on the *Sabbath day. Then they would accuse Jesus of wrong deeds against the *Sabbath rules.

There were other lawyers and *Pharisees there. So, Jesus asked them if it is legal to cure someone on the *Sabbath day. It was a difficult question for them to answer. There is nothing in the Bible to say that it is not legal. But they had their regulations. These regulations had become law to them. By this law, it would be wrong to cure a person on the *Sabbath day. (They would allow a doctor to cure a person if it was a matter of life or death. But this man was not in such a desperate state; he could wait until after the *Sabbath.) The lawyers and *Pharisees would not answer Jesus. So, Jesus cured the man and sent him away.

Verses 5-6 If a son, or even an *ox, fell into a well, they would pull him out. Although it was a *Sabbath day, they would not wait. Immediately they would rescue the son or the *ox. Such an act may have been against their rules for the *Sabbath. But it was not against God's law. In the same way to cure a man on the *Sabbath day may be against their rules. But it was not against God's law. The lawyers and *Pharisees could not argue against Jesus.

Verse 7 At special meals such as at a wedding, there was a strict arrangement of places. The most important ones were next to the hosts. The next important ones were those on the sides nearest to the hosts. The least important ones were those furthest away from the hosts. Jesus saw how the guests tried to take the more important places.

They did not sit on chairs. Often, they lay on their left sides on cushions. There were three persons to each cushion. And the middle one of the three was more important than the other two.

Verses 8-11 Jesus spoke about a wedding meal. He advised guests to take lower places rather than important ones. Then if a guest were important, the host would take him to an important place. If a less important guest were in that place, the host would ask him to move. Then it could be that the only place available was the lowest place. The other guests would see this, and it would cause shame for that guest. Suppose however that an important guest was in a lower place. Then the host would come and he would take that guest to a higher place. The other guests would see this, and it would bring honour to that guest.

God will act in a similar way. If people make themselves important, God will give no honour to those people. But to those people who are humble, God will give honour. A person's position does not depend on his own opinion about himself. It depends on God because God will be the judge of all people.

Verses 12-14 Then Jesus spoke to the *Pharisee who had invited him. Jesus advised him not to invite those people who could invite him back. Jesus did not mean that he should never invite any such person. Jesus is not against normal social life. But in God's opinion, a host gains no advantage when he only invites those people. Such people may reward the host by the invitations that they give to him. So the host would receive his rewards from people and not from God.

It would be very much better to invite those people who cannot reward the kindness. The reason for such acts must not be for the reward. It must be from a genuine desire to help those people. But God will see it. He will reward such actions when good people rise from death.

At a future time, good people (that is, God's people) will come back from death. Also, there will be a time when evil people will return from death. Then there will be the judgement day when God will be the judge of all people. He will decide whom to reward, and whom to punish.

Verse 15 Jesus had spoken of the future when God will raise people from death. The *Jews were familiar with the idea of a grand dinner in God's *kingdom. They believed that the good people of the past would rise from death. And these good people would be guests at that dinner. Also as *Jews, they expected to be guests with them at the dinner. So, one of the guests replied to Jesus. He said that it would be a great honour to be at that grand dinner. It seems that this guest expected to be there. But in fact, some who expect to be there will not be there. Jesus would explain to him that many people are too busy to accept God's invitation.

Verses 16-17 Jesus told them a story. It was about a man who invited many people to a great supper. None of the people whom he had invited had refused the invitation. The host expected them all to come. It took a long time to prepare for the great supper. When the supper was ready, the host sent his servant to fetch the guests. But they would not come to the supper.

It was the custom in some places to expect a second invitation. It may be that the servant took the second invitation to the guests. And they refused the second invitation. To refuse in this way was an insult to the host.

Verses 18-20 These guests made excuses. The first one had bought a field. He would have looked at it before he bought it. The field, of course, would still be there after the meal. Therefore, it was not necessary to view it at that time. It could wait until after the supper. It is plain that, really, this man did not want to come to the supper.

Another man had bought some *oxen. He would have been satisfied with them before he bought them. Now they were his *oxen and he could test them at any time. It could wait until after the supper. But he too did not want to go to the supper.

Another man had just married a wife. A marriage would not be a sudden affair. He would have known about it before he received the invitation to the supper. The invitation to these suppers would be to men only. He would have to leave his new wife at home while he went to the supper. The wives of the other guests would have to stay at home. As an excuse, he said that he could not go to the supper. If he had wanted to, he could have gone.

All three of these men knew about the supper before the servant came. All three made weak excuses as their reasons not to go to the supper.

Verses 21-24 The servant told his master what had happened. His master was angry. The guests that he had invited had insulted him. But he would not allow those excuses to spoil his supper. If the original guests would not come, he would invite other guests. He sent his servant to the poorer parts of the town. He told him to bring in poor people from there. He included those people who were sick or blind. And he included those people who could not walk.

The servant did what his master told him. But he did not bring in enough guests to satisfy his master. So, the master sent the servant to search wider and to urge people to come in. The servant went to the roads and paths outside the town. There he would find people who had no homes. Even these people, the servant must urge to come to the supper.

Even if the first guests came, the master would not allow them to come in. There would be no further chance for them. They had missed their opportunity.

Jesus told this story to show God's desire to have a right relationship with people. The supper means a place in God's *kingdom. He sent the *prophets to invite his people to come in. But very many of them would not accept that invitation. Now in Jesus, there is the invitation for all to come in. He sends Christians to bring in people from all nations. They must bring all types of people. No person is beyond the reach of God. The good news of Jesus is for all people. God will receive all who come to him. But when people refuse God's invitation, that invitation may not remain open to them.

It costs to be a *disciple – Luke 14:25-35

v25 Large crowds came together to Jesus. He turned to them and he spoke to them. **v26** 'If you want to be my *disciple, you must hate your father and mother. You must hate your wife, children, brothers and sisters. You must even hate your own life. If you do not, you cannot be my *disciple. **v27** And you must carry your cross and you must follow me. If you do not, you cannot be my *disciple.

v28 Suppose that you want to build a tall building. You would first sit down and you would estimate the cost. Then you would see if you have enough money to finish it. **v29** Otherwise, you will start from the base but you will not be able to complete the building. Then everyone who sees it will laugh at you. **v30** They will say, "This person started to build. But he could not finish the building."

v31 Suppose that a king intends to go to war against another king. He would first sit down and he would think about the situation. He would decide whether or not his army of 10 000 soldiers could beat the other army of 20 000 soldiers. **v32** He may decide that he cannot win. So, while the other king is a long way from him, he will send some people to him. They will try to arrange for peace between the kings. **v33** In the same way, you must give up everything that you have, in order to be my *disciple.

v34 Salt is good. But if salt loses its taste, you cannot make it good again. **v35** It is no good for the soil or for garden use. People throw it away. You people who can hear me, listen.'

Verses 25-27 As Jesus travelled, crowds came to him. He taught them what it means to be his *disciples.

The Bible teaches us to love each other. We must not even hate our enemies. In fact, we must love them (Luke 6:27). Here 'hate' means to love less. Our love for Jesus must be first and greater than our love for each other (Matthew 10:37). Our love for Jesus must be so strong that, in contrast, our love for our family is like hate.

A *disciple must be loyal to Jesus first. All who want to follow Jesus must be ready to die on behalf of Jesus. It is as if the *disciple dies to himself each day. In other words, the true *disciple does not do what he wants. He lives for Jesus and he follows Jesus.

Verses 28-33 To be a *disciple of Jesus is not easy. The *disciple has to give up everything to follow Jesus. This is a heavy price to pay. A person ought to think about this before he becomes a *disciple. Jesus told two stories to teach this.

A man who wants to build a tall building must think first. He needs to be sure that he has the money to complete the building. If not, he may start to build but he may not be able to complete it. Then people will laugh at him. He was foolish because he did not have enough money to finish the job.

A king decides that he wants to fight against another king. He knows that the other king has more soldiers. So, he thinks hard about whether his 10 000 men can defeat the 20 000 men of his enemy. If his army can defeat the enemy then let them fight. But if not, then he must arrange a peace agreement with the other king.

In the first story, the builder has a choice to build or not to build. A person must think whether he can afford to be a *disciple. He can choose whether he will be a *disciple or not.

In the second story, the king must do something. Either he must fight or he must make a peace agreement. A person must decide whether he can afford to refuse the demands of Jesus.

Jesus does not want as *disciples those people who cannot continue with him. Instead, they should know what it means to be his *disciples. And they make the decision to give up everything for him. By this means, they give to Jesus the control of their lives.

However, Jesus does not expect his *disciples to do these things by means of their own strength. Every Christian would certainly fail if he depended on himself. People can only be strong enough to stand as *disciples of Christ if they depend completely on God. Because he supports his people, even the weakest Christian becomes strong enough to follow Christ.

Verses 34-35 Pure salt is a chemical that cannot lose its taste. The salt that they used was not at all pure. If the pure chemical part became less then the salt taste would be less. Then the salt would be no use.

Jesus expects his *disciples to continue to follow him. If they do not continue, they are of no use to him.

Three stories about things that people had lost – Luke 15:1-32

A *shepherd lost a sheep – Luke 15:1-7

v1 The men who collected taxes and the *sinners all came to listen to Jesus. **v2** But the *Pharisees and the teachers of the law complained. They said, ‘This man is a friend of *sinners. He even eats with them.’

v3 Then Jesus told them this story. **v4** ‘Suppose that one of you has 100 sheep. And he loses one of them. He will leave the other 99 sheep in the desert. He will go after the one that he lost. He will search until he finds it. **v5** When he finds it, he will be happy. He will put that sheep on his shoulders. **v6** When he gets home, he will call together his friends and neighbours. He says to them, “Be happy with me. I have found my sheep that I lost.” **v7** I tell you that it is like that in heaven. There is much joy when one *sinner *repents. There is more joy than for the 99 good people who do not need to *repent.’

Verses 1-2 The men who collected taxes were unpopular because of their work. They helped the *Romans whom the people hated. And often they collected more money than they should from the people. In this way, many of them became wealthy.

Every person on earth has *sinned. Therefore, all of us are *sinners. But here it means those whom the people considered to be *sinners, for example *prostitutes.

The men who collected taxes and the *sinners came to listen to Jesus. And Jesus was happy to talk with them. He even ate with them. This disgusted the *Pharisees and teachers of the law. They refused to be friendly with such people. They would not even teach the law to these *sinners. It was much worse to eat with them. That would be to accept them and to be friends with them. But Jesus came on behalf of *sinners to save them from the judgement for their *sins. Therefore, he had to teach them how to enter the *kingdom of God.

Verses 3-7 Jesus replied to the *Pharisees and teachers of the law. He told them this story about a good *shepherd.

It was normal in that country for a *shepherd to look after about 100 sheep. Each evening the *shepherd counted the sheep to make sure that they were all there. If one sheep was missing, a good *shepherd would do as in the story.

The word for 'desert' here really means a country place where people did not live. It would not be an unsuitable place for the sheep to remain. And Jesus did not say that nobody guarded the 99 sheep. Probably the owner of the sheep would ask another *shepherd to look after his sheep. Then, he could give all his attention to look for the one sheep that he had lost. When he found it, he would be very happy.

Jesus is the good *shepherd. He came to earth to find and to save those who had gone away from God. The *Pharisees and teachers of the law thought that they were not *sinners. But the men who collected taxes and the *sinners knew it. They knew that they were *sinners.

The *shepherd had found the sheep that he had lost. Because of that, he had a party. So, there is joy in heaven whenever a *sinner *repents.

A woman lost a coin – Luke 15:8-10

v8 'Suppose that a woman has 10 silver coins but she loses one. She will light a lamp, and she will sweep the house. She will look carefully for the coin until she finds it. **v9** And when she has found it, she will call her friends and neighbours together. She will say to them, "Be happy with me. I have found the coin that I had lost." **v10** So, I tell you that it is the same among God's *angels. There is much joy among them because one *sinner has *repented.'

Verses 8-10

Jesus told this story of a woman who had lost one of her 10 silver coins. Each of these coins was worth about a day's pay for a worker. The 10 coins may be all that the poor woman owned. The loss of one coin was a serious matter to her.

She lit a lamp. Her house would have no windows or very small ones. Even in the daytime, she would need to use a lamp.

Like the *shepherd, she shares her joy when she finds it. This story means the same as the previous one. *Sinners have gone away from God. Jesus came to find them. There is joy among the *angels when a *sinner *repents. Jesus has found that *sinner.

A father lost a son – Luke 15:11-32

v11 Then Jesus said, 'A certain man had two sons. **v12** The younger son said to his father, "Father, give me my share of the property." So, the father divided his property between his two sons.'

v13 Not long after that, the younger son got together all that he owned. Then he went to a country far from home. There he wasted his wealth. He was careless and foolish in the way that he lived. **v14** He spent all that he had. Then there was a severe lack of food in that country. And he became poor and hungry. **v15** So, he went to work for one of the citizens of that country. His employer sent him into his fields to feed pigs. **v16** The son was so hungry that he wanted to eat the pigs' food. Nobody gave anything to him. **v17** At last, he realised his true situation. He said, "My father's workers have plenty to eat. But here I will starve to death. **v18** I will leave here and I will go to my father. I will say to him, 'Father, I have *sinned against heaven and against you. **v19** I do not deserve for anyone to call me your son. But let me be like one of your workers.' " **v20** So, he got up and he went back to his father. But while he was still a long from home, his father saw him. He felt sorry for his son. And he ran to meet him. He put his arms round his son and he kissed him.

v21 The son said to his father, "Father, I have *sinned against heaven and against you. I do not deserve for anyone to call me your son."

v22 But the father said to his servants, "Be quick. Bring out the best clothes. Put them on him. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. **v23** And get our fat *calf and kill it. Let us eat and be merry. **v24** This son of mine was dead but now he is alive again. I had lost him but now I have found him." And they began to be merry.

v25 The older son was in the field. When he came near to the house, he heard music and dances. **v26** So, he called to one of the young men. He asked him what it meant. **v27** The young man replied, "Your brother has come home. And your father has killed the fat *calf because your brother has arrived back safe and well."

v28 The older brother was angry and he would not go into the house. So, his father came out and he tried to persuade him to come in. **v29** However, he answered his father, "All these years I have worked hard for you. I have always obeyed your commands. But you never gave to me even a young goat so that I could be merry with my friends. **v30** But this son of yours spent your money on *prostitutes. And when he came home, you killed the fat *calf for him."

v31 The father said to him, "Son, you are always with me. All that I have is yours. **v32** But we must be merry and happy. Your brother was dead but he is alive again. We had lost him but now we have found him." '

Verses 11-12 This story is about a son who went away from home. He lived a bad life in a foreign country. In the end, he came home to his father. The purpose of the story is to show the love of the father. He waited for his son to return. When the son came home, the father gave to him a warm welcome. They had a great party. This is to show how God the Father loves even the worst *sinner. There is joy in heaven over each *sinner who comes back to God.

Then there is the contrast between the father and the older brother. Perhaps this is to show the attitude of many of the *Pharisees and teachers of the law. The brother would not come in to the party. He would not forgive his brother.

When a man died, under the law the oldest son received a double share of his possessions (Deuteronomy 21:17). If this father had died, the older son would have received two thirds. The younger son would have received one third. While he was alive, the father could give gifts to his sons. There was no law about what he could give to each son.

In the story, the younger son asked for his share of the property. This was what he would receive on the death of the father. The father gave him his share. Probably this was one third of all his possessions. All that remained of the father's property would pass to the oldest son.

Verses 13-20 When the younger son had his money, he left home. He went a long way to a foreign country. He had plenty of funds at first but he was not sensible with them. He was careless and he wasted all his money. It was his own fault that he became poor. He could not afford to buy food and he was hungry. This was partly because there was a severe lack of food in that country.

He had to get a job. The only work that he could find was to feed pigs. The *Jews do not eat pigs (Leviticus 11:7-8). In normal circumstances, a *Jew would refuse to work with pigs. But this young man was desperate.

Although he had a job, he could not afford to buy much food. Nobody gave him anything. So, he was very hungry. He saw the pig food and he even felt a strong desire to eat that food.

At last, he realised how foolish he had been. His father's workers had plenty to eat. He was the father's son and he was very hungry. He decided to go at once to his father. He was sorry for what he had done. He began to *repent of his actions and his attitudes. He should not have asked for his share of the father's property. He should not have left his father to go to the distant country. He should not have spent all the money in the way that he did. In all of this, he had *sinned against God and against his father. *Sin is always against God even more than it is against anyone else. The son would ask his father to employ him as a worker. The son knew that he had no right to return as a son. And he could not expect his father to receive him as a son.

He went back to his father. The father had hoped that this son would return. All the time he had looked for his younger son. The father saw him while he was still a long way off. The father was so happy that he ran to him. He hugged his son and he kissed him.

Verses 21-24 The son started to say his speech but he did not complete it. Probably his father did not let him continue. The father had accepted him as his son.

Immediately the father ordered his servants to bring the best clothes, shoes and a ring. These things showed that the younger son now had authority as a son of the father.

Then the father ordered his servants to prepare a party. They must kill the best *calf because this was to be a special occasion. To the father it was as if his son had been dead. Now his son was alive again.

Verses 25-32 It seems strange that the older son was not there at the start of the party. But this is just a story. He knew nothing about it until he heard the sound from the party. There was music and people were dancing. He asked a young servant what the noise meant. The young man told him. Then the older son was so angry that he would not go into the house.

The father came out to urge him to come in. The son thought himself to be superior. He had not done anything wrong. But the father had not rewarded him in any way. He would not even call the other son his brother. Instead, he described the younger son as a son of his father (verse 30). That son had spent the father's money on *prostitutes. The older son supposed that his brother had used the money in that way. Yet, for him the father had killed the special *calf.

The father was gentle with his older son. He loved both his sons. All that the father possessed would belong to this son. His brother had come back. Therefore, it was right and necessary to be happy and to have a party.

In this story of the younger son, Jesus taught that God our Father accepts *sinners. He is ready to forgive them when they turn to him. The attitude of the older brother is like that of many of the *Pharisees and their *disciples. They were angry that Jesus did not agree with their traditions. He did not do what they thought to be right and proper. Jesus gave a welcome to *sinners whom they considered too bad.

The wise manager – Luke 16:1-18

v1 Jesus also told the *disciples, 'There was a rich man who had a manager. But someone told him that his manager was wasting the rich man's possessions. **v2** So, he called his manager in. He said to him, "I have heard about you. Give to me an account of all that you have done. You cannot continue as my manager."

v3 The manager thought, "I must do something. My master has taken my job from me. I am not strong enough to dig. And I am ashamed to ask people for money or food. **v4** I know what I will do. Then, when I lose my job, I will have friends. They will receive me into their homes."

v5 Then he called in each person who was in debt to his master. He asked the first one, "How much do you owe to my master?"

v6 And he replied, "100 *baths of oil." The manager told him, "Sit down quickly. Take the statement of your account. Change the amount to 50 *baths."

v7 Then the manager asked another person, "How much do you owe?" And he replied, "100 *cors of wheat." The manager said to him, "Take the statement of your account. Change the amount to 80 *cors."

v8 The manager was not an honest man. But the master praised him because he had been wise. People who care only about this world show great wisdom among themselves. Often, they deal with their wealth more wisely than the people who know God. **v9** I tell you, use the wealth of this world to make friends for yourselves. When your wealth has gone, they will receive you into *eternal homes.

v10 Whoever you can trust with a little, you can trust with a lot. Whoever is not honest with a small amount will not be honest with a large amount. **v11** If you have not been honest with this world's wealth, nobody will trust you with true wealth. **v12** If you are not honest with somebody else's property, nobody will give to you property of your own.

v13 No servant can serve two masters. He will hate one and he will love the other one. Or he will be loyal to one and he will dislike the other one. You cannot serve God and wealth.'

v14 The *Pharisees loved money. They heard what Jesus said. And they laughed at him. **v15** Jesus said to them, 'You make yourselves to seem so good to other people. But God knows your hearts and minds. God hates that which people make important.

v16 The law and the *prophets were until John. Since that time we *preach the good news of the *kingdom of God. And everyone is pressing into it. **v17** But the smallest detail cannot drop out of the law. It would be easier for heaven and earth to disappear than that.

v18 Suppose that a man divorces his wife. If he marries another woman, he is guilty of *adultery. If another man marries that wife then he is guilty of *adultery.'

Verses 1-2 Jesus told this story to his *disciples. The *disciples here probably included those people who followed Jesus and not just the 12 *disciples. Jesus spoke about a rich man who had a manager. A manager was often a slave but here this manager was not a slave. He was responsible for all the financial affairs of his master. He had the authority to make legal agreements on behalf of his master.

Someone told the master that his manager was wasting the rich man's possessions. The master took the job from the manager before he looked at the evidence. The manager may not have been guilty but he could not defend himself. But he had time to act while he prepared the accounts.

Verses 3-4 There was no hope of another job like this one. He was not strong enough for hard labour. He would not ask people for money. He had to find another way to live. He decided to get friends who would provide for him.

Verses 5-7 The manager spoke to each person who owed money to the master. He told them to bring the records of their debts. Then he told them to reduce the amounts. He was able to do this because he still had the authority as the manager.

A bath was about 5 gallons (22 litres) of liquid goods. A cor was about 220 litres of dry goods.

In those days people returned kindness because of any kindness that they had received. In this act, the manager obliged these persons to do something for him. When he left his job, they would receive him into their homes.

Verse 8-9 The manager was not an honest man. The word for 'not honest' could mean 'of this world'. The manager was a man of the world and not one who believed in Jesus.

Maybe the manager should not have changed the agreements. Perhaps in this, he had done what was wrong. He had reduced the amount that the master expected to receive. But the master praised him because he had been wise.

Clearly, the master had lost money. He did not praise the manager because of this. He praised him because he had been clever. People would imagine that the master was a generous man. And they would consider the manager to be their friend.

Of course, really the master did not approve of these reductions. However, he could not now complain. Because of these reductions, people thought well of him; he would not want to change that. He would seem very foolish if anyone discovered the truth about this matter. For that reason, it would now be very hard for him to remove the manager from his job.

People who do not believe in Jesus use their possessions for their own benefit. With wisdom, they try to increase their wealth. They seem to be more eager to achieve their purpose than Christians are to achieve theirs.

God's people should use their resources better to bring people into the *kingdom of God. At death, a Christian will lose whatever wealth he has in this world. But he will receive a warm welcome to his *eternal home in heaven. That welcome may be from those people whom he had helped into the *kingdom.

Verses 10-13 A person who is honest in small matters will be honest in large matters. You would not give responsibility for large matters to a person who is not honest. Jesus contrasts this world's wealth with 'true wealth', in other words, the wealth of heaven that only God can give. God expects his people to be responsible with the money that he has given to them in this world. If they want God to give them responsibility for great things, they must first be responsible with small things. They must be responsible in the use of their money and other possessions.

We may think that we own our possessions. But all that we have is as a loan from God (1 Chronicles 29:14). We are like managers of what God has put in our care. When we die, we can take nothing with us. Then God will give rewards to those people who trust in him.

Those people to whom wealth is of first importance in effect make wealth their god. It has become their master. Nobody can be the servant of two masters. He will serve one master better than he serves the other master. Although we may have both God and money, we cannot serve them both.

Verses 14-15 The *Pharisees heard what Jesus had said. They laughed at it because it was true about them. They appeared to be loyal to God and to serve him. But many *Pharisees loved money. The love of money is a cause of much evil (1 Timothy 6:10). They tried to serve both money and God.

We see the outside of a person but God knows the heart. Much that people consider important, God hates.

Verses 16-17 Until the time of John the *Baptist, God spoke to his people by the law and the *prophets. The law and the *prophets mean the whole of the *Old Testament. But from that time, God has spoken by Jesus who is his Son (Hebrews 1:1-2). Jesus *preached about the *kingdom of God. The good news is that, by belief and trust in Christ, people can enter the *kingdom. The *kingdom is the rule of God in the lives of those people who believe.

Crowds of people were eager to hear Jesus. They tried to get into the *kingdom by various means. The *Pharisees tried to stop them because the *Pharisees opposed the good news. They thought that Jesus *preached against the law and the *prophets.

Jesus told them that every detail of the law was permanent. The whole law was as permanent as the earth and heaven. What Jesus taught was in no way against the law.

Verses 18 God introduced marriage so that the man and the woman should become as one. God intended marriage to be a union for life.

The law allowed men to divorce their wives because of some causes (Deuteronomy 24:1-4). The causes are where the woman has not been loyal to the marriage (Matthew 5:31-32, Matthew 19:8-9). The *Pharisees and their traditions made it much easier to divorce a wife. They had many small reasons that they accepted for divorce.

The man, who divorced his wife, should not marry again. If he did, he would be guilty of *adultery. If a man marries a woman after her divorce, he is also guilty of *adultery.

The rich man and Lazarus – Luke 16:19-31

v19 'There was a rich man who always dressed in the finest and most expensive clothes. He lived in luxury every day.

v20 Also there was a very poor man whose name was Lazarus. He had sore places all over his body. He lay at the gate of the rich man. **v21** Lazarus desired to eat the bits of food that fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and they wiped their tongues over his sore places.

v22 One day the poor man died. The *angels carried him to Abraham's side. Also, the rich man died and people buried him. **v23** In hell, where he suffered, the rich man looked up. He saw Abraham in the distance and Lazarus at Abraham's side. **v24** So, he called out, "Father Abraham, pity me. Send Lazarus to put his finger in some water and to make my tongue cool with it. I am in great pain in this fire."

v25 But Abraham replied, "Son, remember. When you were alive, you had everything good. But for Lazarus, everything was bad. Now he has comfort here, but you are suffering.

v26 In addition to that, there is a great gap between us. Nobody can cross that gap to come to us. And nobody from here can cross that gap to come to you."

v27 The rich man answered, "Then I ask you, father Abraham, to send Lazarus back to my father's house. **v28** I have 5 brothers. Let him warn them so that they will not come to this place of pain."

v29 Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the *prophets. Let them listen to them."

v30 But he said, "No, father Abraham. But if a dead person goes to them, then they would *repent."

v31 Abraham said to him, "They do not listen to Moses and the *prophets. So, they would not believe even if a dead person comes back to life." '

Verses 19-26 Jesus told this story of a rich man and a poor man. The rich man lived in luxury. The poor man lay at the gate of the rich man. The rich man had more than enough. The poor man had nothing. He was starving and he had many sore places on his body.

The poor man's name was Lazarus. Lazarus means 'God has helped'. It was a common name. Probably Jesus used it in this story because of what it meant.

Both of these men died. The people buried the rich man probably in his own special grave. There would have been a great funeral for him. The story does not say that anyone buried Lazarus. If he did have a funeral, it would have been very poor. *Angels took Lazarus to be with Abraham. But the rich man went to hell.

By 'hell', Jesus meant the place of punishment. He described a place where the fire burned like the valley called Gehenna. Gehenna was where people burned the rubbish outside Jerusalem.

From that place of punishment, the rich man could see Abraham and Lazarus. They were a long way off. Lazarus lay close to Abraham. This could mean that they were eating a meal together. The rich man called out to Abraham. He called Abraham 'father'. He supposed that as a *Jew he belonged to the family of Abraham. He asked Abraham to pity him. But he did not pity Lazarus when they were on earth. Then he asked Abraham to send Lazarus with a drop of water to cool his tongue.

Abraham would not do what the rich man had requested. He gave to him two reasons. The rich man had so much wealth when he was alive on earth. But he had been a proud and selfish man. He had not been a good manager of his wealth; he did not use his money responsibly. The second reason was that there was a gap between the two places. It was not possible for anyone to cross over that gap. As for Lazarus, he had a poor experience while he was alive on earth. Now he was happy with Abraham in the best place.

The rich man did not suffer because he was rich. Abraham too was a rich man. The difference was in their attitude to God and to other people.

Verses 27-31 The rich man asked Abraham to send Lazarus to his 5 brothers. But Abraham would not do it. All that they needed to warn them was in Moses and the *prophets. They should listen to and they should obey the words of the *Old Testament. Even if some dead person came to live again, they would not believe.

Jesus told this story to the people and especially to the *Pharisees. Many of the *Pharisees were showing the same attitudes as the rich man's brothers in the story. They believed in life after death and in a future judgement. They thought that as the family of Abraham, they would be safe. They had the *Old Testament but they did not obey it. They loved money and they loved to receive honour from the people. They would not help the poor people. Even when Jesus came to life again after his death, many *Pharisees would not believe in him.

***Sin, *faith and duty – Luke 17:1-10**

v1 Jesus spoke again to his *disciples. 'It is certain that some things will cause people to *sin. But it will be terrible for anyone who causes that to happen. **v2** It is a serious thing to cause even the least important person to *sin. It would be better if people threw that person into the sea with a large stone round his neck. **v3** So, be careful what you do. If your brother *sins, show him his error. Then if he *repents of his *sin, forgive him. **v4** Suppose he *sins against you 7 times in a day. If he *repents each of those 7 times, you must forgive him.'

v5 The *apostles said to the *Lord, 'Give us more *faith.'

v6 The *Lord replied, 'If only you had *faith as small as a tiny *mustard seed! Then you could say to this mulberry tree, "Lift yourself out of the ground. Go and plant yourself in the sea." It would obey you.'

v7 Suppose that you had a servant. He has been ploughing or feeding the animals. When he comes in from the farm, you do not tell him to sit down and eat. **v8** No, you would say to him, "Prepare a meal for me. Then get ready and serve me. After I have had my meal, you can have something to eat and drink." **v9** You would not especially thank the servant because he obeyed you. **v10** That is how it should be with you. You should do all that God tells you to do. Then say, "We are merely servants and our master has not gained anything from our work. We have done only what we ought to have done."'

Verses 1-4 The things of this world will tempt even the *disciples of Jesus. Often the fault is the *disciple's own natural desires. But sometimes other people will tempt them to *sin. God will punish those people who cause his people to *sin. Jesus does not say what that punishment will be. However, he did explain that God considers this to be a very severe matter.

The large stone would have been part of a mill. It would be very heavy. It would hold the person down so that he would drown. The person who causes even the weakest *disciple to *sin deserves an even worse punishment than that. However, God can forgive the person that caused the *disciple to *sin. But that person must first *repent. God cannot forgive anyone who refuses to *repent.

God hates *sin. Therefore, Christians must be careful not to *sin. And they must be careful not to cause other people to *sin. If a Christian does *sin, other Christians must show him his error. They must not do this as if they were judges. They must do it because they care about him. If he *repents, they must forgive him. The number 7 here does not mean only 7 times. It means 'however many times he *sins'.

Verses 5-6 The *apostles wanted more *faith. But it was not a question of quantity. The amount of *faith was not important but the kind of *faith was. A little real *faith could do great things.

The mustard seed was very small. The mulberry tree is a tree that has very firm roots. So, to move a mulberry tree would be difficult. A small *faith would be enough for a *disciple to tell the tree to lift itself out of the ground. By this, Jesus taught that nothing is impossible to real *faith.

In the Bible, *faith means belief and trust in God. Jesus was telling the *disciples simply to believe and trust in God. If they did that, God would do great things in and through their lives. He would even do things that seemed impossible.

Verses 7-10 A servant had worked hard all day. When he came in, his master expected him to prepare a meal. After the master had eaten then the servant could feed himself. That was normal. That was the job of the servant. He had done nothing more than he ought to have done. The master would not thank him especially because of what he had done.

Suppose that we obey God. And we do all that God wants us to do. That is our duty because we are his servants. We have only done what we ought to have done. We have done nothing special.

10 *lepers – Luke 17:11-19

v11 On his way to Jerusalem, Jesus went along the border between Samaria and Galilee. **v12** As he came into a village, 10 *lepers met him. They stood at a distance. **v13** They called out with loud voices, 'Jesus, master, pity us.'

v14 Jesus saw them and he said to them, 'Go. Show yourselves to the priests.' As they went, the *Lord cured them of *leprosy.

v15 One of them saw that the *Lord had cured him. And he came back to Jesus and he praised God in a loud voice. **v16** He bent down so that his face was on the ground in front of Jesus' feet. And he thanked Jesus. This man was a *Samaritan.

v17 So Jesus said, 'I cured 10 men of their *leprosy. But the other 9 have not returned. **v18** None of them came back to praise God except this foreigner.' **v19** Then Jesus said to him, 'Get up. Go on your way. Your *faith has made you well.'

Verses 11-14 Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. Here he was on the border between Samaria and Galilee. The exact route that Jesus took is not clear to us. He started the journey on the road through Samaria (9:51-56), which was the shorter route. But the last part of his journey seems to have been through Perea (Matthew 19:1, Mark 10:1). Perea is on the east side of the river Jordan. From there, he went through Jericho (19:1). The most likely explanation is that Luke did not put these events in order of time.

*Lepers had to keep at a distance from other people. So, these 10 *lepers had to cry out with loud voices. They asked Jesus to pity them. They may have expected to receive a gift of food or money. They did not ask him to cure them. But that is probably what they hoped.

Jesus told them to go to the priests. The priests would examine the *lepers. The priests would decide whether the disease had gone or not (Leviticus chapter 14). The *lepers obeyed Jesus and they went. That showed that they were trusting Jesus to cure them. Then as they went, Jesus cured them of the disease.

Verses 15-19 One of the *lepers came back to thank Jesus. He did not first go to the priest to check that he was free of the disease. He knew that Jesus had cured him. He praised God in a loud voice. The other 9 did not come back.

This man was a *Samaritan. In normal circumstances the *Jews and the *Samaritans would stay away from each other. But this *Samaritan *leper was with *Jewish *lepers. Unlike them, he could not go to the *Jewish priests. So instead this *Samaritan returned to give honour and thanks to Jesus, a *Jew. He was the last one that we would expect to thank Jesus. But he was the only one.

Jesus expressed surprise that only this foreigner had returned to give God thanks. God had cured 10 men; they all should be very grateful to God. But the other 9 men were not praising God for the wonderful thing that he had done for them.

Jesus told the *Samaritan to get up and to go on his way. The other *lepers had believed and Jesus had cured them. But Jesus told the *Samaritan that his *faith had made him well. This must mean more than what the other *lepers had received. Jesus had cured their bodies. But Jesus made this man whole. Maybe this man received the *salvation that Jesus *preached.

When the *kingdom of God comes – Luke 17:20-37

v20 Some *Pharisees asked Jesus when the *kingdom of God would come. Jesus answered 'God's *kingdom will come. But you will not be able to see it with your eyes. **v21** Nobody will say, "Here it is." Nor will they say, "There it is." They cannot see it because God's *kingdom is with you.'

v22 Jesus said this to the *disciples. 'The time will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man. But you will not be able to see one. **v23** People will say to you, "Look. There he is." Or, "Here he is." Do not go with or follow those people. **v24** The lightning flashes and shines from one end of the sky to the other end. The Son of Man will be like that in the day when he comes. **v25** First, he must suffer many things. And the people of this age will refuse him.'

v26 Before the Son of Man's return, people will be carrying on their usual activities. It will be like the days before Noah's flood came. **v27** Then, people ate and they drank. They married and they gave their children in marriage. This continued until the day that Noah entered his ship. Then the flood came and it killed them all.

v28 It was the same in the days of Lot. People ate and they drank. They bought and they sold. They planted and they built. **v29** But the day that Lot left Sodom, fire and *sulphur rained down from heaven. And it killed all of them.

v30 It will be very much like that on the day when the Son of Man appears. **v31** On that day, a person may be on the roof of his house, with his goods inside the house. But he should not go into the house to get them. Anyone in a field should not turn back to the things that are behind him. **v32** Remember Lot's wife. **v33** Those who try to keep their lives will lose them. But those who give up their lives will preserve them. **v34** I tell you, on that night two people will be asleep in one bed. The *Lord will take one away but he will leave the other one. **v35** Two women will beat grain to make flour. The *Lord will take one away but he will leave the other one. **v36** [Two men will be in the field. The *Lord will take one away but he will leave the other one.]

v37 The *disciples asked him, 'Where, *Lord?' Jesus answered them, 'Where there is a dead body. That is where the *vultures will gather.'

Verses 20-21 Much of what Jesus taught was about God's *kingdom. The *Pharisees asked him when this *kingdom would come. Jesus told them that it would come. But this *kingdom was different to their idea of a *kingdom. They thought of the *kingdom as a king in *Israel who would defeat the *Romans. However, Jesus said that they could not see God's *kingdom. People cannot say that the *kingdom is here or there. It has no physical place on the earth.

The words 'with you' could mean 'inside you' or 'among you'. 'Among you' would seem to be the right translation. Jesus would not tell the *Pharisees that the *kingdom was inside them. The *kingdom cannot be where people refuse Jesus.

The *kingdom was there among them in the person of Jesus. They could not see it. Those people who believe in Jesus enter into the *kingdom. They belong in the *kingdom. Jesus rules in their lives. Where he rules, that is God's *kingdom.

Verses 22-25 It is not clear what 'one of the days of the Son of Man' means. It could mean that the *disciples would remember the past. They would wish that Jesus were still with them on earth. But 'the days of the Son of Man' appear to be in the future. They refer to the time when Jesus will come again. That will be the start of this *kingdom on the earth. But the *disciples will not yet see those days.

People will say that the *Christ has come again. They will say that he has come in secret. They will ask the *disciples to come and see him. Jesus said that this is false. He will not come in secret. When he comes, all the people will know it. They will see it as clearly as they see the lightning in the sky.

Before he comes again, Jesus must suffer. The people will refuse to accept him as the *Christ. And they will kill him.

Verses 26-29 Until Jesus comes again, life will continue as usual. It was the same in the time of Noah. Then the people lived their ordinary lives. They did not believe what Noah told them. They did not obey God or trust in him. So, they were not ready when the flood came. They all died in the flood.

It was the same in the days of Lot. Then the people lived their ordinary lives. Lot was a good man but the people of Sodom were wicked people (Genesis 13:13). They did not obey God or trust in him. So, they were not ready when God destroyed their city. All the people died in the fire and the sulphur. Sulphur is a yellow chemical that burns.

Verses 30-36 When Jesus comes, people will be living their ordinary lives. Most of them will not believe in Jesus. They will not know that Jesus will come. They will not expect him to come. They will not be ready for him when he comes.

This is not about the year *AD 70, when the *Romans destroyed Jerusalem. It is about when Jesus comes back. That time is still in the future.

Jesus will come suddenly. Then the situation will be urgent. There will be no time to gather up material possessions. People must give their whole attention to the Son of Man. Those people who try to keep their way of life will lose their lives. Only those people who have handed their lives over to God will be ready to lose their lives (Mark 8:34-35). But the result will be, in fact, that they will save their lives. Lot's wife was almost safe but she looked back (Genesis 19:26). She was unwilling to leave her old life.

People will be either for Jesus or against him. Jesus will take those people who are for him. He will leave those people who are not for him. Jesus does not explain what he means. But Paul wrote about the time when Jesus will come (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). At that time those people who believe in Jesus, he will take up from the earth. Those people who remain will have to come in front of God. He will be their judge and he will punish them. Those people who belong to Jesus will escape that fate.

In that country, houses usually had flat roofs. There would be steps up the outside of the house. The roof was part of the living space.

Some Bibles have verse 36. This is in some old texts but it is not in the best texts.

Verse 37 The *disciples wanted to know where all this will happen. Jesus did not directly answer their question. Vultures are large birds that eat dead animals. So, a dead body in the desert will attract vultures. So you can know that it is there because of the vultures.

People who do not believe in Jesus are dead in God's opinion. Wherever they are at that time, the *Lord will be their judge. They will not escape the punishment for their evil deeds. As a dead body attracts vultures, so they will have brought about their own punishment.

Two stories about prayer – Luke 18:1-14

v1 Then Jesus told his *disciples a story. It showed them that they should always pray. They should pray and they should never give up. **v2** He said, 'In a certain town, there was a judge. This judge was not afraid of God and he did not care about people. **v3** There was a widow in that town. She came to the judge. She said to him, "Act on my behalf against my enemy."

v4 For some time he refused to do anything on her behalf. But later he said to himself, "I am not afraid of God. And I do not care about people. **v5** However, this widow bothers me so much. I will give to her the help that she wants. Otherwise, she will come so often that she will wear me out."

v6 And the *Lord said, 'Listen to the judge. Although he does not act in a right or proper manner, he still said that. **v7** God will certainly do what is right for his people. They are the people whom he has chosen. They cry out to him day and night. He will not be slow to answer them. **v8** I tell you that God will help his people quickly. The Son of Man will come again. But he may not find on earth many people who believe in him.'

v9 Jesus told a story to some people. These people were confident that they were good people. And they thought that they were superior to all other people. **v10** He said, 'Two men went up to the *temple to pray. One man was a *Pharisee, and the other man's work was to collect taxes. **v11** The *Pharisee stood alone and he prayed. "God, I thank you that I am not like other men. They steal and they cheat. They act unfairly. They are guilty of *adultery. I thank you that I am not a *sinner, like this man. He collects taxes. **v12** Twice each week, I choose not to eat because of my religion. And I give a 10th of everything that I get." **v13** The man who collected taxes stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven. He beat his hands on his upper body. And he said, "God, pity me. I am such a bad *sinner." **v14** I tell you that this man, and not the *Pharisee, went home with a right relationship with God. God will make humble everyone who tries to make himself great. Those people who are humble, God will make great.'

Verses 1-6 Jesus had spoken about the time when he will come again. Nobody knows when that time will be. In the meantime, those people who believe in Jesus should pray. The *Jews would pray every day and up to three times a day. But Christians can pray at any time and as often as they want. They should pray often and they should not stop. Christians must pray until Jesus comes. And they should never give up hope.

Jesus did not teach that God was like the bad judge. God is not like that in any way. However, even the bad judge did what was right in the end. God loves his people. He always does what is best for them. The story is all about the widow. She continued to ask the judge to make a decision on her behalf. If she had not done so, the judge would not have made that decision.

The bad judge did what seemed best for him. He did not bother about right or fair decisions. He did not respect God and he was not afraid of God. Maybe he had accepted money from a rich enemy of the widow. It was much easier to refuse this widow's appeal. But she would not accept that. She continued to come to him. And she continued to ask him to act for her benefit. In the end, he had to make the right decision on her behalf and against her enemy.

The bad judge made the right decision because the widow insisted on an answer. God is good. He will always do what is right. He hears his people as they cry out to him day and night. They realise that they need God's help. They know that their only hope is in God. God does not always answer immediately. But he will not delay the answers. He will act on their behalf at the proper time.

Jesus said, 'I am coming soon' (Revelation 22:20). The *apostle John replied, 'Come, *Lord Jesus.' But maybe he will not find many who pray with *faith. Perhaps there will be just a few Christians who are praying with *faith for his return.

Verses 9-14 Luke does not say who the people in verse 9 were. Many people think that they are good enough to get to heaven. They trust more in themselves than they do in God. But this is a serious mistake. The Bible tells us that all have *sinned (Romans 3:23). Therefore, nobody can get to heaven by what he has done. Many people think that they are superior to other people. They consider that those other people are greater *sinners. But this attitude is not a good one. God hates all *sin, whether in our opinion it is a great *sin or a small *sin.

Jesus told this story about two men. One was a *Pharisee. The *Pharisees tried to obey all the rules and traditions of their religion. Many of them were proud. They thought that they were better than other people. The other man collected taxes. Most people hated the men who did this work. That was because they worked for the *Romans. Many of them collected more taxes than were due. In this, many of them robbed the people and they became rich. These two men came into the *temple to pray.

The *Pharisee stood to pray. This was the normal way to pray in the *temple or in the *synagogue (Mark 11:25). However, he prayed with an attitude of pride. He thanked God that he was better than other people. He thanked God that he was not a *sinner like the other man. He spoke of the bad things that he did not do. Then he told the *Lord of the good things that he did. What the *Pharisee said about himself was true. He chose not to eat frequently, in fact, more often than God's law orders the *Jews to do. He gave a 10th of more than the law said (Deuteronomy 14:22-29). But he prayed with a wrong attitude. He was not humble. He showed no sense of *sin in himself. He did not express his need for help from God. He expected God to *bless him as a reward because of his good deeds.

The man who collected taxes had a completely different attitude. He knew that he was a *sinner. He stood at the back of this area of the *temple. It would have been normal to look up to pray. But this man would not look up. He was so aware of his *sins. He was so sorry that he beat his upper body. (It was the custom to do that when people felt very sad and desperate.) His prayer was short and simple. He did not tell God how good he was. He just said how bad a *sinner he was. He asked God to pity him and to forgive him.

God accepted the prayer of the man who collected taxes. God answered his prayer and God forgave his *sin. The prayer of the *Pharisee did not need an answer. He received nothing from God.

Jesus told this story to teach that God hates pride. God opposes those people who are proud. Those people who make themselves important, God will refuse. But God accepts those people who are humble. To them, God will give honour.

Jesus and the children – Luke 18:15-17

v15 Some people brought even babies to Jesus, because they wanted him to touch them. When the *disciples saw this, they told the people to stop. **v16** But Jesus called for the children to come to him. He said, 'Allow the children to come to me. Do not stop them, because God's *kingdom belongs to such as these. **v17** I tell you the truth. You must accept God's *kingdom as a child does. If you do not, you will never enter the *kingdom.'

Verses 15-17 People, probably parents, brought their babies and little children to Jesus (Mark 10:13). They wanted Jesus to put his hands on them and to bless them. The *disciples tried to stop them. Maybe the *disciples thought that Jesus was too busy or too tired. Maybe they thought that little children were not important. But Jesus considered the little children to be very important. He wanted them to come to him. He told the *disciples not to stop them.

Jesus took the little children in his arms. He put his hands on them and he blessed them (Mark 10:16).

Little children have simple trust in their parents. The *kingdom of God is open to people who have such simple trust in Jesus. In this way, people need to become as little children to enter the *kingdom of God. The way in is not by deeds but by *faith. Without this simple trust in Jesus, there is no way into the *kingdom.

The rich young ruler – Luke 18:18-30

v18 A certain ruler asked Jesus, 'Good teacher, what must I do to have *eternal life?'

v19 Jesus said to him, 'You call me good. But nobody is good except God alone. **v20** You know God's commands. "Do not *sin in *adultery. Do not murder. Do not steal. Do not give false evidence. Give honour to your father and to your mother."'

v21 The ruler replied, 'Yes. I have obeyed all of these since I was a boy.'

v22 Jesus heard this reply. He said to him, 'You still lack one thing. Sell everything that you have. Then give it to poor people. And you will have wealth in heaven. Then come and follow me.'

v23 When the ruler heard this, he became very sad. This was because he was very wealthy. **v24** Jesus looked at him. And Jesus said, 'It is very hard for wealthy people to enter God's *kingdom. **v25** It would not be easy for a camel to go through a *needle's eye. It is more difficult for a wealthy person to enter God's *kingdom.'

v26 The people who heard him asked, 'Then whom can God save?'

v27 Jesus replied, 'God can do anything. He can do the things that are impossible for people to do.'

v28 Peter said to Jesus, 'We have left everything. And we have followed you.'

v29 Jesus said to them, 'I tell you the truth. Some people have left their homes and their wives. Some people have left their brothers, parents and children. They have left all this for God's *kingdom. **v30** But they will certainly receive much more in this present age. And in the age that will come, they will have *eternal life.'

Verses 18-21 A ruler came to Jesus. He was a young man and he was wealthy (Matthew 19:22). We do not know what he ruled. He could have been an official in the government or in a *synagogue. But he was probably too young to be a *synagogue ruler.

He called Jesus the good teacher. It was very unusual to call any man 'good teacher'. Jesus replied that nobody was good except God. Jesus did not say that he was not good. In effect, the young man gave to Jesus a name that belonged to God. What the young man had said was important. Maybe he did not think about what he said. But perhaps he did recognise Jesus as the Son of God.

The ruler asked Jesus what he must do to have *eternal life. He thought that somehow he could earn *eternal life. Jesus said that nobody is good except God. Therefore, nobody can achieve *eternal life because nobody is good enough.

Jesus answered the question about what the man should do. He referred to 5 of God's 10 commands (Exodus chapter 20, Deuteronomy chapter 5). These 5 commands are about our duty to other people. The young man thought that he had obeyed these commands from childhood. If he had thought more about it, he would not have been so sure. He would have realised that he had neglected to obey even these 5 commands. To other people he may have seemed without blame in the law. But in himself, he could not have been perfect to the standard that these commands declare to be necessary. (See James 2:10-11.)

On this occasion, Jesus did not mention those commands that are about our duty to God.

Verses 22-25 The young ruler thought that he had obeyed the commands of God. But he was wealthy and his wealth had become his god. In other words, he trusted in his wealth rather than in God. The first command is that we must *worship the real God only. So, Jesus told him to sell all that he had. He should give the money to poor people. Then he would have no wealth on earth but he would be rich in heaven. Then he should follow Jesus.

This action was special to that man. It is not a general rule for all people. The principle for everyone is that nothing should take the place of God in our lives. We cannot trust in wealth or anything else.

The young man did not want to give away his money in order to serve God. Luke does not tell us that he refused to obey Jesus. But at that time he went away very sad because he was very wealthy.

It is hard for rich people to enter the *kingdom of God. They seem to have sufficient for all that they need. They trust in what they have. They feel no need for God's help. So, it is very difficult for them to realise that they do need God.

It would be impossible for a camel to go through a *needle's eye. It is impossible for a rich person to buy his way into heaven. But God can do what is not possible for men.

Verses 26-30 People thought that it was good to be rich. It showed that God had *blessed that person. So, a rich person should have the best opportunity for life after death. So, if it is so difficult for them, it must be worse for other people. If rich people cannot achieve *salvation, then nobody else can. That is true. Nobody can achieve *salvation. But what is impossible for people is possible with God. *Salvation for rich people and for poor people is by the kindness of God. *Eternal life is a gift from God that no person can earn.

Peter said that the *disciples had left everything. And they had followed Jesus.

In his reply, Jesus showed that God could not be in debt to anyone. So, if a person gives up anything for God's *kingdom, God will give more. He will give to him in this life and in the life to come. But the promise of reward cannot be the purpose of the person's action. It must be on behalf of God's *kingdom and in the purposes of God.

Jesus tells about his death – Luke 18:31-34

v31 Jesus took the 12 *disciples aside. He said to them, 'Listen. We are going to Jerusalem. There everything that the *prophets wrote about the Son of Man will happen. **v32** The *Jewish leaders will hand him over to the foreigners. They will laugh at him. They will insult him and they will *spit on him. **v33** They will beat him with whips and they will kill him. But on the third day he will rise to life again.'

v34 The *disciples did not understand any of this. What he said was a mystery to them. And they did not know what he meant.

Verses 31-34 There are many *prophecies in the *Old Testament that tell about the *Christ's death. Jesus told the *disciples that these *prophecies were about him. He would die in Jerusalem. This was part of God's purposes for him and for our *salvation.

The *Jewish leaders would hand him over to the *Romans. They would make fun of him and they would insult him. They would *spit on him. They would hurt him with whips and they would kill him. But death could not defeat Jesus; Jesus would defeat the power of death. On the third day after his death, Jesus would rise to life again.

Jesus had spoken about his death several times before. But the *disciples still did not understand about his death. They could not understand that Jesus would come back to life again. Perhaps their hopes about him made it especially difficult for them to think about his death. They hoped that he would lead the *Jews to defeat the *Romans. By that means, they expected him to become the king of the *Jews.

Jesus cures a blind man – Luke 18:35-43

v35 As Jesus came near to the city called Jericho, a blind man sat by the road. He was asking people to give money to him. **v36** He heard the crowd go by. He asked what was happening. **v37** The people told him that Jesus from Nazareth was going by.

v38 The blind man cried out, 'Jesus, Son of David, pity me.'

v39 The people at the front of the crowd told the blind man to be quiet. But he shouted even louder, 'Son of David, pity me.'

v40 Jesus stopped and he ordered them to bring the blind man to him. When he came near, Jesus spoke to him. **v41** He asked, 'What do you want me to do for you?' The blind man replied, '*Lord, I want to see.'

v42 Jesus told him, 'Receive your sight. Your *faith has cured you.' **v43** Immediately, he could see again. He followed Jesus and he gave honour to God. All the people saw this, and they praised God.

Verses 35-37 On his way to Jerusalem, Jesus crossed the river Jordan. As he approached Jericho, a blind man sat by the road. The blind man heard the noise of the crowd that followed Jesus. He learned from the people that Jesus from Nazareth was there.

In Matthew, there were two blind men. In that incident, Jesus was leaving Jericho. Jesus cured both of them (Matthew 20:29-34). In Mark, as Jesus was leaving Jericho, there was a blind man called Bartimaeus. And Jesus cured him (Mark 10:46-52). It seems that the accounts from Matthew and Mark are the same. If so, Bartimaeus had a companion whom Mark does not mention. Perhaps Bartimaeus was the one who first cried out to Jesus. The account in Luke seems to be different because Jesus had not yet arrived in Jericho. So, Luke is describing a third blind man whom Jesus cured during this visit to Jericho.

The blind man had heard about Jesus, the *prophet from Nazareth. Jesus had become famous. The blind man had heard stories of how Jesus cured people. He believed that Jesus could cure him.

Verses 38-39 He cried out to Jesus. The people near to the man told him to be quiet. But he continued to cry out. He shouted out even louder to Jesus. He asked Jesus to pity him.

He called Jesus 'the Son of David'. The Son of David was the *Christ whom, in the *Old Testament, God had promised to send. It seems that, on this occasion, Jesus accepted the title 'Son of David'. If so, then here he agreed that he was the *Christ.

Verses 40-43 Jesus stood still and he asked the people to bring the blind man to him. Then Jesus asked the man what he wanted. The man had asked Jesus to pity him. Now the man replied to Jesus that he wanted to see. He believed that Jesus could cure his sight.

Jesus told the man to see again. The means by which the man could see was his *faith. He believed and immediately he received his sight. He followed Jesus and he praised God. Also, the people saw this and they praised God.

Zacchaeus – Luke 19:1-10

v1 Jesus had entered the city called Jericho and he was passing through it. **v2** A man was there whose name was Zacchaeus. He was a chief official among the men who collected taxes. And he was wealthy. **v3** He wanted to see who Jesus was. But Zacchaeus was a small man, and he could not see Jesus because of the crowd. **v4** He ran ahead to a place where Jesus would come. And he climbed a *sycamore tree so he could see Jesus.

v5 When Jesus came to that place, he looked up. He said, 'Zacchaeus come down quickly. I must stay at your house today.' **v6** Zacchaeus came down at once. And he was glad to have Jesus come to his house.

v7 All the people saw this. They began to complain. They said, 'Jesus has gone in to stay with a *sinner.'

v8 Zacchaeus stood up. He said to the *Lord, 'Look *Lord. I give half my possessions to the poor people. And if I have cheated anyone, I pay back 4 times as much.'

v9 Jesus said to him, 'Today *salvation has come to this house, because even this man is a *descendant of Abraham. **v10** The Son of Man has come to find *lost people and to save them.'

Verses 1-4 Jesus was going through Jericho. Jericho is a city with a long history. It is one of the oldest cities in the world. It is in the Jordan plain at about 700 feet (250 metres) below sea level. The plain was and still is very good for agriculture. Jericho means the city of *palm trees. Jerusalem is about 17 miles (25 kilometres) away. The first mention of Jericho in the Bible was when the *Israelites camped by the river Jordan opposite Jericho (Numbers 22:1). Later they attacked Jericho and they destroyed it (Joshua 5:13-6:27). Joshua cursed (declared a terrible punishment for) anyone who built Jericho again (Joshua 6:26). A man called Hiel did so. And as Joshua had said, Hiel's first son and his youngest son died (1 Kings 16:34).

Zacchaeus lived in Jericho. He was a *Jew; his name is *Jewish. He was a chief of the men who collected taxes. So probably, he was responsible for the men who collected the taxes in that region. Perhaps it was his job to pass on the taxes to the *Romans. He was a rich man but not all of his wealth came from honest deeds.

Zacchaeus had heard about Jesus. And he wanted to see Jesus. But he was a small man and he could not see over the heads of the crowd. So, he climbed a tree on the route that Jesus would take. Then he was in a good position to see Jesus as he came along.

Verses 5-8 Zacchaeus hid in a tree but Jesus saw him there. Jesus knew who Zacchaeus was. Jesus spoke to him by name. He did not ask if he could stay at Zacchaeus's house. Jesus told him that he must stay with him. Perhaps that was because Jesus wanted to speak with him in private. Zacchaeus was happy with this.

In the opinion of most of the people, the men who collected taxes were the lowest in society. They were *sinners. Jesus had gone to stay with such a person.

The visit of Jesus had a great effect on Zacchaeus. He promised to give half of his wealth to the poor people. He promised to pay 4 times as much to anyone that he had cheated. The law ordered a person to pay the original sum plus a 5th (Leviticus 6:4-5, Numbers 5:5-7). The word 'give' is in the present tense. This was not a promise for some future date but for actions now. This showed that he had changed.

Verses 9-10 Zacchaeus was a *Jew. The *Jews came from the family of Abraham. But not all *Jews shared the *faith that Abraham had. Jesus said that Zacchaeus was a *descendant of Abraham. This must mean that Zacchaeus had that *faith. In other words, he now believed and trusted in God. *Salvation had come to that house by *faith and not because of the good deeds that Zacchaeus did. Probably Jesus said this about Zacchaeus to the crowd that followed him.

*Salvation came to that house. The 'house' would mean those persons who live in that house. This could mean that other family members also had *faith.

Jesus came to find *lost people. *Lost people are those people who have not yet put their trust in God. Zacchaeus was one of those that Jesus came to save.

The story about the king's servants – Luke 19:11-27

v11 While the people listened to this, Jesus told them a story. They were near Jerusalem. So, the people thought that God's *kingdom would appear at once. **v12** So he said, 'A very important man went to a country far away. He went to become the king of his country and then he came back. **v13** Before he went, he called to him 10 of his servants. He gave to each of them a *mina. He told them to trade with the *minas until he came back.

v14 But some of his people hated the man. So, they sent a group of people after him with this message: "We do not want this man to be our king."

v15 The man did receive the *kingdom and he came back. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money. He wanted to know what each of them had gained with it.

v16 The first servant came. He said, "*Lord, your *mina has gained 10 *minas."

v17 The master said to him, "You have done well. You are a good servant. Because you were loyal in this small matter, you will have authority over 10 cities."

v18 The second servant came. He said, "*Lord, your *mina has gained 5 *minas."

v19 The master said to this servant, "You can rule over five cities."

v20 Then another servant came. He said, "*Lord, here is your *mina. I have kept it safe in a piece of cloth. **v21** I was afraid of you because you are a severe man. You take what is not yours. In addition, you harvest crops that you did not plant."

v22 His master replied, “With your own words you have declared the judgement that I will make against you. You are a wicked servant. You knew that I am a severe man. I take what is not my own. I harvest where I have not planted. You knew these things. **v23** You should have put my money in the bank. Then when I came back, my money would have earned some more.”

v24 There were men who stood there. The master said to them, “Take his *mina away from him. Give it to the man who has 10 *minas.”

v25 They said, “*Lord, that man has 10 *minas already.”

v26 He replied, “I tell you this. Everyone who has will receive more. But a person with nothing will lose all that he has. **v27** Bring those enemies who did not want me to be their king. Kill them here in front of me.” ’

Verses 11-14 The crowd came near to Jerusalem. They expected that the *kingdom of God would come. Maybe they expected Jesus to declare that he was the king. Therefore, Jesus told this story about an important man. The man went to a country a long way from home. He went to receive a *kingdom.

The idea for this story may have come from the history of Archelaus. When Herod died, he left a part of his *kingdom to his son Archelaus. But the *Romans controlled the whole *kingdom. So, Archelaus had to go to Rome to ask Caesar Augustus to make him king over Judea. Many *Jews in Judea did not like Archelaus. They sent men to Rome to try to persuade Caesar Augustus that Archelaus should not be their king.

Jesus would soon go away by means of his death. But he will return in the future. He will have received his *kingdom. And he will come back to rule. In the meantime, many people do not want Jesus to be their king.

The man gave to each of 10 servants a sum of money. He told them to trade with this money while he was away. This was a test to see whether he could trust them with larger tasks.

A mina was about the wages that a worker would earn in three months.

Verses 15-19 The man got his *kingdom and he came back home. He told his servants to give to him an account of what they had done. The first one had gained 10 more *minas. The second one had gained 5 more *minas. The king gave them control over cities in his *kingdom.

Verses 20-23 The third servant out of the 10 gave his account. We do not know what happened to the other 7 servants. The third servant gave to the king the *mina that he had kept safe. He had done nothing with it. He did not trade with it, as his master had ordered him to do. He hid it because he was afraid of his master. He was afraid that he might lose his master's *mina.

The servant's explanation was that his master was a very severe man. His master took profit where he had not earned it.

The master used what the servant had said against him. The servant knew what kind of man the master was. Therefore, he should at least have put the money in the bank. There it would have earned profit.

The master had told the servants to trade. He expected them to take that risk. The third servant did not obey his master, so the master was angry with him.

Verses 24-27 The master took the *mina from the third servant. He gave it to the servant who had 10 *minas. The servant with 10 *minas had proved that he was loyal and responsible. So, his master could trust him with much greater responsibility. The servant who returned his *mina did not trade with it. He had neglected to use it as his master had ordered. He had shown that he was neither loyal nor responsible.

So, the one who has will receive more. The one who does not have will lose everything.

God has given gifts to his people. For example, he has given them skills and opportunities to serve him. If they do not use those gifts, they will lose them. If they use the gifts well, then they will receive greater gifts.

The king killed those people who did not want him to be their king. Jesus will come as the king. He will be the judge of those people who will not have him as their king. Our attitude to Jesus is a matter of life or death, and the results of that will be *eternal.

Jesus enters Jerusalem – Luke 19:28-44

v28 After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead. He was on his way to Jerusalem. **v29** Jesus came near to Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the *Mount of Olives. Then he sent two of his *disciples. **v30** He said to them, 'Go into the village over there. As you enter the village, you will find a young *donkey. Its owner has tied it up. Nobody has ever ridden on it. Undo the young *donkey and bring it to me. **v31** Someone may ask you why you are undoing the young *donkey. Tell that person, "The *Lord needs it." '

v32 The two *disciples went and they found the young *donkey. It was as Jesus had told them. **v33** As they undid the young *donkey, the owners of it said to them, 'Why are you undoing the young *donkey?'

v34 The *disciples answered, 'The *Lord needs it.'

v35 So, they brought it to Jesus. They threw their coats on the young *donkey and they put Jesus on it. **v36** As Jesus went along, people spread their coats on the road in front of him.

v37 Jesus came near to the place where the road goes down the *Mount of Olives. The large crowd of his *disciples began with joy to thank God. They praised God in loud voices because of all the great things that they had seen.

v38 They said, 'God *bless the king who comes in the name of the *Lord. Peace in heaven, and *glory in the highest places.'

v39 Some of the *Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Teacher, tell your *disciples not to say these things.'

v40 'I tell you this,' Jesus replied. 'If they were silent, the stones would cry out.'

v41 As Jesus came near to Jerusalem, he saw the city. And he wept when he saw it. **v42** He said, 'If you, even you, had only known on this day the things for your peace. But your eyes cannot see those things. **v43** The time will come when enemies will build against your walls to attack you. They will surround you on every side. You will not be able to escape.

v44 They will destroy you and they will kill the people in you. They will not leave one stone upon another stone. This is because you did not recognise the time of God's visit to you.'

Verses 28-34 The chief priests and the *Pharisees in Jerusalem wanted to arrest Jesus. They did not know where he was. Jesus was not yet in Jerusalem. But they gave orders to the people about him. If they found Jesus, they must tell the leaders of the people (John 11:55-57). Although there was this danger, Jesus came openly toward Jerusalem. He was not afraid of these enemies. While the crowd was with him, the leaders would not arrest him. Jesus knew what would happen soon. He knew that he would die in Jerusalem. He went to Jerusalem for that purpose.

Jesus came to the hill called the *Mount of Olives, near to Bethphage and Bethany. Bethany was a village about two miles from Jerusalem on the east slopes of the *Mount of Olives. Bethany was where Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived (John 11:1). Bethphage was near to Bethany but we do not know exactly where. The name Bethphage means 'house of *figs'.

Jesus sent two *disciples to go into a village. The village could have been Bethphage. From there, he told them to fetch a young *donkey for him to ride. Nobody had ever ridden on this animal. Nobody had trained it to carry a rider. However, it was tame when Jesus rode on it. It was as if the young *donkey was familiar with its rider.

Jesus gave careful instructions to the two *disciples before they went to fetch the *donkey. Someone may ask them what they were doing with it. If so, Jesus told them what to say. They must reply that its *Lord needs it. It happened as Jesus had told the *disciples. We may ask whether Jesus arranged this in advance. Otherwise, the owners would not have let the *disciples take the young *donkey. However, maybe Jesus had not arranged it. He knew that the animal was there. And he knew that the owners were ready for the *Lord to ask for it. Perhaps Jesus knew these things by the power of the *Holy Spirit.

The *prophecy in Zechariah and the account in Matthew show that there were two animals. There was a *donkey and a young *donkey (Zechariah 9:9, Matthew 21:1-7). The Books of Mark and Luke refer only to the young *donkey as probably Jesus rode on that animal (Mark 11:1-7).

Verses 35-38 The *disciples brought the young *donkey to Jesus. They put some of their coats on the *donkey instead of a saddle. Then they lifted Jesus onto the *donkey. Other people spread their coats on the road in front of Jesus. Matthew, Mark and John tell us that the people cut down branches from trees. They spread these branches on the road (Matthew 21:8, Mark 11:8, John 12:13). John writes that the branches were from *palm trees.

By tradition, we now call the Sunday before Easter ‘*Palm Sunday’.

Jesus rode down the hill called the *Mount of Olives to go into Jerusalem. The crowds of *disciples were excited and they praised God. They praised God because of all the great things that they had seen. They saw Jesus as the king whom God had sent to them. They believed that their king was coming to his capital city. He was coming to receive his *kingdom. Matthew and John refer to the *prophecy of Zechariah 9:9. ‘Say to the daughter of Zion, “Look. Your king comes to you. He is gentle and he rides on a *donkey, a young *donkey.”’

In that *prophecy, the *Christ would come as the prince of peace (see Isaiah 9:6). So, the crowds spoke about peace in heaven and *glory in the highest places.

Verses 39-40 There were some *Pharisees in the crowd. They did not like what the *disciples said. They could not accept Jesus as the king or as the *Christ. They came to Jesus. They asked him to tell his *disciple not to say these things.

Jesus would not do as the *Pharisees wanted. Instead he answered them with words similar to Habakkuk 2:11. If the *disciples were quiet, the stones would cry out.

Verses 41-44 From the hill called the *Mount of Olives, there was a magnificent view of the entire city. In the middle of that view across the Kidron Valley, there was Herod's *temple. The sight was impressive. But Jesus saw into the future. He wept when he saw the city. He wept because the people had not put their trust in God. If they had done so, God would have brought peace to Jerusalem. Jesus could see the terrible events that would happen there. But the people could not see it.

Jesus knew that the *Romans would attack the city. And they would destroy it. They would not leave one stone on top of another stone. The people who remained in the city would not be able to escape.

All this happened. In 70 *AD, the *Roman army came; its leader was an officer called Titus. The army surrounded the city. And then they destroyed the *temple and the city. They killed most of the people. They sent away those people who remained alive into foreign countries.

Most of the people in Jerusalem had refused to believe in Jesus. God had sent Jesus as the *Christ. But the people did not recognise the *Christ when he came to them.

Word List For Section 3

AD ~ years after Christ.

adultery ~ sex with a person who is not one's wife or husband.

altar ~ the special table where priests burned animals and other gifts that they offered to God.

ancestors ~ people in history from whom your family has come.

angel ~ a special servant of God from heaven. God made angels to serve him and to take his messages. So, angels are God's servants from heaven. But there are evil angels who opposed God. These evil angels now serve the devil.

apostle ~ someone whom God sends; especially one of the 12 men whom Jesus chose to be his helpers.

assaria ~ a very small *Roman coin that was worth a 16th of a *denarius.

BC ~ years before Christ.

baptism ~ a ceremony that uses water to show that God has forgiven (washed away) a person's *sin. Jesus also used baptism as a word-picture for how he would suffer.

Baptist ~ the title that we use for John, whom God sent to prepare people for the *Christ's arrival.

bath ~ a liquid measurement equal to about 5 gallons (22 litres).

blasphemy ~ a very serious *sin where a person chooses on purpose to oppose God.

bless ~ to show kindness to someone.

calf ~ a young cow up to one year old.

chicks ~ very young birds.

Christ ~ the Christ is the name for the person whom God would send to be the *Saviour of his people. Jesus is the Christ and he was called Christ.

cor ~ a dry measurement equal to about 50 gallons (220 litres).

demons ~ evil *angels that serve the devil.

denarius ~ a coin. The plural is denarii. A denarius was the amount that a workman would earn for one day's work.

descendant ~ a future member of a family or nation.

disciple ~ a person who follows a leader, especially the 12 men that Jesus chose to be with him.

donkey ~ an animal with long ears. It is like a small horse. People use donkeys to ride on or to carry goods.

dough ~ a mixture, mainly of flour and water, from which people make bread.

eternal ~ something that will always be and will never end.

eternal life ~ life of a new quality for those people who believe in Jesus. This new life will be with Jesus always.

faith ~ trust in someone or something; belief and trust in God and in Jesus Christ his Son.

feast ~ a time to eat and drink. The special times of many *Jewish ceremonies are feasts.

figs ~ a kind of sweet fruit.

glory ~ great honour and beauty.

gospel ~ the good news that God saves people from *sin because of Jesus Christ.

Greek ~ the language in which the authors wrote the *New Testament.

Hebrew ~ the language of the *Jews and of the *Old Testament.

herbs ~ plants that people grow for a useful purpose, for example as medicine or to add flavour to food.

Holy Spirit ~ God's Spirit whom Jesus sent to help his people. It is another name for God, also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ and the comforter. The Holy Spirit is a person but not human. He lives and works for God, he is God, equal with God the Father and with God the Son.

hypocrisy ~ when a person pretends in order to give a false impression.

hypocrite ~ someone who pretends in order to give a false impression.

Israel ~ the country of the *Jews.

Israelites ~ *Jewish people.

Jewish ~ people or things that are from the *Jews.

Jews ~ people who were born from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the families of their children.

kingdom ~ the place or territory where a king rules. In the *New Testament, this is nearly always the people over whom the king rules and not a territory on earth.

leper ~ a man with a serious skin disease called *leprosy.

leprosy ~ serious disease of the skin.

Levite ~ A person from the family of Levi. The Levites helped the priests in the *temple.

lily ~ a kind of flower that is very beautiful. The plural is lilies.

Lord ~ a title for God, or Jesus, to show that he is over all people and things. In the *Old Testament, *LORD was a special name for God.

lost ~ a description of someone or something that has wandered away from its owner or is not in its proper place.

mina ~ a sum of money that was worth the same as a workmen could earn in three months.

mint ~ a *herb.

miracle ~ a powerful deed that seems to be against the normal laws of nature. Miracles showed God's power.

moth ~ a kind of insect. Some moths eat clothes.

Mount of Olives ~ a hill near Jerusalem. The word 'mount' means a mountain or hill. Olives are a type of oily fruit that grow on trees. Those trees grew on the hill near Jerusalem called the Mount of Olives.

mustard ~ a kind of *herb or *spice which grows quickly from a very small seed.

needle's eye ~ the tiny hole in a needle.

New Testament ~ the last part of the Bible, which the writers wrote after the life of Jesus on earth.

Old Testament ~ the first part of the Bible; the holy things that the writers wrote before Jesus' birth.

ox ~ an animal of a similar kind to a cow. The plural is oxen.

palm ~ a type of tree.

Passover ~ annual ceremony (*feast) to remember God's rescue of the *Jews from Egypt.

peace ~ the calm and content attitude that is the result of a right relationship with God.

persecute ~ to attack and to hurt people because of what they believe.

Pharisees ~ a group of *Jews who tried to obey all God's rules. Many of them did not approve of Jesus.

preach ~ to speak out the message from God and to teach his word.

prophecy ~ a message from God; a gift of the *Holy Spirit.

prophet ~ person who speaks on behalf of God. A prophet can sometimes say what will happen in the future.

prostitute ~ a woman who sells her body to men for sex.

raven ~ a large black bird.

repent / repentance ~ to change one's mind and heart. To turn away from *sin and turn to God. To turn one's mind and heart away from *sin is to repent.

Roman ~ Rome was the capital city of the rulers at that time. Anything that belonged to Rome was Roman.

Sabbath ~ the 7th day of the week (Saturday), which is special to the *Jews as a holy day.

sacrifice ~ a gift to God to ask him to forgive *sins or to thank him for something. To sacrifice means to make a sacrifice.

salvation ~ the result when God saves us from *sin and punishment; the new life that God gives to those people who believe in the *Lord Jesus.

Samaritan ~ Samaria was a region to the north of Judea. Samaritans are people from Samaria.

Satan ~ the name of the devil.

Saviour ~ a title for Jesus, who saves his people from their *sins.

scorpion ~ A scorpion is an animal up to 4 inches (10 centimetres) in length. At the end of the tail is its sting. Its sting is extremely poisonous, and sometimes it can kill a person.

shepherd ~ someone who takes care of sheep.

sin ~ sin is the wrong things that we do. To sin is to do wrong, bad or evil deeds and not to obey God.

sinners ~ people who *sin.

soul ~ the part of a person that we cannot see. It is in us during our life. And it continues to live after we die. It is our inner life (not the body).

sparrow ~ a kind of small bird.

spices ~ a sweet substance or a substance with a strong smell.

spit ~ to force liquid from the mouth.

sulphur ~ a yellow chemical that burns.

sycamore ~ a type of tree.

synagogue ~ a building where *Jews gather for prayer; a meeting place for *Jews.

temple ~ a special building for the *worship of God. The *Jews had a temple in Jerusalem for the *worship of the real God. But at other temples, people *worshipped false gods.

tempt ~ to persuade someone that they should do wrong things.

tower ~ a tall building.

vineyard ~ a farm or large garden where people grow the fruit to produce wine.

vulture ~ a large bird that eats dead animals.

weapon ~ a tool of war that people use to attack or to defend themselves.

wolves ~ wild animals that look like large dogs.

worship ~ the act when someone gives honour to God. Someone who worships, praises God. That person thanks God. And that person respects God.

yeast ~ a substance that makes bread rise before someone bakes the bread.

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SECTION 4

Luke: The Man Christ Jesus

Jesus Completes his Work in Jerusalem

Luke 19:45 to 21:38

Ian Mackervoy

Jesus at the *temple – Luke 19:45-48

v45 Then Jesus went into the *temple area. And he began to force out the men who were selling things there. **v46** He said to them, ‘The *scriptures say this. “My house will be a house of prayer.” But you have made it a place where thieves meet.’

v47 Jesus taught in the *temple every day. The chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people tried to kill him. **v48** But they could not find a way to do it because all the people were eager to hear him.

Verses 45-46 Jesus had come into Jerusalem on the previous day. He went into the *temple and he had a look round. Then he left the city and he spent the night in Bethany (Mark 11:11). The next morning, Jesus came again to the *temple.

In the *temple area, there was a market. This part of the *temple area was open to people who were not *Jews. It was the only part of the *temple where they could pray to God.

On a previous occasion, John tells us that the traders sold *oxen, sheep and *doves (John 2:14). Also, there were traders who changed money. These animals and the *doves were for the *sacrifices. The *Jewish people had to give these *sacrifices. It was easier to buy the animals here rather than to bring them from home.

Every *Jew had to pay a *temple tax. This was a half *shekel. If they did not have *shekels, they had to change some money into *shekels. All of these activities were necessary. However, they should not have happened in the *temple area. The *temple was a place to pray, not to carry on trade.

Jesus was angry. He forced out of the *temple those men who sold things. He chased out the men who bought. He pushed over the tables of the men who changed money. He pushed over the seats of the men who sold *doves (Matthew 21:12, Mark 11:15). Nobody had the courage to oppose him.

Jesus taught that the *temple was God's house. It was where people should come to pray (Isaiah 56:7). It was not a market place. Jesus called the traders 'robbers' because they were not honest. They were greedy. They charged more than they should have done (Jeremiah 7:10-11).

Verses 47-48 Jesus taught in the *temple each day until the leaders arrested him in Gethsemane. Gethsemane is a garden below the hill called the Mount of Olives. All this time the chief priests and other leaders looked for a way to kill Jesus. But they were afraid of the people. The ordinary people wanted to hear the things that Jesus was teaching.

Question of authority – Luke 20:1-8

v1 One day, Jesus was teaching the people in the *temple and he was speaking about the *gospel. The chief priests, teachers of the law and leaders of the nation came up to him. **v2** They asked Jesus these questions. 'Tell us what authority you have to do these things. And who gave you this authority?'

v3 Jesus replied to them, 'I also will ask you a question. Tell me this. **v4** Was John's authority to *baptise from heaven or was it just human?'

v5 They discussed this among themselves. They said, 'We could say from heaven. Then he will say, "Why did you not believe him?" **v6** We cannot say that his authority was just human. If we did, all the people would throw stones at us. They believe that John was a *prophet.'

v7 So, they answered Jesus, 'We do not know where John got this authority.'

v8 Jesus replied, 'Neither will I tell you who gave me authority to do these things.'

Verses 1-8 In the *temple, Jesus *preached the *gospel to the people. While he taught the people, a group of the leaders came to him. This group consisted of the chief priests, teachers of the law and other leaders. They could have been an official team from the *Sanhedrin. They asked Jesus about his authority for what he did. This question may have been because of the way that he forced the traders to leave the *temple area. But it probably included much more than that action. The group of leaders could see that Jesus had authority. But they asked who gave that authority to him.

It seems clear that they wanted to use Jesus' answers against him. Jesus knew what they were trying to do. So, he did not answer as they expected. Instead, he asked them a question. He asked them about the authority of John the *Baptist to *baptise. That *baptism was either from God or from John himself. This question caused these leaders a problem. They were the leaders of the *Jewish religion. They ought to have known the answer.

The group of leaders did not want to say that the *baptism of John was from God. If it was from God, they should have believed John. John had said that Jesus was the *Christ. And they should have asked John to *baptise them. However, the leaders could say that the *baptism was a human idea. If they said this, then the people would be against them. The people knew that John was a *prophet. The people were aware that John's authority was from God. These leaders were afraid of what the people would do. The people might throw stones at them and try to kill them.

These leaders dared not answer the question that Jesus had asked. So, Jesus would not answer their question.

In effect, they had the answer. God, who gave authority to John, also gave authority to Jesus. With that authority, Jesus *preached and he did these great deeds.

Story of the farmers – Luke 20:9-19

v9 Then Jesus told the people this story. ‘A man planted a *vineyard. He rented it to some farmers while he went away for a long time. **v10** At harvest time, he sent a servant to the farmers. The servant came to get from them a share of the harvest of the *vineyard. But the farmers beat the servant and they sent him away with nothing. **v11** The owner sent another servant. The farmers beat and insulted this servant. And they sent the servant away with nothing. **v12** The owner sent a third servant. They beat this servant and they hurt him badly. And they threw him out of the *vineyard.

v13 The owner of the *vineyard said, “I know what to do. I will send my son whom I love. Perhaps they will respect him.”

v14 But when the farmers saw the son, they reasoned with themselves. They said, “This is the owner’s son, who will in the future own his property. Let us kill him and the property will be ours.” **v15** They threw the son out of the *vineyard and they killed him. You know what the owner of the *vineyard will do to them. **v16** He will come and kill those farmers. He will give the *vineyard to other farmers.’ The people heard this story. They said, ‘This must never happen.’

v17 Jesus looked straight at them. He said, ‘This is what the *scriptures say. “The stone that the builders threw out became the most important stone.” **v18** That stone will break into pieces everyone who falls on it. But those people on whom the stone falls, it will beat into powder.’

v19 The teachers of the law and the chief priests knew that Jesus told this story against them. At once, they looked for a way to arrest him. But they were afraid of the people.

Verses 9-12 Jesus told this story in order to warn the leaders of the people that they were not obeying God. In the story, a property owner planted a *vineyard. He rented it to farmers while he went away. At harvest time, the owner sent his servants to receive his share of the harvest. That was the rent that was due. However, the farmers would not hand over what was due. Instead, the farmers beat and they insulted the servants. It seems that this continued for several years.

Luke has made the story shorter than Matthew and Mark. They tell us a bit more about the preparation of the *vineyard. The owner sent many servants. The farmers beat them. They threw stones at some and they killed some of the servants (Matthew 21:33-36, Mark 12:1-5).

Verses 13-16 If this had been a true story, probably the owner would have appealed to the law. But in the story, the owner had one son. He loved his son. He sent this son to collect what was due to him. The owner hoped that the farmers would respect his son.

The farmers had paid no rent for several years. The real owner was a long way away. Perhaps the farmers thought that the owner was dead. Or maybe he had already given the *vineyard to his son. If the farmers killed the son, they could take the *vineyard for themselves. It would become their own property. So, they threw the son out of the *vineyard and they killed him.

Jesus discussed with the people what the owner would do. In Matthew, the people gave the answer (Matthew 21:41). Probably Jesus repeated their answer to show that he agreed with it. The owner would kill those wicked men. He would rent the *vineyard to other farmers who would give him his share at the proper time each year.

It is the meaning of the whole story (and not each detail in it) that is important. It would be a mistake to try to interpret every detail. God's *vineyard means his people (see Isaiah 5:1-7). The leaders of the people were like the farmers. God had given the leaders the responsibility to look after his people, even as the farmers had to look after the *vineyard. However, many leaders of *Israel would not do what God wanted. God sent his servants, that is, the *prophets, to them. In the history of *Israel, many of its leaders had *persecuted the *prophets. They threw stones at some and they killed many of the *prophets. But the love of God is very strong. He decided to give the leaders of his people another opportunity to obey him. So, God sent his son Jesus to them. The leaders at the time of Jesus may have thought that they were serving God well. The *temple was beautiful, and they carried out all the ceremonies. However, like many leaders before them, the most important leaders did not want to obey God. They had opposed John the *Baptist and now they were plotting to kill Jesus. Jesus knew what would happen to him.

Of course God would punish the leaders who did such evil things. He would remove their authority to rule his people. He would allow people from every nation to serve him.

Now both *Jews and people who are not *Jews have the opportunity to serve God. Together, they are his *vineyard (John 15:1-8, Romans 11:17-24).

The fruit that God wants is for people to trust him and to obey him.

Verses 17-18 Jesus reminded the leaders about the *scriptures (Psalm 118:22-24). Matthew and Mark include, 'God has done this. And it is wonderful to us.'

We do not know what was the most important stone. It could have been a large stone in the base of the building. That stone would establish the shape of the building. It could have been the top stone on a corner of the building. That stone would hold the walls together. It could have been the top stone of the building. That stone would hold the whole structure together.

The builders had to be careful to choose the correct stone for the purpose. They would throw out any stone that was not suitable. The workers in stone prepared the stones for the *temple away from the *temple (1 Kings 6:7). There is a story about a stone that the builders refused. The builders could not find where the stone should go. They threw the stone away. Then they discovered that it was the most important stone for the building.

Jesus was like the stone that those builders threw out. The leaders did not want to accept him, so they opposed him. But they had made a terrible mistake. God chose Jesus as the most important stone. All the purposes of God depend on Jesus.

The stone has the power to destroy its enemies. People may refuse and they may oppose Jesus. However, they will suffer because of it. In the day of judgement, God will punish them because of their attitude to Jesus.

Verse 19 These teachers of the law and these chief priests realised that Jesus spoke against them. They were like the bad farmers who would kill the son. Or, they were like the builders who threw away the most important stone. Those leaders should have changed their attitudes when Jesus warned them. However, in fact Jesus' words made them even more eager to arrest him. But they could not do it because they were afraid of the people.

Questions to test Jesus – Luke 20:20-47

v20 So, they (the leaders) watched Jesus all the time. They sent to him men who pretended to be sincere. They tried to get Jesus to say something wrong. Then they could hand him over to the authority and power of the *Roman ruler. **v21** So, they asked Jesus a question. 'Teacher, we know that you speak the truth. And you teach what is right. You refuse to give honour to anyone who does not deserve it. You teach God's way with truth. **v22** Is it right for us to pay taxes to the *emperor or not?'

v23 Jesus knew what they were trying to do. **v24** He said to them, 'Show me a *denarius. Whose face and name are on it?' They answered, 'The *emperor's.'

v25 He said to them, 'Give to the *emperor the things that belong to the *emperor. And give to God the things that belong to God.'

v26 So, they failed to make Jesus say anything wrong in public. His answer astonished them and they were silent.

v27 The *Sadducees did not believe that people would rise to life after death. Some of them came to Jesus with a question. **v28** They said, 'Teacher, Moses wrote this law for us. Suppose that a married man dies. He leaves a wife but no children. His brother should marry the widow and he should have children with her on behalf of his brother. **v29** Once there were 7 brothers. The first one married a woman and he died. They had no children. **v30** The second brother married the widow and he died. **v31** The third brother and then all the rest married her. All 7 of them died but did not leave any children by her. **v32** Last of all, the woman died. **v33** When God raises people from death, whose wife will this woman be? All 7 brothers had married her.'

v34 Jesus said to them, 'In this world, people marry or other people arrange marriages for them. **v35** Those people whom God accepts will receive the honour to take part in the future age. They will rise up from death. In that age, they will not marry and nobody will arrange marriages for them. **v36** They cannot die again. They will be like the *angels. God will raise them up from death and they will be his children. **v37** In the passage about the bush, Moses shows clearly that people will rise from death. He calls the *Lord "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob". **v38** He is not the God of dead people. He is God of those who are alive. All people are alive to him.'

v39 Some of the teachers of the law answered, 'Teacher, you have spoken well.' **v40** And they did not dare to ask Jesus any more questions.

v41 Then Jesus said to them, 'People say that the *Christ is David's son. **v42** But this is what David himself says in the Book of Psalms. "The *Lord said to my *Lord, 'Sit on my right side. **v43** Sit there until I put your enemies beneath your feet.' "

v44 So, David calls the *Christ '*Lord'. But people say that the *Christ is David's son.'

v45 While all the people listened, Jesus spoke to his *disciples. **v46** He said, 'Be cautious of the teachers of the law. They like to walk about in long coats. They like it when people greet them in the markets. They want the most important seats in the *synagogues. And they like the place of honour at special dinners. **v47** They cheat widows in order to take their houses. But they pretend to be good and make long prayers. God will be very severe when he punishes such men.'

Verses 20-26 The *Jewish leaders watched Jesus as they looked for an opportunity to arrest him. If they could cause the people to turn away from Jesus then they could act. If they could cause Jesus to offend the *Romans then the *Romans could arrest him. In this way, they could hand him over to the *Roman rulers. The people had to pay taxes to the *Romans. They hated their duty to pay these taxes, because they considered the *Romans their enemies. The *Romans demanded that they paid the taxes. So, the leaders sent some *Pharisees and some of Herod's party to Jesus (Mark 12:13). Herod was a ruler whom the *Romans had appointed over part of Israel.

These men pretended to be sincere. They called Jesus 'teacher'. Usually people would use that title to give honour to someone, but here it was *hypocrisy. They said that Jesus always spoke the truth. However, they did not believe him. They said that Jesus was fair. He did not give special attention to any person. They said that Jesus spoke as from God. Again, they did not really believe that.

Then they asked Jesus a question that needed 'yes' or 'no' as the answer. They asked whether it was right to pay taxes to the *emperor or not. In effect, they asked whether it was legal under God's law. If Jesus had said 'yes', it would have offended the people. If Jesus had said 'no', it would have offended the *Romans.

Jesus was too wise for such a question to catch him. He knew what the purpose of the question was. He asked them to show him a *denarius. This was a silver *Roman coin. They had to pay the taxes with such coins. The *denarius had the face and the name of the *emperor, probably Tiberius, on it. Then Jesus gave to them his answer. He told them to give to the *emperor what belonged to him. But they must give to God what belongs to him.

This clever answer astonished them. They were silent. They had failed in their purpose.

Taxes were due to the *emperor. But our lives and everything that we have belong to God.

Verses 27-33 The *Sadducees were a group in the *Jewish religion. The chief priest and many other priests were *Sadducees. The name *Sadducee may have come from Zadok. Zadok was a priest at the time of David (see 2 Samuel 19:11). The *Sadducees did not accept all of the traditions of the *Pharisees. However, the *Sadducees did believe in the Torah. The Torah consists of the first 5 books of the Bible. We do not know whether they accepted the rest of the *Old Testament. But they did not believe in a life after death.

The *Sadducees brought a problem for Jesus to answer. A woman had married 7 brothers in turn. All 7 husbands had died before the widow died. But she had not had a child by any of them. In the next life, which one will be her husband? That was their question.

This question is about the custom called Levirate marriages. The term comes from the word *levir* in the *Latin language. This word means 'husband's brother'. This was an ancient custom. When a man died without children, his brother would marry the widow (see Genesis 38:8). The first child with the widow would be as the child of the dead brother. The purpose of this custom was to keep the dead man's property in his family. The custom became a law where the brothers lived in the same place (Deuteronomy 25:5-6).

The *Sadducees thought that this question would confuse Jesus. They believed that there is no life after death. They thought that their story proved it. God would not have given a law which caused a woman to have many husbands in the next life.

Verses 34-38 The answer that Jesus gave to them was in two parts. First, he talked about the difference between this life and the next life. This answered the question about marriage. Then he showed the *Sadducees that they were wrong about life after death.

Life after death is not just an extension of this life. It will be very different from life here on earth. Life here on earth ends in death. We cannot think that anything of this life will be the same in the future life. The future life will never end and there will be no death. Only those people whom God accepts will have that new life. He will raise them from death and he will give to them this new life. No person can achieve that life for himself.

People that God raises cannot die. They will be like the *angels. The *angels do not marry and they do not die. The people in that future age will be the children of God.

Those people who believe in Jesus have *eternal life already. But they look forward to the full experience of it in the future. John wrote, 'We are children of God now. We do not know what we will be. But when Jesus appears, we shall be like him' (1 John 3:2).

In this life, people marry. In the future life, there is no marriage. In the future life, the widow will not have a husband. She will not be the wife of any of the brothers.

In Matthew and Mark, Jesus started his reply with three statements. The *Sadducees were wrong. They did not know the *scriptures. And they did not know the power of God (Matthew 22:29, Mark 12:24).

The *Sadducees did not understand the *Old Testament. They believed in the 5 books of Moses. But they did not understand the references to life after death in those books. Jesus told them about the time when God met with Moses.

God called to Moses from the bush that burned. God told Moses that he is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exodus 3:1-6). Therefore Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were alive but they had all died. They had, or they will have, life after death. This proves that there is a life after death. They are alive with God.

Verse 39-40 The teachers of the law did believe in a life after death. They seemed glad that Jesus had answered the *Sadducees so well. The *Sadducees were not popular with the teachers or with the people.

Nobody dared to ask Jesus any more questions.

Verses 41-44 The *Jews understood that the *Christ would be a *descendant of David. They called the *Christ 'the son of David'. They expected the *Christ to come as a great king. Even as David defeated the enemies of *Israel, so they expected the *Christ to free them from the *Romans.

People usually believed that an *ancestor was greater than his *descendant. So, the *Jews were speaking as if David was greater than the *Christ. However, David calls the *Christ his '*Lord'. David recognised that the *Christ was greater. The *Christ would be both David's son (*descendant) and his *Lord.

In the Psalms, God tells the *Christ to sit at his right side, that is, in the place of greatest honour. Then God will defeat all the enemies (Psalm 110:1). Paul wrote about Jesus that, in his human nature, he was a *descendant of David. As the *descendant of David, Jesus was a man. But the *Holy Spirit declared that Jesus was the Son of God (Romans 1:3-4). As the Son of God, Jesus is of the nature of God. The *Holy Spirit proved this as he raised Jesus from death.

Verses 45-47 Jesus warned his *disciples about many of the teachers of the law. They were doing the same wrong things that many leaders of religion do still today. They liked other people to think that they were good and important. They wanted people to recognise and to respect them. They considered themselves superior to other people. They made long prayers in order to impress people.

They loved to sit in the most important seats in the *synagogue. These seats were at the front where the leader read the *scriptures. At the front, all the people could see them. The people would think that they were so important.

The teachers of the law could not receive payment from their pupils. They had to teach and not to ask for payment. But they could receive gifts. The teachers encouraged people to give more than they could afford. They took money from even the poorest members of society.

God saw this *hypocrisy. He will be very severe when he punishes such men.

The widow's gift – Luke 21:1-4

v1 Jesus looked up and he saw some rich people. They put their gifts into the box in the *temple. **v2** Then he saw a poor widow who put two small *copper coins into the box. **v3** And he said, 'I tell you the truth. This poor widow has given more than all those other people. **v4** From their plenty, the rich people gave gifts to God. But she is poor. She put in all that she had to live on.'

Verses 1-4 In the *temple, there was an area where the women could *worship. In that area was a special room.

That was where the priests stored gold and silver for the *temple. Here the people could put their gifts into 13 boxes. The money in 6 of the boxes was for general use. The money in the other 7 boxes was for particular purposes.

Jesus saw how the people put money into one of these boxes. Many rich people put a lot of money in the box (Mark 12:41). Then he saw a poor widow put two *copper coins in the box. These coins were the smallest of the *Jewish coins. They were worth very little.

Jesus said that this poor widow had given to God more than all the other people. They could afford what they had given to God. They had enough and more than enough for themselves. The value of the gift was in the cost to the person who gave it. She had given all that she had.

The true worth of a gift is not how much a person gives. It is not so much the amount of the gift but the attitude of the person who gives it. By her generous gift, this widow had shown true love for God.

The end of the age – Luke 21:5-38

v5 Some people talked about the *temple. The builders had built it with beautiful stones and with the gifts that people had given. **v6** But Jesus said to them, 'You see this *temple. The time will come when not one stone will remain on top of another stone. An enemy will throw them all down.'

v7 They asked him, 'Teacher, when will these things happen? And how will we know that the time has come for these things to happen?'

v8 Jesus replied, 'Be careful. Do not allow anyone to tempt you away from me. Many will come who will use my name. They will say, 'I am the *Christ.' They will say that the time has come. Do not follow them. **v9** Do not be afraid when you hear of wars and revolutions. These things must happen first. But they do not mean that the end is near.'

v10 Then he said to them, 'Nations will fight against other nations. *Kingdoms will fight against other *kingdoms. **v11** In many places, there will be terrible *earthquakes. People will suffer from lack of food and awful diseases. Also, people will see strange and terrible things in the sky.

v12 Before all these things happen, people will arrest you. They will *persecute you. They will hand you over to their *synagogues and they will put you in prisons. They will accuse you in front of kings and rulers because of my name. **v13** But this will give you an opportunity to tell about me. **v14** So do not worry about what you will say to defend yourselves. **v15** I will give you the wisdom to know what to say. None of your enemies will be able to oppose you. They will not be able to argue against you. **v16** Even parents, brothers, relatives, and friends will hand you over to your enemies. And they will kill some of you. **v17** All people will hate you because of me. **v18** But you will not lose even one hair from your head. **v19** Stand firm and you will gain life.

v20 You will see when armies come to camp all round Jerusalem. Then you will know that they will soon destroy Jerusalem. **v21** Then the people who are in Judea should escape to the mountains. Those people who live in the city should leave it. Those people who are in the country should not go into the city. **v22** These are the days of punishment. All that the *scriptures say about it will happen. **v23** In those days, it will be terrible for women who are expecting babies. It will be terrible for mothers who *nurse young children. The earth will suffer terribly; the people in this country will suffer because of the anger. **v24** Their enemies will kill some of the people with swords. They will take other people as prisoners to all the other countries. People from other nations will walk all over Jerusalem. This will continue until the end of the periods of time that belong to the nations.

v25 Strange things will happen to the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, fear will fill the nations. The roar of the sea and of the great waves will confuse and worry them. **v26** People will be weak with fear, because of the things that they expect to happen in the world. God will shake the heavens, the sun, moon and the stars. **v27** Then people will see the Son of Man as he comes in a cloud. He will come with power and much *glory. **v28** When these things begin to happen, stand up. Raise your heads, because your *salvation is near.'

v29 Then Jesus told this story, 'Look at the *fig tree and all the other trees. **v30** As soon as leaves grow on them, summer is near. You can see it for yourselves and you know it. **v31** In the same manner, you will see that these things are happening. Then you will know that God's *kingdom is near.

v32 I tell you the truth, all these things will happen. People of this time will certainly remain alive until all this has happened. **v33** The heaven and the earth will not last. But the words that I have spoken will last for all time.

v34 Be careful how you live. Do not cause problems for yourselves by excesses of food and drink. Do not let the worries of life cause you not to be ready. Otherwise that day will take you by surprise. **v35** Like a trap that catches a bird, that day will come on all the people across the whole earth. **v36** So be ready at all times. Pray that God will make you able to escape all these things. They will happen soon. Pray that you will be able to stand in front of the Son of Man.'

v37 Each day Jesus taught the people at the *temple. And in the evenings, he went out to spend the night on the hill called the Mount of Olives. **v38** Early each morning, all the people came to him in the *temple to hear him.

Verses 5-7 The *temple was a magnificent building. It had taken 46 years to build it (John 2:20). The *disciples admired it and they talked about it to Jesus (Mark 13:1, Matthew 24:1). They showed him the beautiful stones with which Herod had built it. But Jesus told them that an enemy would throw down all of these stones. The enemy would destroy the *temple.

Jesus and the *disciples left the *temple area. They went to the hill called the Mount of Olives (Matthew 24:3). As they sat there, they had a wonderful view of the *temple. The *disciples asked when the enemy would destroy the *temple.

In *AD 70, the *Roman army destroyed the *temple. It happened as Jesus had said.

Verses 8-11 Matthew 24:3 refers to three questions that the *disciples asked on this occasion. When shall these things be? What will show us that you are coming? What will show that the end of the world has come? In answer to these questions, Jesus spoke to them about the future. He will come before the end of the age. But that would not happen immediately. Much had to happen before the time when he would return.

Before Jesus comes, there will be many false *prophets. Jesus warned his *disciples not to believe them. Many will come who pretend to be the *Christ. Many people will believe them and they will follow these false *Christs. However, Jesus warns his *disciples not to follow any of these false *Christs.

Before the end comes, there will be wars between nations. There will be many *earthquakes. People will die from the lack of food and because of diseases. There will be strange things in the sky. These things are the beginning of the troubles that will come upon the world.

Verses 12-19 This passage refers to the time before the *Romans destroyed the *temple. But in the same way, people will *persecute those who believe until the end of time.

Jesus told his *disciples that people would *persecute them. The *synagogues were not just places for *worship. There they dealt with legal matters under the *Jewish law. People would drag the *disciples in front of the *synagogue rulers. They would put the *disciples in prison. Also, people who were not *Jews would *persecute the *disciples. Those people who believe in Jesus would stand in front of kings and rulers.

In these circumstances, the Christians would be able to declare what God has done on their behalf. They would not need to make plans about how they should defend themselves. God would show them what to say. They would speak by means of the *Holy Spirit in them (Mark 13:11). Their enemies would not be able by their arguments to overcome the Christians.

The *gospel of *Christ will divide families. Close relatives will become enemies. They will hand Christians over to their enemies. But God is in control and he will work out his purposes. Some of the Christians will die. Then they will go to be with the *Lord Jesus.

People hate Christians because Christians believe in Jesus Christ. But the people of this world cannot hurt Christians unless God allows it. Men may kill the body but they can do nothing more. The real life of a Christian is with the *Lord Jesus. To those Christians who continue to the end, God promises *eternal life.

Verses 20-24 Jesus told the *disciples that armies would surround Jerusalem. The armies would destroy the city. This is not a *prophecy about the end of the present age. It refers to *AD 66 to 70 when the *Romans destroyed Jerusalem. God permitted the *Romans to punish Jerusalem.

It would be normal for people from the country to go into the city in time of war. But Jesus warned his *disciples not to go into the city. Those people who were in the city should come out of it. They should go into the mountains. When the *Romans began to gather round Jerusalem, many of the Christians escaped to Pella. Pella was a town in the region called Decapolis. This region was east of the River Jordan and south of the Sea of Galilee. They were safe there.

As Jesus had said, it was a terrible time. The *Romans killed many thousands of people. And they took several thousands as prisoners. They sent their prisoners into foreign countries. Josephus, a *Jewish writer in the first century, wrote that the *Romans killed 1 100 000 people. He also says that they took 97 000 prisoners. These numbers are probably too large. But they do show how terrible it was.

Jerusalem would be in the control of other nations. This would continue until the times of the nations ended. It is not clear what this means. However, it is my belief that those times are now ending. That is because Jerusalem is not now under the control of the nations.

Verses 25-28 The subject now changes to the time when Jesus will come again. Before he comes there will be strange events in the sky. Matthew and Mark tell us that the sun and the moon will lose their light. They say that stars will seem to fall from the sky. The heavens will shake (Matthew 24:29, Mark 13:24). There will be major effects on the seas and on the earth. All these things will frighten people. These things will cause confusion and terror among the people.

Then Jesus will come with power and great *glory. He will not come in secret. People everywhere will see him as he comes in a cloud. The *disciples saw Jesus as he rose into the cloud. Men in white clothes (actually *angels) told them that Jesus had gone to heaven. They said that he would come again in the same way (Acts 1:9-11).

The people who believe in Jesus will see the strange events in the skies. To them these events show that Jesus will come soon. Unlike other people, they can be confident. When Jesus comes, he will complete the process of *salvation. He will send his *angels to gather those people who belong to him (Matthew 24:31, Mark 13:27).

Verses 29-33 In the spring, new leaves grow on the *fig and other trees. Then it will soon be summer. The new leaves show that summer is near. So, the events in the sky and the sea will show that God's *kingdom is near. This means that Jesus the king will come soon.

Verse 32 mentions the 'people of this time'. That cannot mean those people who lived at the same time as Luke. So it probably means the people who live at the time of the strange events in the sky. Those strange events have not happened yet. The 'people of this time' is our translation of a particular word in the original language. This word could mean a type or nation of people. Perhaps it means that there will still be *Jews or Christians at that time. The word could mean the normal life of a man. Then the events would last for no more than the period of a man's life.

One day, God will destroy this earth and sky. But what Jesus said will always last. We can be sure that all these events will happen. It will be as Jesus has spoken.

Verses 34-36 The *Lord Jesus will come suddenly. It will be a surprise to the whole world. They will not prepare themselves for him to come. But those people who belong to Jesus should prepare themselves. They should live as if they expect Jesus to come at any time. They should not give themselves to too much food and drink. They should not let the affairs of this world make them anxious. They should pray for God to help them to be strong in *faith. They should pray that finally they would be able to stand in front of the *Lord Jesus. To stand before the Son of Man means to possess complete *salvation.

Verses 37-38 Each day, Jesus taught in the *temple. But he did not stay in Jerusalem. At night, he went out to the hill called the Mount of Olives.

Jesus was popular with the people. A large number of them came to the *temple early each day to hear him.

Word List for section 4

AD ~ years after *Christ.

ancestors ~ people in history from whom your family has come.

angel ~ a servant of God from heaven. God made *angels to serve him and to take his messages. So, *angels are God's servants from heaven. But there are evil *angels who opposed God. These evil *angels now serve the devil.

baptise ~ to carry out the ceremony called *baptism.

baptism ~ a ceremony with water to show that God has forgiven (washed away) a person's *sin.

Baptist ~ the title of John, which he received because he carried out the ceremony called *baptism.

Christ ~ the Christ is the name for the person whom God would send to be the *Saviour of his people. Jesus is the Christ and he was called Christ.

copper coins ~ coins that were worth very little.

denarius ~ a coin. The plural is denarii.

descendant ~ a future member of a family or nation.

disciple ~ a person who follows a leader, especially the 12 men that Jesus chose to be with him.

dove ~ a bird.

earthquake ~ when the earth shakes, that is an earthquake.

emperor ~ like a king. The *Romans called their most important ruler an emperor.

eternal life ~ life of a new quality for those people who believe in Jesus. This new life will be with Jesus always.

faith ~ trust in someone or something; belief and trust in God and in Jesus Christ his Son.

figs ~ a kind of sweet fruit.

glory ~ great honour and beauty.

gospel ~ the good news that God saves people from *sin because of Jesus Christ.

grapes ~ a fruit from which to make wine.

Holy Spirit ~ God's Spirit whom Jesus sent to help his people. It is another name for God, also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ and the Comforter. The *Holy Spirit is a person but not human. He lives and works for God. He is God, equal with God the Father and with God the Son.

hypocrisy ~ when someone pretends in order to give a false impression.

Israel ~ the country of the *Jews.

Jewish ~ people or things that are from the *Jews.

Jews ~ people who were born from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the families of their children.

kingdom ~ the place or territory where a king rules. In the New Testament, this is nearly always the people over whom the king rules and not a territory on earth.

Latin ~ an ancient language.

Lord ~ a title for God, or Jesus, to show that he is over all people and things. In the *Old Testament, LORD was a special name for God.

nurse ~ when a mother gives milk to her baby from her breast.

Old Testament ~ the first part of the Bible; the holy things that the writers wrote before Jesus' birth.

ox ~ an animal of a similar kind to a cow. The plural is oxen.

Passover ~ annual ceremony to remember God's rescue of the *Jews from Egypt.

persecute ~ to attack and to hurt people because of what they believe.

Pharisees ~ a group of *Jews who tried to obey all God's rules. Many of them did not approve of Jesus.

preach ~ to speak out the message from God and to teach his word.

prophecy ~ a message from God; a gift of the *Holy Spirit.

prophet ~ person who speaks for God. A prophet can sometimes say what will happen in the future.

Roman ~ Rome was the capital city of the rulers at that time. Anything that belonged to Rome was Roman.

sacrifice ~ a gift to God to ask him to forgive *sins or to thank him for something. To sacrifice means to make a sacrifice.

Sadducees ~ a group in the *Jewish religion who did not believe in a life after death.

salvation ~ the result when God saves us from *sin and punishment; the new life that God gives to those people who believe in the *Lord Jesus.

Sanhedrin ~ A group of 71 leaders under the high priest who were the *Jewish government.

Saviour ~ a title for Jesus, who saves his people from their *sins.

scriptures ~ the books of the Bible.

shekel ~ *Jewish money.

sin ~ sin is the wrong things that we do. To sin is to do wrong, bad or evil deeds and not to obey God.

synagogue ~ a building where *Jews gather for prayer; a meeting place for *Jews.

temple ~ a special building for the *worship of God. The *Jews had a temple in Jerusalem for the *worship of the real God. But at other temples, people *worshipped false gods.

vineyard ~ a place where *grapes grow.

worship ~ the act when someone gives honour to God. Someone who worships, praises God. That person thanks God. And that person respects God.

SECTION 5

Luke: The Man Christ Jesus

Jesus Suffers Death and He Becomes Alive Again

Luke 22:1 to 24:53

Ian Mackervoy

Judas goes to the chief priests – Luke 22:1-6

v1 It was almost time for the *feast of *unleavened bread, called the *Passover. **v2** And the chief priests and the teachers of the law were trying to find a way to kill Jesus. However, they were afraid of the people. **v3** Then *Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot. He was one of the 12 *apostles. **v4** Judas went to the chief priests and the *temple guards. He discussed with them how he could hand Jesus over to them. **v5** They were glad and they agreed to give money to him. **v6** So, Judas promised to do it. He looked for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them away from the crowd.

Verses 1-2 On the 14th day of the *Jewish month called Nisan is the *Passover. From the 15th day of that month for 7 days is the *feast of *unleavened bread (Numbers 28:16-17). In time, people referred to these two *feasts as the *Passover. Nisan is about March or April in our calendar. Another name for Nisan is Abib.

At the *Passover, the *Jews remember how God rescued their families from Egypt. At that time, the *Jews were slaves in Egypt. God allowed a series of *disasters to happen in Egypt, but the king of Egypt still would not allow them to leave. Then, God told the *Israelites to kill a young sheep (or a goat) on behalf of each family. He told them to put some of the blood from these animals round their doors. That night, the oldest son in each *Egyptian family died. But God protected the families of the *Israelites who had put the blood round their doors. The result was that, at last, the king of Egypt let the *Israelites leave Egypt (Exodus chapter 12).

In the *feast of *unleavened bread, the *Jews remember how they left Egypt. They left in a hurry. So, they took the *dough with them before they had added the *yeast (Exodus 12:34).

Jesus had come to Jerusalem for the *Passover. The chief priests and many of the teachers of the law there wanted to kill Jesus. They could not arrest him in public because they were afraid of the reaction from the people. Previously, many of the *Pharisees had been the main enemies of Jesus. Now these chief priests and teachers of the law had become the leaders against him.

Verses 3-6 We do not know why Judas turned against Jesus. We do know that he was a thief. He had control of the money on behalf the *disciples and he took some for himself (John 12:4-6). Maybe he saw an opportunity to make money. He could get a good fee if he could hand over Jesus to the chief priests.

Judas went to the chief priests and the *temple guards. He offered to hand Jesus to them and they were glad. They agreed on a price. That price was 30 silver coins (Matthew 26:15). From then on, Judas looked for an opportunity to do it. But he had to do it in private, away from the crowds.

It seems that *Satan put the idea into the mind of Judas before the last supper. Then during the meal, *Satan entered him. Judas left the supper and he went out into the night (John 13:2; John 13:27-30). Jesus knew what Judas would do.

The last supper – Luke 22:7-38

v7 The day of *unleavened bread came. That is, the day when it was necessary to kill the young sheep for the *Passover. **v8** Jesus sent Peter and John. He said to them, 'Go. Prepare the *Passover meal for us to eat.'

v9 They asked him, 'Where do you want us to prepare it?'

v10 He told them, 'Go into the city. A man will meet you. He will be carrying a jug of water. Follow him into the house that he enters. **v11** And say to the owner of the house. "The Teacher says to you, 'Where is the guest room? I want to eat the *Passover there with my *disciples.' " **v12** The owner will take you upstairs. He will show you a large room ready for you to use. Prepare the meal there.'

v13 Peter and John left. They found everything as Jesus had told them. And they prepared the *Passover meal.

v14 When the time came, Jesus and the *apostles sat at the table. **v15** Jesus said to them, 'I really want to eat this *Passover with you. I want to eat it with you before I suffer. **v16** I tell you that I will not eat it again on earth. I will not eat it until it has achieved its purpose in God's *kingdom.'

v17 Then Jesus took a cup of wine and he thanked God. He said to his *apostles. 'Take this and share it among yourselves. **v18** I tell you this. I will not drink wine again until God's *kingdom comes.'

v19 Jesus took a loaf of bread. He thanked God and he broke the bread. He gave it to them. He said, 'This is my body. I give my body on your behalf. Do this to remember me.'

v20 Then after the meal, Jesus took the cup of wine. He said, 'This wine means the new promise that I will establish by my blood. It is sure because I will die on behalf of you. **v21** But look. The hand of the man who will give me to my enemies is on the table with mine. **v22** The Son of Man will go even as God intended. But it will be terrible for that man who hands him over to his enemies.' **v23** Then the *apostles began to discuss among themselves which of them would do that.

v24 Also, there was a quarrel among the *apostles. They argued about which of them was the most important. **v25** Jesus said to them, 'The kings of the nations rule powerfully over their people. Those people in authority over the people are called "friends of the people". **v26** But you must not be like that. The most important among you should be like the least important. Your leader should be like the person who serves. **v27** The person at the table is more important than the person who serves him. Usually that is what people think. But I am among you as a servant. **v28** You have stayed with me through my struggles. **v29** As my Father gave to me a *kingdom, even so I give this great honour to you. **v30** You will eat and drink at my table in my *kingdom. Also, you will sit on *thrones. You will be the judges of *Israel's 12 *tribes.

v31 Simon, Simon, *Satan has asked for all of you. He wants to test you all as a farmer separates wheat. **v32** However, I have prayed for you, Simon. I have prayed that your *faith would not fail. And when you come back to me, support your brothers.'

v33 Peter answered, '*Lord, I am ready to go to prison with you. I am willing even to die with you.'

v34 Jesus answered him, 'Peter, I tell you this. The *cock will call out in the morning. But before that, you will say three times that you do not know me.'

v35 Then Jesus said to the *apostles, 'I sent you out without purses, bags or *sandals. Did you need anything?'

'Nothing,' they answered.

v36 Jesus said this to them. 'But now if you have a purse, take it with you. If you have a bag, take that as well. If you do not have a sword, buy one. Sell your coat if necessary. **v37** Do this because of what the *scripture says. It says, "They considered him to be a criminal." I tell you that this must happen to me. What the *scripture says about me will happen.'

v38 The *disciples said, 'Look, *Lord. Here are two swords.'

He replied, 'That is enough.'

Verses 7-13 'The day of *unleavened bread' was an unusual expression. Matthew and Mark say that this was the first day of *unleavened bread (Matthew 26:17, Mark 14:12). Probably it means the day when the *Jews removed all *yeast from their houses. They had to do this before the *Passover.

This was on 13th Nisan. On that same day, they killed the animals for the *Passover meal. They ate lambs (young sheep) each *Passover to remember that first *Passover. This would be in the early evening. To the *Jews, the day began in the evening. So, in the *Jewish calendar, the day had become 14th Nisan. They ate the meal that same evening. This *Passover meal was a family or small group meal.

The 15th Nisan was the first actual day of the *feast of *unleavened bread. That day was a special day. The rules for that day were the same as for the *Sabbath (Leviticus 23:3-14). At the end of the *feast of *unleavened bread, there was another special day. That day would be the 21st day of Nisan. Sometimes people called these days special *Sabbaths. They were in addition to the normal *Sabbath days unless the 15th was a *Sabbath day. On the 15th Nisan there would be another '*Passover' meal. This was the meal that the *Pharisees referred to in John 18:28.

Jesus sent Peter and John to prepare for their *Passover meal. They wanted to know where to prepare it. Jesus had kept his plans secret. Only he knew where he would eat the meal with his 12 *apostles. Perhaps this was to avoid an early arrest. Judas could not have known the place. Jesus told Peter and John to go into the city. There they must follow the man who carried a jug of water. It was not normal for a man to carry a jug of water. Women usually went to fetch water. The two *apostles went into the city and they met this man. Jesus knew that this man would fetch water. He knew that the *apostles would meet the man at that moment. This could not have been by chance. But probably it was not by a previous arrangement.

Peter and John followed the man to the house as Jesus had told them. They asked the master of the house where the guest room was. He showed them the large upper room. The room was upstairs. Those stairs would have been on the outside of the building. There the two *apostles prepared for the meal.

Verses 14-16 The *apostles gathered with Jesus for the *Passover meal. They had to wait for the correct time. That was when they could see the first three stars in the night sky. Also, a silver *trumpet sounded three times in the *temple area. Then the meal could start.

Before the meal, Jesus washed the feet of the 12 *apostles (John 13:1-20). Then Jesus sat down with them. To 'sit' here means to lie down on their left sides with their feet away from the table. They would lie on mats. At the original *Passover, the people had to be ready to go. They stood and they ate the meal in a hurry (Exodus 12:11). Now the *Jews were free and so they could lie down. They could enjoy the meal and relax.

Jesus really wanted to eat this meal with the *apostles. This was the last opportunity that he had to eat the *Passover with them. He knew that, in just a few hours, he would die. The death of the *Passover *lamb was the price of freedom for the people of *Israel. The death of Jesus was the price of freedom and life for those people who believe in him. Jesus would not eat the *Passover again on earth. But he looked forward to the great *feast in God's *kingdom.

Verses 17-20 The *Passover meal had a traditional form. The meal included a supper at which they ate the *lamb. At certain parts of the meal, the leader would pass round 4 cups of wine. Two of these would be before the supper and two would be after the supper.

Jesus took one of the first two cups of wine. He gave thanks to God, as the leader would usually do. Then he passed the cup round to the *apostles. Again, he told them that this would be his last meal before his death. He would not drink wine with them again until that *feast in God's *kingdom.

At the end of the supper, the leader would take some bread and he would break it. He would give thanks to God. Then he would pass the broken pieces of bread to the other people. Jesus took the bread and he broke it. He told them that this bread meant his body. He would give his body on their behalf. From then on, his *disciples should break bread to remember Jesus. Then he took the cup of wine that they would drink after supper. He gave thanks to God because of it. This was the third of the 4 cups of wine. He passed the cup to his *apostles. He told them all to drink from it. Then Jesus told his *apostles that God was making a new promise. Jeremiah had said a long time ago that God would do this (Jeremiah 31:31-34). God promised to forgive his people's *sins. Jesus told them that he would die. He would give his blood on their behalf and on behalf of many people. This is how God can forgive our *sins. We can be free from the punishment that we deserve because of our *sins. We need to believe in Jesus and we must ask God to forgive us.

Christians break bread and drink wine together to remember Jesus. We remember that he died on our behalf. Also, we remember that he rose up from death again. The bread that we break reminds us of the body of Christ. The wine that we pour out reminds us of the blood of Christ. Jesus asked that we should do this (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

Verses 21-23 John was on the right side of Jesus. The most important guest would be on the left side of the leader. But in this company, nobody was more important than the rest. It seems that Judas had this most important position. During the meal, Jesus said that one of them would hand him over to his enemies.

Jesus told them that he would die. His death was in God's plan. But the man who handed Jesus over would be responsible for his actions. That man would suffer because of what he did.

They were all worried about this. Each of them asked whether it was him. That man would be the man who put bread into the dish at the same time as Jesus (Matthew 26:23). Peter signalled to John. And John asked Jesus who it would be. It would be the *disciple to whom Jesus passed a piece of bread. The leader would pass the piece of bread to the person on his left side. Jesus passed the piece of bread to Judas. Soon after that, *Satan took control of Judas (John 13:27). Jesus told Judas to go in order to do what he must do. Judas went out but the other *apostles did not know why (see Matthew 26:1-25; Mark 14:18-21; John 13:21-30).

Verses 24-27 This was the last time that Jesus would eat with his *apostles. He had told them that soon his enemies would kill him. One of the *apostles would give Jesus to his enemies. These things should have mattered much more to them than their thoughts about themselves. But the *apostles thought that the *kingdom would come soon. Jesus would be the king. So, at this last supper the *apostles argued about which of them would be the most important.

The nature of Christ's *kingdom is different from the nature of *kingdoms in this world. Here kings rule with authority and the people must serve them. The leaders call themselves friends of the people. They make themselves important. They consider themselves superior to other people.

The most important people in Christ's *kingdom are those people who make themselves as servants. This attitude is the opposite of the world's attitude. In this world, the person who sits at the table is more important than the servant. However Jesus, the *Lord of all things, came as a servant. Earlier, Jesus had washed the feet of his *apostles (John 13:4-14). That was the task of a servant. Christ had served them as a servant and he urged his *disciples to act in the same manner too.

Verses 28-30 The *apostles had been loyal to Jesus. They had been with him through all the difficulties of his work. Except for Judas, they had proved themselves good *disciples of Jesus. So, Jesus encouraged them. Even as the Father had given a *kingdom to Jesus, so he would give a great honour to them. Jesus did not mean that they would receive a *kingdom on this earth. The *kingdom that he will give to them is his own. They will enjoy the future with Jesus in his *kingdom. They will dine at the king's table. They will have responsible jobs in that *kingdom.

Verses 31-34 Already *Satan had achieved his purpose with Judas. *Satan wanted also to cause Simon Peter to lose his *faith in Jesus. *Satan does not have the authority to do what he wants. He has to ask God to allow him to do it. *Satan can go no further than God allows.

The word 'you' in verse 31 is in the plural. Not only did *Satan want Peter, but also he wanted all the *apostles. However, Jesus had prayed on Peter's behalf. Jesus did not pray that *Satan would not test Peter. He prayed that Peter would not fail the tests. He knew that Peter would fail at first. But Jesus was confident that Peter would succeed in the end.

Peter would fail but he would come back to Jesus. His *faith and love for Jesus would be even stronger than before. All the *apostles would run away (Matthew 26:31; Mark 14:27). They would be afraid for their lives. When he came back, Peter must support the other *disciples. He would become a leader among them.

Peter did not understand how serious the situation was. He was a bold and strong person. But he did not know how weak he would be. He was ready to go to prison on behalf of Jesus. He was even willing to die for Jesus. That was what Peter said. But what actually happened was too hard for him. Peter was not as strong as he thought.

Jesus knew all that would happen to him and to the *apostles. Jesus told Peter what he (Peter) would do that same night. Peter would say that he did not know Jesus. Before the *cock called out in the morning, Peter would say that three times. However, Peter insisted that he would not do this. He said that he was ready to die with Jesus. And the other *apostles said the same things (Matthew 26:35; Mark 14:31).

Verses 35-38 When Jesus sent the *disciples out to *preach, they did not take anything with them (10:1-12). The people to whom they went looked after them. In those days, there were no special dangers for them as they went. But from this time on, their experience would be very different. They would need to provide for themselves. They would need a purse, a bag and a sword. Jesus was not encouraging them to fight (22:49-51). He mentioned the sword to emphasise that the lives of the *disciples would be in real danger. They would need to look after themselves.

Jesus told them that his enemies would arrest him. They would take him as if he were a criminal (Isaiah 53:12). Jesus would die with criminals. But in his death, he would take away the *sins of many people. All that the *scriptures said about him would happen.

The *apostles did not understand what Jesus meant. They said that they had two swords. Jesus replied that this was enough. Jesus did not mean that two swords were enough. He meant that they had said enough about this matter.

In the garden – Luke 22:39-45

v39 As he usually did, Jesus went out of the city to the *Mount of Olives. And his *disciples followed him. **v40** When Jesus arrived at the place, he said to them, 'There will be a test for you. So, pray that you do not fail.' **v41** Jesus went beyond them about the distance that a person could throw a stone. He knelt and he prayed. **v42** He said, 'Father, if it is possible in your purposes, take this *cup from me. But I do not pray for what I want. Do what you want.' **v43** Then an *angel from heaven appeared to him and he gave strength to Jesus. **v44** Jesus was in terrible pain. He prayed even harder. And from his skin came blood that fell onto the ground. **v45** Jesus got up from his prayer and he came to his *disciples. But he found that, because of their deeply sad feelings, they were asleep.

Verses 39-45 At the *Mount of Olives, there is the garden called Gethsemane. It was to this garden that Jesus went (Matthew 26:36; Mark 14:26). Often Jesus went to this garden therefore Judas knew where to find him. Jesus did not change his habit to avoid Judas. And he knew that Judas would come with the crowd from the chief priests. When Jesus and his *disciples got there, Jesus warned them. He said that the devil would test them. So, he told them to pray that they would not fail the test.

Jesus took three of the *disciples a bit further. They were Peter, James and John. He asked them to watch and to pray with him. He told them about the extreme strain that he felt. Then he went a little further by himself (Matthew 26:36-39; Mark 14:33-35). People usually stood to pray. On this sad and special occasion, Jesus knelt. He prayed to God. He knew about the awful death that he would suffer. This would not be an ordinary death. He called this the 'cup', which refers to the anger of God against *sin. Jesus would die because of the *sins of all people. God would put everybody's *sins on Jesus. And he would carry these *sins away (1 Peter 2:24). By that means, God would forgive everyone who truly trusts him. However, we must confess our *sins to him, and we must invite Jesus into our lives (Acts 2:37-38; Acts 3:19).

Jesus knew that he would suffer the punishment because of all our *sins. He was in such pain because of this. Therefore, he asked God his Father to take this 'cup' away from him if it was possible. But there was no other way to remove our *sin. So, Jesus was ready to suffer and to die. That was what God wanted.

An *angel came to support Jesus. Jesus knew extreme pain in his mind and spirit. Here was a real struggle for Jesus. He had to overcome it. His prayer was so serious that blood fell to the ground from him.

Then he went back to the *disciples but they were asleep. They were so sad and tired. He spoke to Peter. He said, 'You could not watch with me for one hour.' Jesus went away and he prayed the same kind of prayer two more times (Matthew 26:42-44; Mark 14:37-41). Each time, when he came to the *disciples, they were asleep.

The arrest of Jesus – Luke 22:46-53

<p>v46 Jesus said to them, 'Do not sleep. Wake up. Pray that you will not fail this test.'</p>

v47 While Jesus was speaking, a crowd arrived. The man called Judas, one of the 12 *apostles, led them. He came close to Jesus so that he could kiss him. **v48** Jesus said to him, 'Judas, with a kiss you are handing the Son of Man over to his enemies.'

v49 The people near Jesus saw what was happening. They asked him, '*Lord, should we use our swords to fight?' **v50** And one of them struck one of the chief priest's servants. He cut off the servant's right ear.

v51 But Jesus answered, 'Allow this to happen.' Then he touched the servant's ear and he cured him.

v52 Those people who came to arrest Jesus were chief priests, *temple guards, and other leaders. Jesus said to them, 'You have come here with swords and heavy sticks. It is as if you have come to arrest a thief. **v53** I was with you in the *temple every day, and you did not arrest me. However, this is your time and now darkness rules.'

Verses 46-51 Luke records just one occasion when Jesus came back to the *disciples. He told them to wake up and pray. In fact, he returned to them three times. On the last occasion, he told them that they could sleep (Matthew 26:45, Mark 14:41). In other words, the time when they had to watch with Jesus had ended. However, really they must get up now because Judas was coming with a crowd to arrest Jesus.

While Jesus spoke to the *disciples, Judas and the crowd arrived. The crowd had come from the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders of *Israel. The crowd carried swords and heavy sticks. It was dark. So, Judas had agreed to show them by a kiss which man was Jesus. Judas came and he kissed Jesus. A kiss was a normal way for friends to greet each other. Judas was one of the 12 *apostles. But this kiss was from the man who had become an enemy of Jesus.

The *disciples asked Jesus whether they should fight. Before he could answer, Peter used his sword. He cut off the right ear of the chief priest's servant. The servant's name was Malchus (John 18:10). Immediately Jesus told the *disciples not to fight. There was no need to fight. All that happened was in the purposes of God. Jesus could have asked for an army of *angels to rescue him. But that would have been against the *prophecies in *scripture.

He cured the servant's ear with a touch.

In an extraordinary way, Jesus seemed to be in control of the situation.

Verses 52-53 Among the crowd, there were some of the chief priests and leaders of the people. The leaders of the people would have been members of the *Sanhedrin. The *Sanhedrin was the committee that ruled the *Jews. They came with the *temple guards to arrest Jesus. The crowd had come with swords and heavy sticks. They had prepared themselves for a fight. It was as if they had to arrest a fierce and dangerous man. Jesus had been in the *temple each day of that week. He had taught the people in public. They did not arrest him there because they were afraid of the people. They could not arrest him then because it was not God's time. Now they arrested him away from the people and in the darkness.

Jesus knew that the time had come for him to die. In this arrest, the forces of the devil attacked the *Christ. The final battle for our *salvation had begun.

Then all of the *disciples left Jesus and they ran away (Matthew 26:56; Mark 14:50).

Peter denies *Christ – Luke 22:54-62

v54 The men arrested Jesus, and they led him away. They brought him into the house of the chief priest. Peter followed at a distance. **v55** Some people lit a fire in the middle of the open area by the house. And they sat down by the fire. Peter sat there with them. **v56** A servant girl saw him as he sat in the light of the fire. She stared at him. And she said, 'This man was with Jesus.'

v57 But Peter denied it. He said, 'Woman, I do not know him.'

v58 After a little time, someone else saw him. He said, 'You are one of them.' But Peter replied, 'Sir, I am not.'

v59 About an hour afterwards, another man insisted. 'Certainly this man was with him, because he is from Galilee, too.'

v60 Peter replied, 'Sir, I do not know what you are talking about.' Just as he spoke this, a *cock called out. **v61** The *Lord turned and he looked straight at Peter. Peter remembered what the *Lord had said to him. Jesus had told him, 'The *cock will call out in the morning. But before that, you will say three times that you do not know me.' **v62** And Peter went outside and he wept bitterly.

Verses 54-62 The crowd took Jesus first to the house of Annas (John 18:13). Annas had once been the chief priest. He was the father of Caiaphas' wife. At that time, Caiaphas was the chief priest. Then Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas (John 18:24). It seems that the entire *Sanhedrin had come to the house of Caiaphas (Matthew 26:57; Mark 14:53).

It was a cold night. The house of Caiaphas had an open area. The servants lit a fire there to keep themselves warm.

Peter was much braver than the other *disciples were. They ran away but he followed the crowd at a distance. Also, John followed Jesus to the house. John knew the chief priest and he went in with Jesus. He arranged for Peter to come in as well (John 18:15-16). Peter came into the property and he sat with the chief priest's servants by the fire.

The servant girl, who opened the door, recognised Peter. She was the first person to say that Peter had been with Jesus (John 18:17). During the hours that followed, two other people accused him of the same thing. The last of these had been in the garden, and he was a relative of Malchus. This man was sure that Peter was one of the *disciples (John 18:26). On each occasion, Peter denied it. Three times, he denied that he even knew Jesus.

Then a *cock called out. Peter remembered what Jesus had said (verse 34). Jesus turned and he looked across the area at Peter. Jesus was aware of what Peter had done. Then Peter went outside and he wept. Peter was so sorry because of what he had done.

Soldiers, Pilate and Herod – Luke 22:63 to 23:25

Jesus and the *Sanhedrin – Luke 22:63-71

v63 And the men that were guarding Jesus made fun of him. And they struck him. **v64** They covered his eyes so that he could not see. Then they demanded, ‘*Prophecy. Tell us who is hitting you.’ **v65** And they said many other things to insult him.

v66 When day came, the nation’s leaders gathered, including the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They brought Jesus to their committee. **v67** They said to Jesus, ‘Tell us this. Are you the *Christ?’

Jesus replied to them. ‘If I tell you, you will not believe. **v68** And if I ask you a question, you will not answer. **v69** But from now on, the Son of Man will sit at the right hand of God’s power.’

v70 They all said, ‘Then are you the Son of God?’

Jesus said to them, ‘You say that I am.’

v71 And they said, ‘We do not need any more witnesses. We ourselves have heard what he said.’

Verses 63-65 There was a group of men, probably soldiers, who guarded Jesus. They held Jesus until the *Sanhedrin, the committee of the *Jews, had come together. These guards made fun of Jesus. People considered Jesus a *prophet. So the guards covered his eyes and they hit him. If Jesus was a *prophet, he should have special knowledge from God. So the guards asked him to say who had hit him. And in other ways, they insulted him.

Verses 66-71 Through the night, the chief priest and some of his friends asked Jesus a series of questions. They tried to cause him to say something wrong. They looked for something with which they could accuse him. But they could not find anything of which he was guilty.

Caiaphas asked Jesus if he was the *Christ. Caiaphas, as the chief priest, was the leader of the *Sanhedrin. At that time, many people in Israel had completely wrong ideas about the *Christ. They expected the *Christ to be a human ruler. Their *Christ would fight against the *Romans. He would establish *Israel as the superior nation on earth. He would be their king. So, Jesus could not answer yes to Caiaphas's question. Jesus was the *Christ but not that kind of *Christ.

If Jesus had tried to explain this to them, they would not listen to him. They would not believe that he was the *Christ. They had made up their minds not to believe in him. If Jesus asked them about the nature of the *Christ, they would not answer his questions. But Jesus did answer their question. He was the Son of Man. He would sit at the right hand side of God. He was the *Christ but this *Christ was much more than their idea of *Christ.

Jesus spoke about the immediate future. From now on, he would sit on 'the right hand of God's power'. Beyond his death, he would rise to life again. Then he would go to God his Father. He would sit at the right side of God. To sit meant that he had completed his work. That work was to achieve *salvation for us. The right side was the most powerful place to be. It was the place of the greatest honour and authority.

They seemed to understand something of what Jesus said. If Jesus would sit with God, he must be the Son of God. So, they asked Jesus if he meant that. The reply that Jesus gave to them did not say yes or no. However, the meaning of his reply was clear. Jesus could not deny that he was the Son of God. Therefore, his answer showed to them that he was the Son of God. They had tried to find witnesses against Jesus. Many came forward. But what they said was not enough. They were false witnesses and they did not agree with each other. The chief priest and those men with him used what Jesus said against him. Jesus agreed that he was the Son of God. Therefore, in their minds, Jesus was guilty of *blasphemy because he made himself equal with God. They decided that Jesus should die.

In the morning, the *Sanhedrin members came together. This was either in the house of Caiaphas or in the committee room in the *temple area. By their law, the *Sanhedrin could not meet during the hours of darkness. The guards brought Jesus to the whole *Sanhedrin as soon as it was light. Then the *Sanhedrin approved the decision that Jesus should die.

Jesus and Pilate – Luke 23:1-25

v1 The whole group rose up and they took Jesus in front of Pilate. **v2** They began to accuse Jesus. They said, 'We have found this man, who causes trouble among our people. He forbids them to pay taxes to the *emperor. And he says that he is the *Christ, a king.'

v3 Then Pilate asked Jesus, 'Are you the king of the *Jews?'

Jesus answered him, 'You say so.'

v4 Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, 'I do not consider this man guilty of any crime.'

v5 But they insisted. 'He causes trouble among the people. He has taught through the whole of Judea. He started in Galilee and now he has come here.'

v6 Pilate heard this. So, he asked whether Jesus was from Galilee. **v7** Pilate realised that Jesus was, therefore, under Herod's authority. So, Pilate sent Jesus to Herod. Herod was also in Jerusalem at this time.

v8 Herod was very glad to see Jesus. For a long time, he had wanted to see Jesus, because he had heard about him. And he hoped to see Jesus perform some kind of *miracle. **v9** Herod asked Jesus many questions, but Jesus did not answer him. **v10** The chief priests and the teachers of the law stood there. They were constantly accusing Jesus. **v11** Herod and his soldiers made fun of Jesus and they insulted him. They dressed him in splendid clothing and Herod sent him back to Pilate. **v12** That day Herod and Pilate became friends. Until this time, they had been enemies.

v13 Pilate called together the chief priests, the leaders, and the people. **v14** He said to them, 'You brought this man to me. You say that he turns the people against the law. I have examined him in front of you. I consider him not guilty of the crime of which you have accused him. **v15** Neither did Herod find him guilty, because Herod sent him back to us. Look. This man has done nothing to deserve death. **v16** Therefore, I will punish him and then I will free him.'

v18 But the whole crowd shouted together, 'Take this man away. Free Barabbas for us.' **v19** (Barabbas was in prison because he had fought against the government in the city, and for murder.)

v20 Pilate wanted to free Jesus, so he spoke again to the crowd. **v21** But they shouted, '*Crucify him, *crucify him.'

v22 Then Pilate spoke to them a third time. 'This man has done nothing wrong. I find no reason why we should put him to death. Therefore, I will punish him and I will let him go free.'

v23 But with loud shouts, they insisted that Pilate should *crucify Jesus. By their shouts, they succeeded. **v24** Pilate decided that he would carry out their request. **v25** Pilate freed the man who had fought against the government. (Because of that, and because of a murder, this man had been in prison. The crowd had asked Pilate to free this man.) But Pilate handed Jesus over as the crowd had requested.

Verses 1-5 The members of the *Sanhedrin had decided that Jesus must die. They were the leaders of the people. However, they opposed Jesus for different reasons. Many *Pharisees opposed Jesus because they did not agree with his message. The chief priests, on the other hand, belonged to the group called Sadducees. They worried that Jesus might cause trouble with the *Romans. Then the *Romans would destroy the *temple and the nation of *Israel. For this reason Caiaphas said that this one man should die (John 11:45-53). But the real reason was that Jesus was the *Christ, the Son of God. This made Jesus equal with God. Both the chief priests and most of the *Pharisees would not believe this. Therefore, to them this was *blasphemy.

The whole group of the leaders took Jesus to Pilate. Usually they would have sent a team on their behalf. But they felt so strongly that they all came. The *Romans did not allow the *Jews to put people to death (John 18:31). So, the leaders had to persuade Pilate to order the death of Jesus.

Pilate was the *Roman ruler in Judea. Usually he would have been in the town called Caesarea. But he was in Jerusalem at this time because of the *Passover.

The crime of *blasphemy was of extreme importance to the *Jewish religion. But *blasphemy was of no interest to the *Romans. *Blasphemy was not a crime under *Roman law. The *Jewish leaders had to find a better reason for their request to Pilate. So, they said that Jesus was claiming to be a king. As a king, he must be an enemy of the *emperor. That would be a political crime. The punishment for such a crime would be death.

The *Jewish leaders accused Jesus of three serious crimes. He tried to cause the people to act against the *Romans. Then he told the people not to pay taxes to the *emperor. And he said that he was *Christ the king. The first two of these were clearly false. And Jesus did not say to the leaders that he was a king.

Pilate and Jesus went into the hall of judgement. The *Jews would not go in because the place was to them unclean. That is, it was unclean for the purposes of their religion. Of course, the hall was not dirty. An unclean person, place or object was something that made people unable to carry out public acts of religion. So, if the *Jews went into the hall, it would make them unclean. Then they would not be able to take part in the *Passover ceremony (John 18:28).

Pilate asked Jesus about all the things of which the *Jewish leaders had accused him. The most serious matter was whether Jesus was a king. Pilate asked Jesus if he was a king. Jesus did not deny that he was a king. He was a king but his *kingdom did not belong to this world (John 18:33-38). But Pilate could see that he was not a danger to the *emperor. He was not a king in the way that the *Jewish leaders had meant. Pilate was a judge with much experience. It did not take him long to see that Jesus was innocent. He decided that Jesus was not guilty of any crime. He came out of the hall of judgement. And he told the *Jewish leaders and the crowd what his decision was.

The crowd would not agree with Pilate's decision. They insisted more urgently that Jesus was guilty. They accused him of many things. They said that he caused trouble among the people. What he taught spread from Galilee through the whole nation.

The crowd would not agree with a 'not guilty' decision because the chief priests persuaded them (Matthew 27:20; Mark 15:11).

Verses 6-12 Jesus had become a difficult problem for Pilate. He wanted to free Jesus because Jesus was innocent. But he did not want to offend the *Jewish leaders. They insisted that Jesus should die. If Pilate freed Jesus, there would be trouble. They had mentioned Galilee. Jesus was from Galilee. In fact, Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea but he lived in Galilee. Pilate thought that he could pass the problem to Herod Antipas. Herod was the ruler of Galilee and he was in Jerusalem because of the *Passover. So, Pilate sent Jesus to Herod.

In *Roman law, the problem would come to the judge in the region where the crime had happened. It was right that Pilate should be the judge. But as Jesus was from Galilee, he could pass the problem to Herod. This would please Herod. It would appear to him that Pilate respected him.

Herod had heard about Jesus. He had heard of the *miracles that Jesus had done. For a long time he had wanted to meet Jesus (9:9). Maybe Jesus would do a *miracle for him. So, he was glad when Pilate sent Jesus to him.

The chief priests and teachers of the law continued to accuse Jesus. Probably they accused Jesus of *blasphemy as well as political crimes. Herod had more experience of *Jewish politics and their religion than Pilate. Herod asked Jesus about all of these things. He may have asked Jesus about what he had taught. He wanted to see a *miracle as well. But Jesus did not answer him. Jesus had nothing to say to Herod. By his silence, Jesus showed that he was in control of the situation. Herod was the weaker person. It would have disappointed him very much that he got no answers from Jesus.

The *Jewish leaders wanted Herod to agree that Jesus should die. Also, Pilate wanted Herod to take that responsibility. But Herod did not satisfy either the *Jewish leaders or Pilate. With his soldiers, he made fun of Jesus. They dressed Jesus in fine clothes and they insulted him. Herod had no further interest in Jesus. He sent him back to Pilate. And Pilate had no choice. He had to take the responsibility.

It seems that Pilate and Herod had been enemies for some time. This incident caused them to become friends.

Verses 13-16 Pilate called together the *Jewish leaders and the people with them. He declared to them that he had examined Jesus. He had looked at all those things about which they had accused Jesus. Also, Herod had tried to find fault with Jesus in these matters. Neither Pilate nor Herod could find anything about which Jesus was guilty. Pilate as the judge must free the innocent man. He said that he would punish Jesus. Then he would free him. He hoped that this would satisfy the *Jewish leaders.

Verse 17 Some Bibles add, 'Now he (Pilate) had to free someone for them at the *feast.'

Verses 18-25 It was a custom that Pilate freed a prisoner at the *Passover time. The people could choose which prisoner they wanted him to free (Matthew 27:15; Mark 15:6). The whole crowd shouted for him to free Barabbas. Barabbas had opposed the *Roman government and he was guilty of murder. John 18:40 calls him a 'thief'. Probably, the *Jewish leaders had persuaded the crowd to choose Barabbas.

It could not have been a very large crowd. There was not enough room in that place. But the crowd was large enough to worry Pilate. It could not have been typical of the ordinary people. The people were not against Jesus. They believed that he was a *prophet. Maybe friends of Barabbas were in that crowd. They would want their friend to be free.

Pilate wanted them to ask for Jesus. So, he gave to them the chance to choose Jesus. He asked them if he could give to them the king of the *Jews. But they shouted even more for Barabbas (John 18:39-40).

Pilate again said that Jesus was innocent. He said that he would punish Jesus. And then he would free him. But this did not please the crowd. Then Pilate asked what he should do with Jesus. The crowd shouted their answer. They cried, '*Crucify him, *crucify him.' Pilate asked them what evil deeds Jesus had done. They did not answer that question. Instead, they shouted even more loudly, '*Crucify him.'

In the end, Pilate gave in to them. He agreed to *crucify Jesus. He freed Barabbas. Pilate washed his hands as if to say it was not his fault (Matthew 27:24).

The *Roman soldiers took Jesus into their hall. They whipped him across his back many times until blood covered his back. They put purple clothes on him. (Kings wore purple clothes. However, the soldiers chose purple clothes for Jesus as an insult. They were laughing at the fact that people had described him as 'king of the *Jews'.) Also, the soldiers put a crown of *thorns on his head. They hit Jesus with a stick and they made fun of him.

Then Pilate brought Jesus out to the crowd. He said, 'Here is the man' (John 19:5).

Jesus on the cross – Luke 23:26-49

v26 As the soldiers led Jesus away, they seized a man called Simon. He was from the city called Cyrene. He was coming into Jerusalem. They forced him to carry the cross of wood behind Jesus. **v27** A large crowd of people followed Jesus. In the crowd, many women cried and they wept because of him. **v28** Jesus turned to the women. He said to them, 'Women from Jerusalem, do not weep on my behalf. Weep on behalf of yourselves and on behalf of your children. **v29** A terrible time will come. Then people will say, "Happy are the women who could not have children. Happy are those women who never gave birth. Happy are those women whose breasts never fed babies." **v30** Then people will say to the mountains, "Fall on us." And they will say to the hills, "Cover us." **v31** People are doing these things when their lives are as pleasant as a green tree. Then they will do worse things when their circumstances become as bad as a dry tree.'

v32 The soldiers led two other men that they would kill with Jesus. Those other men were criminals.

v33 When they came to the place called the *Skull, they *crucified Jesus. And they *crucified the two criminals. One criminal was on the right side of Jesus and the other criminal was on his left. **v34**

Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them. They do not know what they are doing.' The soldiers divided his clothes among themselves. They played a game of chance to decide which of the clothes each would take.

v35 The people stood there and they watched. But the rulers insulted Jesus. They said, 'He saved other people. Let him save himself. The *Christ whom God has chosen could do it.'

v36 The soldiers also made fun of Jesus. They came up to him and they offered to him sour wine.

v37 They said to him, 'If you are the king of the *Jews, save yourself.'

v38 Above Jesus, there was a sign. It said, 'This is the king of the *Jews.'

v39 One of the criminals who hung there insulted Jesus. He said, 'You pretend to be the *Christ. If you are, then save yourself and us.'

v40 But the other criminal protested at this. He said, 'You ought to be afraid of God. You are suffering the same punishment as he does. **v41** Our punishment is fair. We are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has not done anything wrong.'

v42 Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your *kingdom.'

v43 Jesus said to him, 'I tell you the truth. Today you will be with me in *paradise.'

v44 It was about the 6th hour. And darkness came over the whole country until the 9th hour. **v45** It was dark because the sun did not shine. And the curtain in the *temple split down the middle. **v46** Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I place my spirit.' When he had said this, he took his last breath.

v47 The army officer saw what had happened. He praised God. And he said, 'Certainly, this man was a good man.' **v48** The crowds had gathered to see this sight. They all saw what happened. They struck themselves because they were so sad. And they went away. **v49** But all those people who knew Jesus stood at a distance. This included the women who had come with him from Galilee. They watched all that happened.

Verses 26 The soldiers led Jesus away to *crucify him. The place where they *crucified was outside the city walls. This place was called Golgotha. Golgotha means 'the place of a *skull'.

The criminal had to carry his cross or at least the bar that crossed the centre. It was very heavy. The soldiers had punished Jesus so much that he was now weak. He could not carry his cross the whole way. The soldiers stopped a man called Simon and they forced him to carry Jesus' cross.

This man, Simon, came from Cyrene. Cyrene was a city in the North African country called Libya. Probably he became a Christian because of this experience. He was the father of Alexander and Rufus (Mark 15:21). These two sons became Christians.

Verses 27-30 There was a large crowd of people on the streets as Jesus went by. The crowd followed him along the way. These people were not against Jesus. These were ordinary people. Many of them admired Jesus. The situation probably made them sad and angry. But they could do nothing. Many of the women wept aloud as they saw him.

Although he was so weak, Jesus managed to speak to the crowd. Even in this situation, Jesus did not think about himself, but about the people. He knew about the terrible events that would soon happen in Jerusalem. He said to the women, 'Do not weep on my behalf. Weep on behalf of yourselves and on behalf of your children.' When the *disaster happened, it would be terrible for the children. Then the people would say that it was better for those women without children. *Jewish women often felt a sense of shame if they were unable to have children. But then it would be terrible for mothers to watch how their children would suffer. That time would be so awful that people would want to die.

Verse 31 There have been several ideas as to what Jesus meant. He was comparing that present time with the future *disaster. He was innocent of any crime. The *Romans knew that he was innocent. Yet, they still *crucified him. It would be so much worse for the *Jews when the *Romans considered the nation guilty.

Fire spreads much more quickly through a forest when the trees are dry. So, Jesus warned them that the future events would be much worse than the present situation.

Verses 32-33 The soldiers led two other men with Jesus. These men were thieves. They came to the place called Golgotha, that is, the *Skull. The *Skull was probably a hill outside Jerusalem. One particular hill outside the old city walls of Jerusalem has the appearance of a *skull. There is a tradition that the *Romans *crucified Jesus and the criminals on this hill. But it is more likely that it was at the base of the hill. It was near the road because people passed by. As they passed by, the people made fun of Jesus (Matthew 27:39-40; Mark 15:29-30).

There the *Roman soldiers *crucified Jesus and the two criminals. Jesus was between the criminals. It was about 9 o'clock in the morning (Mark 15:25).

In *crucifixion, the person hung on a cross. We do not know for certain the shape of the cross. It was probably a central beam that had a bar across it. They fixed Jesus to the cross with nails through his hands and feet (John 20:25-27; Luke 24:39). This was an awful, slow and painful death. But the Bible does not say much about the physical pain that Jesus suffered. It concentrates more on the importance of Jesus' death. In it, he took the punishment for all our *sins (1 Corinthians 15:3). We must confess our *sins to God and we must invite him into our lives, for God to forgive us. Also, by Jesus' death, he defeated the devil (Hebrews 2:14). So, he frees his people from the devil's power.

Verse 34 Jesus prayed on behalf of those people who were guilty of his death. He asked God his Father to forgive them. They did not understand what they had done. They knew that he was innocent of any crime. But they did not believe that he was the *Christ. And they did not understand that he was the Son of God. If they had understood it, they would not have *crucified the *Lord of *glory (1 Corinthians 2:8). However, this did not excuse them. They were guilty of this murder.

Jesus prayed on behalf of his enemies. He taught us that we should do the same (Luke 6:27-28; Matthew 5:44).

It was the custom for the soldiers to take the clothes after they had *crucified a person. They divided Jesus' clothes into 4 parts. But they would not cut up his long coat. So, they played a game of chance to see which one of them would take the coat. In that game, they threw stones to decide who was the winner. The Book of Psalms says that this would happen (Psalm 22:18; John 19:23-25).

Verses 35-38 Many of the people would come to see a *crucifixion. So on this occasion people stood there and they watched Jesus. Most of the ordinary people did not insult Jesus. But some who were passing by did make bad remarks to Jesus (Matthew 27:39-40; Mark 15:29-30). It was the rulers who insulted him. These included the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders of the people. By their insults, they emphasised that they did not believe in him. If Jesus could save other people then he could save himself. If Jesus were the *Christ, he could come down from the cross. If God had chosen him, then God could save him. All of this was true. Jesus could have saved himself. But the rulers did not understand that Jesus came to die on our behalf. It was God's plan that Jesus should die because of the *sins of all people.

It was the custom for the criminal to carry a board. That board had on it a note of his crime. And the soldiers would put that notice on the cross above the criminal's head. Above the head of Jesus, the notice was: 'This is the king of the *Jews.' This was the reason for the death of Jesus, as Pilate understood it. The notice was in three languages: *Hebrew, *Greek and *Latin. *Hebrew was the language of the *Jews. *Greek was the language of many people who had come to Jerusalem for the *Passover. *Latin was the language of government and it was the official language of the *Romans.

The soldiers also made fun of Jesus. They said, 'Let the king of the *Jews save himself.' But they offered him sour wine to drink.

Verses 39-43 At first, the two criminals began to insult Jesus (Matthew 27:44; Mark 15:32). One of them continued to insult Jesus. But the other one of them realised who Jesus was. He protested to the other criminal. Soon that man would have to come in front of God as his judge. That should cause him to be afraid of God. All three of them were suffering the same punishment. The two criminals deserved it. But the criminal who spoke considered Jesus innocent of any crime.

It must have been difficult for them to speak. They suffered so much pain. And there was so much noise round about them. But the one criminal spoke to Jesus. He believed that Jesus was a king. He did not ask Jesus to rescue him from his cross or from death. He realised that death would not be the end. So, he asked Jesus to remember him when he came into his *kingdom.

The answer of Jesus was more than that criminal could have expected. Yes, he (the criminal) would be in that *kingdom. He would die that day and he would go to be with Jesus in *paradise.

The word *paradise came from the Persian language where it meant a garden. It was a place of beauty and delight. A person could relax as he enjoyed that beautiful place. Later, people chose that word to refer to the place where God's people live with him after death. That was the meaning that Jesus gave to the word '*paradise' here.

Verses 44-45 The *Jewish day consisted of 12 hours. The start of the day was sunrise. The end of the day was at sunset. So, the length of an hour varied at different times during the year.

In those days, they had no clocks or watches. As a result, the writers of the *New Testament estimated the times. Luke estimated that this darkness came at about the 6th hour (in other words, noon). It continued until about the 9th hour (3 o'clock). It was dark for three hours from about noon to about 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

John says that Pilate brought Jesus out to the *Jews at about the 6th hour. Probably John used a different measurement of time that people commonly used in Asia. To them, the day started after midnight. So, that 6th hour would have been 6 o'clock in the morning (John 19:14).

This afternoon it was dark because the sun did not shine. The light from the sun could not come through the darkness. It could not have been an eclipse (the rare event when the moon is in front of the sun). That cannot happen when the moon is full. At *Passover, there was a full moon.

At the end of the period of darkness, Jesus died. And the large curtain in the *temple split from top to bottom. This curtain was between the most holy place and the rest of the *temple. The chief priest went into the most holy place once a year to meet with God. Nobody else could go behind the curtain. Now the curtain to the most holy place was open. It was as if anybody could now go beyond the curtain. Now the people could approach God for themselves because of Jesus' death.

So, the meaning is that the death of Jesus has made the way for us to approach God. His body is like the curtain by which we have a doorway to God (Hebrews 10:19-25).

Verse 46 Jesus did not die because of the things that people did to him. He had said that he had authority to lay down his life. And he had power to take it again. Nobody could take his life from him. He would lay it down of his own decision (John 10:17-18). Jesus had done all that he had come to do. He cried out, 'It is finished' (John 19:30). Then he gave his own life to God his Father. He cried out with a loud voice that the people could hear. He said, 'Father, into your hands I place my spirit.' His life, his spirit, went to be with God. He took his last breath and his body died.

Verses 47-49 The officer in charge of the *crucifixion saw all that happened. He must have seen other *crucifixions but never one like this. He felt the darkness and he saw the *earthquake (Matthew 27:51). And he saw how Jesus had died in an unusual way. These things caused him to be afraid and he praised God. Now he knew that Jesus was innocent of any crime. Jesus' death convinced him that Jesus was someone special. In Luke 23:47, he called Jesus a righteous man. The word 'righteous' means someone who is truly good. In Matthew 27:54, he called Jesus 'the Son of God'.

The crowd of ordinary people who had come to see the *crucifixions went away sad. What they expected to be an entertainment brought no satisfaction. They too knew that Jesus was not guilty of any crime. Jesus was a good man. And the people thought that he was a *prophet. Now their leaders had murdered an innocent man. What the people had seen deeply affected them. It bothered them and it upset them.

Many of Jesus' friends had come. But they stood some way from the cross. Among these friends were the women who had been such a help to Jesus during the last three years.

The grave of Jesus – Luke 23:50-56

v50 There was a man called Joseph. He was a good and sincere man. And he was a member of the committee that ruled the country. **v51** But he had not agreed with the committee's decision to act against Jesus. He was from the *Jewish town called Arimathea. He was waiting for and he was expecting God's *kingdom to come. **v52** Joseph went to Pilate and he asked for the body of Jesus. **v53** He took the body of Jesus down from the cross of wood. And he wrapped the body in a cloth. Then he placed Jesus' body in a grave. Workmen had cut the grave into the rock, and nobody had buried anyone there yet. **v54** It was the day when the *Jews prepared for the *Sabbath day. This *Sabbath had almost come.

v55 The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph. They saw the grave and how Joseph laid the body in it. **v56** The women left there and they prepared *spices and oils for the body. But they rested on the *Sabbath day as the law ordered.

Verses 50-54 Joseph came from the *Jewish town called Arimathea. We do not know where Arimathea was. Joseph was a member of the *Sanhedrin of the *Jews. He could not have been there when the *Sanhedrin called for Jesus' death. All of the *Sanhedrin that were there had agreed with the decision. But Joseph had not agreed with their decision. He was a sincere man who respected God. He expected the *Christ to come and he looked for the *kingdom of God. He was a *disciple of Jesus. But he kept quiet about it because he was afraid of the *Jews (Matthew 27:57; John 19:38).

Evening approached and at sunset the *Sabbath day would begin. That *Sabbath was a special day because it was the *Passover. So, it was important to bury Jesus' body quickly, before sunset. Joseph was not afraid any longer. With much courage, he went to Pilate and he asked for Jesus' body. Pilate was surprised that Jesus was dead already. He called the officer. And the officer told him that Jesus was dead. Then Pilate gave to Joseph authority to take and to bury the body.

Joseph took Jesus' body down from the cross. He would have needed help to do this. Then they wrapped Jesus in a cloth. And they put him in a new grave. Then they rolled a large stone across the entrance to the grave. The grave was in a garden that was near to Golgotha. Joseph had prepared that grave for himself. His workmen had dug the grave into the rock. These graves were like rooms in the rock. They were large enough for a person to walk in.

Nicodemus brought some *spices. Joseph and Nicodemus put *spices on the body to preserve it (John 19:39). Then they wrapped the body in strips of cloth.

Nicodemus was another member of the *Sanhedrin. He too was a secret *disciple of Jesus.

Verses 55-56 The *Jewish custom was to wrap a mixture of *spices and oils with the body. There was not time to prepare *spices in a proper way. The women followed Joseph to see where the grave was. Then they went away to prepare the necessary *spices. They did not come to the grave on the *Sabbath day. They needed to buy some *spices, which they could not do on the *Sabbath day (Mark 16:1). They intended to come after the *Sabbath to wrap the body in a proper manner. However, before the *Sabbath began, Nicodemus and Joseph had already begun to wrap the body with *spices.

Jesus is alive again – Luke 24:1-12

v1 On the first day of the week, while it was still very early, the women came to the grave. They brought the *spices that they had prepared. **v2** They found that someone had rolled the stone from the entrance to the grave. **v3** When they went in, they did not find the body of the *Lord Jesus. **v4** This was strange and they did not know what to think. Then two men appeared, who stood by them. The men wore clothes that shone like lightning. **v5** The women were very afraid and they bent down with their faces to the ground. But the men said to them, ‘Do not look here for Jesus. You will not find him who is alive among dead people. **v6** He is not here. He has risen from death. Remember what he told you in Galilee. **v7** He said, “Someone will hand over the Son of Man to *sinful people. They will *crucify him. But he will rise from death on the third day.” ’ **v8** Then the women remembered what Jesus had said.

v9 The women returned from the grave. And they reported all these things to the 11 *apostles and to all the other *disciples. **v10** The women were Mary *Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James. There were also other women with them. They told these things to the *apostles. **v11** Their words seemed like nonsense to them. So, they did not believe the women. **v12** But Peter got up and he ran to the grave. He bent down to look inside. He saw the grave cloths but nothing else. He went away. And he wondered what had happened.

Verses 1-8 The *Sabbath day was the 7th day of the week. It ended at sunset on the Saturday. Then the first day of the week started. But the women could not do much during the hours of darkness. Very early on Sunday morning at sunrise, the women came to the grave. They were Mary *Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome and perhaps other women. They had prepared *spices and they had come to place the *spices on Jesus' body.

They had discussed among themselves who could move the heavy stone from the grave (Mark 16:3). But there had been an *earthquake and an *angel had rolled the stone away (Matthew 28:2). So, when the women arrived, the grave was open. The women went into the grave but Jesus' body was not there. Instead, two men stood there. The clothes that the two men wore shone like lightning. They were *angels. The women were very afraid. And they fell down with their faces to the ground.

It seems that one of the *angels sat down on the right side of the grave (Mark 16:5). And he spoke to the women. He told them not to be afraid. He knew that they had come to find Jesus. He said that Jesus was not there. Jesus was not dead. He had been dead but now he was alive. The *angel invited the women to see where the body had been. He reminded them of what Jesus had said. Jesus had spoken about his death and that he would rise to life again (Matthew 16:21; Matthew 17:22-23; Luke 9:22; Luke 18:31-33). And the women remembered that Jesus had said this. Then the *angel told the women to go back to the *disciples. They must tell the *disciples that Jesus had risen from death. Jesus would go before them to Galilee and there they would see him.

Verses 9-12 It seems that Mary *Magdalene had been first at the grave. She discovered that Jesus' body was not there. She ran to tell Peter and John (John 20:1-2).

As the other women went to tell the *disciples, Jesus met them. He told them to tell the *disciples to go to Galilee. There the *disciples would see him (Matthew 28:9-10). This was what the *angels had already told them.

It seems that Mary *Magdalene went back to the grave and she wept there. She looked into the grave and she saw the two *angels there. They asked her why she wept. She answered them and then turned away. As she turned, she saw Jesus. But she did not know that it was Jesus. She thought that he was the gardener. Then Jesus called her name and she recognised Jesus. Afterwards she went to tell the *disciples about it (John 20:11-18).

The women told the 11 *apostles and all the other *disciples what had happened. Their report was so strange that the *apostles did not believe the women. The story sounded like nonsense to them. They did not expect Jesus to rise from death to life. But Peter and John ran to the grave. Peter looked into the grave and he saw the grave clothes. He went in. And he saw how the cloth for the head was separate from the rest of the grave clothes. If someone had removed the body, that person would not have left the clothes in the grave. This convinced John that Jesus' body had come out of those clothes (John 20:2-10). They went home and Peter wondered about these things.

The *disciples see that Jesus is alive – Luke 24:13-49

v13 On the same day, two of Jesus' *disciples were going to a village called Emmaus. It was about 7 miles (11 kilometres) from Jerusalem. **v14** They were talking to each other about all the things that had happened. **v15** They talked and they discussed these things. As they did that, Jesus himself came to them. And he walked with them. **v16** They saw him, but they were unable to recognise him.

v17 Jesus said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other? What are you talking about as you walk along?'

They stood still with sad faces. **v18** One of them called Cleopas said to him, 'You must be the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know about it. Do you not know about the things that have just happened there?'

v19 Jesus said to them, 'What things?'

They said to him, 'The things about Jesus from Nazareth. He was a *prophet. His deeds and his words were powerful in front of God and all the people. **v20** The chief priests and our leaders handed him over to the men who ordered his death. He died by *crucifixion. **v21** We were hoping that he was the *Christ. We hoped that he would soon free *Israel. But now, in addition to all these things, it is the third day since these things happened. **v22** Also, some of our women astonished us. They went to the grave early this morning. **v23** But they did not find his body there. They came back to us. They told us that they had seen a *vision of *angels. The *angels told them that Jesus is alive. **v24** Some of our men went to the grave and they found it empty. It was as the women had said. But those men did not see Jesus.'

v25 Then Jesus said to them, 'How foolish you are. You do not seem able to believe all that the *prophets said. **v26** They said that the *Christ must suffer these things. Then he would enter into his *glory.' **v27** And Jesus explained to them what all the *scriptures said about him. He began with the books of Moses and with all the *prophets to explain these things to them.

v28 They came near to the village to which the two were going. Jesus seemed to be going further. **v29** But they urged him, 'Stay with us. It is now late, and the day is almost over.' So, he went to stay with them.

v30 When Jesus was at the table with them, he took the bread. He thanked God for it. He broke the bread and he gave it to them. **v31** Then it was as if their eyes could see. They now recognised who he was. And he vanished from them. **v32** They said to each other, 'Our hearts seemed to burn inside us as he spoke to us on the way. That happened while he was explaining the *scriptures to us.'

v33 So, the two *disciples got up at once and they went back to Jerusalem. There they found the 11 *apostles together with some other *disciples. **v34** These told the two *disciples, 'It is true. The *Lord Jesus has risen from death to life. He has appeared to Simon.' **v35** Then the two *disciples told what had happened on the road. And they explained how they had recognised Jesus. They had recognised him when he broke the bread.

v36 As they said these things, Jesus himself stood among them. He said to them, '*Peace be with you.'

v37 The sight of him was a shock to them and it frightened them. They thought that they saw a spirit. **v38** Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid. Do not have doubts in your minds. **v39** Look at my hands and feet. You can see that it is really me. Touch me, and see for yourselves. A spirit does not have a physical body. But you can see that I do have a real body.'

v40 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. **v41** Still they could not believe it. They were so full of joy and surprise. So, he asked them, 'Do you have anything here to eat?' **v42** They gave him a piece of fish that someone had already cooked over the fire. **v43** Jesus took it and he ate it in front of them.

v44 He said to them, 'Remember. I told you about this while I was still with you. The books of Moses, the *prophets and the Psalms spoke about me. All that they said about me must happen.'

v45 Then he helped them to understand the *scriptures. **v46** He said to them, 'The *scriptures say this. The *Christ must suffer. Then he will rise from death on the third day. **v47** You must *preach the good news in his name. If people *repent, then God will forgive their *sins. *Preach this to all nations. And start in Jerusalem. **v48** You are witnesses of these things. **v49** I will send to you what my Father promised. Wait here in the city until you receive power from above.'

Verses 13-16 Afterwards on that same Sunday, two *disciples were walking to Emmaus. We do not know where Emmaus was. However, it was a village about 7 miles from Jerusalem. Perhaps they were going home after *Passover. One of the *disciples was Cleopas but Luke does not give to us the name of the other *disciple. We do not know whether the other *disciple was male or female. They could have been husband and wife, or two men.

These *disciples were discussing all that had happened. They had been there when the women came back from the grave. They heard that someone had moved the stone away and about the *angels. But they were sad and they felt confused by the events of the last few days. What had happened depressed them.

Jesus came up behind them from the direction of Jerusalem. And he joined them as they walked. However, they did not recognise him.

Verses 17-24 Jesus asked them what they were discussing. Then they stopped and they stood still. Their faces showed how unhappy they were. Cleopas turned to answer this stranger. What had happened in Jerusalem, in these few days, was so public. Everybody in Jerusalem except this man must have known about it.

Jesus asked what they were talking about. Then they told him about their hopes and disappointments. They believed that Jesus was a *prophet. They thought that he was more than a *prophet. What Jesus had said was clearly from God. Jesus had done many powerful deeds. They had seen the power of God in Jesus. Perhaps he was the *Christ who would free God's people from all their enemies. That was what they had hoped. But it seemed as if all of this had failed completely.

They told how the chief priests and the rulers had caused Jesus' death. The leaders had persuaded the *Romans to *crucify Jesus. All this happened three days ago. But that morning some women had been to the grave. The grave was empty and the body was not there. The women said that they had seen *angels. And the *angels said that Jesus was alive. The women surprised Jesus' *disciples by what they had said. So, some of the men went to the grave. We know that Peter and John went there. Maybe other men went as well. They saw that the grave was empty. But they did not see Jesus. What the women said seemed not to be real. Perhaps Cleopas thought that it was just a *vision.

Verses 25-27 Jesus replied to them. They ought to have believed all that the *prophets had said. Then they would have believed the women. They would have known that Jesus was alive. The *Old Testament tells about the life and death of the *Christ. Jesus said that the *scriptures were about him (John 5:39). The *prophets clearly told about his death. They spoke about the things that the *Christ must suffer. It was necessary for him to suffer and to die. Jesus came as a man in order to die because of the *sins of all people. God sent his Son for that purpose. After he had suffered, the *Christ must become alive again. Then he would enter into (receive) his *glory.

Jesus taught them about himself from the whole of the *Old Testament. He started with what Moses had written. Then he showed them about the *Christ in the books of the *prophets. 'Moses and the *prophets' means all of the *scriptures. But Jesus did not tell them at this time that he himself was the *Christ.

Verses 28-32 It was now late in the day and it would soon be dark. The two *disciples arrived at the place where they would stay that night. This may have been their home or the home of one of them. If so, it would have been the custom to invite this stranger to be their guest. But maybe it was a hotel. Jesus was not intending to stop there. If they had not asked him to stay, he would have gone further. What Jesus taught them had impressed the *disciples. So, they urged him to stay with them. Jesus agreed to stay and to eat with them.

The three of them sat down for a meal together. Usually the host would have taken the bread and he would have said a prayer of thanks to God. But Jesus took the place of the host. Now he was not a stranger or just the guest. He was the master. After the prayer of thanks to God, Jesus broke the bread. He gave the broken pieces to the two *disciples.

Jesus broke the bread and he gave it to them. And it was as if something opened their eyes. Perhaps they saw the nail marks in his hands for the first time. Maybe God chose that moment to show them that Jesus was his Son. However, now they knew that the stranger was Jesus. He really was alive again. As soon as they recognised him, he vanished from their sight.

Then the two *disciples remembered how they had felt. As Jesus taught them, it had a powerful effect on them. It seemed like warmth that glowed in their hearts. In other words, it was more than a feeling. As Jesus spoke, the *Holy Spirit was working powerfully upon them. And that brought about a great change in their minds. Now they knew that it was Jesus. He had explained the *scriptures to them. They understood that Jesus was the *Christ. All that had happened made sense to them now. In other words, the meaning of those recent events had become clear to them.

Verses 33-35 Their first reaction was that they must tell the other *disciples. They got up from the table at once. And they hurried back the 7 miles to Jerusalem. It would have been dark for most of the way. But that did not seem to bother them. In Jerusalem, they found the 11 *apostles, who had some other *disciples with them. When they arrived, the *apostles had news to tell them: 'Jesus is alive.' Jesus had met with Simon Peter. This happened the same day that Jesus rose from death. It was after the women had seen Jesus. And it was some time after Peter and John had been to the grave. Also, this proved the reality of what the women had said.

Then the two *disciples told their story. They told how Jesus had taught them on the way to Emmaus. But they had not known him until he broke the bread.

Verses 36-43 The 11 *apostles were all present that evening. But clearly, Thomas left the house before Jesus came. Thomas found it impossible to believe the reports that Jesus was alive. However, Thomas was there a week afterwards when Jesus came again. That was when, at last, Thomas believed (John 20:24-29).

Although Jesus was alive, the *disciples were afraid of the *Jewish leaders. They made sure that they had shut the doors. Nobody could come in unless one of the *disciples opened the doors from the inside. It was by now quite late at night. While they spoke about him, Jesus himself came there among them. This physical world could not limit his new body. He was able to appear when and where he chose.

His sudden appearance must have been quite a shock to them. Nobody had let Jesus in. He was just there in the room. He greeted them with the words, '*Peace be with you.' But they were afraid. They thought that he was a spirit. It could not really be Jesus.

Jesus told them not to be afraid. He proved that he was real and not just a spirit. He showed them the marks of the nails in his hands and feet. He invited them to touch him to prove that he had a physical body. The kind of spirit that they were afraid of would not have a real body like his.

They were so glad that they could not quite believe the truth. It was too wonderful to be true. As a final proof, Jesus asked for some food. They gave to him some fish. And Jesus ate it in front of them.

Verses 44-49 Jesus reminded his *disciples that he had told them about these things. He had told them many times about his death. He had taught them that he would rise again (9:22; 18:31-34). All that had happened to him was in the *scriptures. All that the *scriptures said about him must happen. Moses, the *prophets and the Psalms means the whole of the *Old Testament. Every part of the *scriptures tells us about Jesus.

Jesus had told them these things while he was with them. That was while he lived with them here, in this world. Now he was not with them all the time. Soon he would leave them. His body would not remain with them in this world.

As he had done on the road to Emmaus, now Jesus helped the *disciples to understand the *scriptures. He showed them from the *scriptures that the *Christ had to suffer. He showed them that the *Christ would rise from death. Now that this had happened, they must *preach this good news. They must tell people this *gospel. People must turn to Christ and they must *repent of their *sins. Then God will forgive them.

The *disciples must start to *preach this *gospel where they were, in Jerusalem. Then they must *preach it in all the nations of the world. This *gospel was for all people and not just the *Jews. This was a new idea for the *disciples. They must *preach in the name of the *Christ. That means that they must *preach with his authority.

The *disciples were in that room because they were afraid of the *Jewish leaders. They could not *preach the *gospel in their own strength. But God had promised to send the *Holy Spirit on his people (John 14:26). The *disciples would need the power of the *Holy Spirit to *preach the *gospel. So, Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem until they had received this power from God.

Jesus goes back to heaven – Luke 24:50-53

v50 Jesus led the *disciples out toward Bethany. He raised his hands and he blessed them. **v51** As he was blessing them, he left them. And he went up into heaven. **v52** The *disciples *worshipped Jesus. Then they returned to Jerusalem with much joy. **v53** They were constantly in the *temple, where they praised God.

It was 40 days afterwards that Jesus led his *disciples toward Bethany. Bethany was a village on the east slope of the *Mount of Olives. It was about two miles from Jerusalem. They did not go as far as the village called Bethany. They went about half way to the village. That distance of about a mile was called a *Sabbath day's journey (Acts 1:12).

Jesus raised his hands and he prayed over his friends. As he blessed them, he went up from them. As they watched, a cloud hid him from their sight (Acts 1:9-11). The *disciples would not see him again. This was the end of Jesus' work as a man on the earth. He is perfect God and perfect man, and he now has the place of greatest honour and *glory in heaven.

By this time, the *disciples clearly realised that Jesus is God. They *worshipped him. Jesus had gone from them. When he left them at Golgotha (the place of his death), they were sad. Now, as he left them to go to heaven, joy filled their hearts. And they returned to Jerusalem.

The *disciples went often to the *temple where they praised God. They remained in Jerusalem until the *Holy Spirit came upon them, about a week later (Acts chapter 2).

Word List for Section 4

angel ~ a servant of God from heaven. God made angels to serve him and to take his messages. So, angels are God's servants from heaven. But there are evil angels who opposed God. These evil angels now serve the devil.

apostle ~ someone whom God sends; especially one of the 12 men whom Jesus chose to be his helpers.

blasphemy ~ to say things against God; to curse and to insult God.

calf ~ a young cow that is up to one year old.

Christ ~ the Christ is the name for the person whom God would send to save his people. Jesus is the Christ and he was called Christ.

cock ~ a male chicken.

crucify ~ a *Roman method to kill as a punishment.
*Roman soldiers fixed the person to a cross of wood.

crucifixion ~ the act when the *Roman soldiers
*crucified a person.

cup ~ a word that Jesus used to describe his death.
Jesus probably used this word to refer to God's anger
against *sin.

disaster ~ when something very bad happens.

disciple ~ a person who follows a leader, especially
the 12 men that Jesus chose to be with him.

dough ~ bread before a person bakes it.

earthquake ~ when the earth shakes, that is an
earthquake.

Egyptians ~ people from Egypt.

emperor ~ like a king. The *Romans called their most
important ruler an emperor.

faith ~ trust in someone or something; belief and trust
in God and in Jesus Christ his Son.

feast ~ a time to eat and drink. The special times of
many *Jewish ceremonies are feasts.

glory ~ great honour and beauty.

gospel ~ the good news that God saves people from
*sin because of Jesus Christ.

Greek ~ the language in which the authors wrote the
*New Testament.

Hebrew ~ the language of the *Jews and of the *Old
Testament.

Holy Spirit ~ God's Spirit whom Jesus sent to help
his people. It is another name for God, also called the
Spirit of God, the Spirit of *Christ and the comforter.
The *Holy Spirit is a person but not human. He lives
and works for God. He is God, equal with God the
Father and with God the Son.

hypocrite ~ someone who pretends in order to give a
false impression to other people.

Israel ~ the country of the *Jews.

Israelites ~ *Jewish people.

Jewish ~ people or things that are from the *Jews.

Jews ~ people who were born from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the families of their children.

kingdom ~ the place or territory where a king rules. In the New Testament, this is nearly always the people over whom the king rules and not a territory on earth.

lamb ~ a young sheep.

Latin ~ the ancient language of Rome.

Lord ~ a title for God, or Jesus, to show that he is over all people and things. In the *Old Testament, LORD was a special name for God.

Magdalene ~ from a town called Magdala.

miracle ~ a powerful deed that seems to be against the normal laws of nature. Miracles showed God's power.

Mount of Olives ~ a hill near Jerusalem. 'Mount' means mountain; the olive is a type of tree.

New Testament ~ the last part of the Bible, which the writers wrote after the life of Jesus on earth.

Old Testament ~ the first part of the Bible; the holy things that the writers wrote before Jesus' birth.

paradise ~ 'paradise' came from the language called Persian where it meant a garden. The word began to refer to the place where God's people live with him after death.

Passover ~ annual ceremony to remember God's rescue of the *Jews from Egypt.

peace ~ the calm and content state that comes from a right relationship with God.

Pharisees ~ a group of *Jews who tried to obey all God's rules. Many of them did not approve of Jesus.

preach ~ to speak out the message from God and to teach his word.

prophecy ~ a message from God; a gift of the Holy Spirit.

prophecy ~ to speak a *prophecy.

prophet ~ person who speaks on behalf of God. A prophet can sometimes say what will happen in the future.

repent ~ to change the mind and the heart. To turn away from *sin and to turn to God. To turn the mind and heart away from *sin is to repent.

Roman ~ Rome was the capital city of the rulers at that time. Anything that belonged to Rome was Roman.

Sabbath ~ the 7th day of the week which was special to the *Jews as a holy day.

salvation ~ the result when God saves us from *sin and punishment; the new life that God gives to those people who believe in the *Lord Jesus.

sandal ~ a shoe with a piece of leather underneath and leather pieces to fit to the foot.

Sanhedrin ~ a group of 71 leaders under the chief priest who were the *Jewish government.

Satan ~ the name of the devil.

scriptures ~ the books of the Bible.

sin ~ sin is the wrong things that we do. To sin is to do wrong, bad or evil deeds and not to obey God.

sinful ~ a person who *sins is sinful.

skull ~ the bones in a head.

spices ~ a sweet substance or a substance with a strong smell.

temple ~ a special building for the *worship of God. The *Jews had a temple in Jerusalem for the *worship of the real God. But at other temples, people *worshipped false gods.

thorns ~ sharp hard points on a tree or bush.

throne ~ the special chair for the king or for an important person.

tribe ~ a large family of people who have come from the same person. The nation called *Israel grew from the 12 sons of Jacob. Their 12 families became the 12 tribes of *Israel.

trumpet ~ a musical instrument that makes a loud noise when someone blows into it.

unleavened bread ~ bread that someone has made without *yeast.

vision ~ like a dream. During a vision, a person seems to see something that has a special message or meaning for him. The person may or may not be asleep when he sees the vision.

worship ~ the act when someone shows honour to God (or to a false god). Someone who worships, praises God. That person thanks God. And that person respects God.

yeast ~ a substance that makes bread rise before someone bakes it.