

Helping Our Children Present Jesus as the Son of Man Part 3

**Growing Godly Families Series
Manual 25**

by
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Luke

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The “Growing Godly Families Series” is the result of weekly topics which were prepared and e-mailed over a period of years. This series is especially designed for those who are already Christian leaders; to give them Biblical principles for the development of additional godly spiritual leaders. Because they give Biblical principles for growth in spiritual leadership, they are also helpful for Christians that want to grow and become godly spiritual leaders.

Mark 10:43-45 says, “Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” In these verses, Christ taught that godly spiritual leaders do not have the attitudes of leaders in the world. Worldly leadership is based on power and authority and is designed to benefit the leader and place him above others. In contrast, godly spiritual leadership is designed to help every Christian reach their full potential in Christ. The following three statements give a summary of three styles of leadership.

If we drive people, we will drive them until they can get out of our way.

If we lead people, we will be able to lead them as far as we have gone ourselves.

If we serve people, we will help each person develop their full God-given potential and equip each person for the ministry that Christ has prepared for every Christian.

In the world, people often measure success by the amount of things that they accumulate before they die. However, they are unable to take any of those things with them when they die. Mark 8:36-37 says, “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” Success produces rewards until we die, but it produces nothing for eternity.

In contrast, God measures effectiveness by our faithfulness and obedience. Matthew 6:19-21 says, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Effectiveness produces eternal rewards. Mark 10:29-30 says, “So Jesus answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time--houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions--and in the age to come, eternal life.’” 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” The Growing Godly Families Series is designed to make your life count for eternity by bringing glory to God.

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Jesus Taught About Forgiveness

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to explain to others that there is a judgment that faces all those who reject Jesus. We saw that Jesus gave a warning to the Pharisees by telling them what had happened to both Lazarus and the rich man when they died. Lazarus believed and received life. The rich man rejected and received judgment. As we come to our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus taught His disciples about the importance of forgiving others.

Jesus taught the disciples what to do when a brother sins against them. We see that they were told to rebuke but they were also told to forgive. Luke 17:1-4 says, "Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him." Jesus began by warning that offenses would come.

The word translated "offences" means anything placed in the way of another person causing that person to stumble or fall. Romans 14:13 says, "Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way." In this verse, the word is translated a cause to fall. In the world people will try to cause Christians to stumble or try to cause us to fall. However, here we see that as Christians we are not to judge or do anything that would cause a brother to stumble or to fall. Jesus made it clear that there will be grief to the Christian who places an obstacle or causes another Christian to stumble. Christ said that was especially true if a Christian would hinder or offend a young or weak Christian.

However, there will be times when other Christians do judge us or place obstacles in our way. In some cases a brother will sin against us in ways that can be very painful. We are told what to do when a Christian does sin against us. We are told to rebuke the other Christian. The word translated "rebuke" is the opposite of honor. Instead of complaining or talking to others about the person, we are to speak directly to the person in love and explain the sin that the person has committed against us. We are then to give the person the opportunity to repent. The word translated "repent" means to change one's mind or purpose for the better. When used of one who is not a Christian, it means to turn from sin and to turn to God. When used of a Christian, it means that the person makes the choice to ask the person against whom he or she has sinned for forgiveness.

Jesus told the disciples that if they rebuked a person and that person repented that they were to forgive the person. The word translated "forgive" means to let go or to send away. When Jesus forgave our sins, He removed them as far as the east is from the west, He buried them in the depths of the sea, He blotted them out and He promised that He will remember them no more. In the same way, true forgiveness means that we will not hold that thing against that person any longer. In fact Jesus said that if a person sins against us seven times in a day and returns to say that he has repented that we are to forgive the person each time.

This is extremely important for both the other person and for us because that is what makes it possible to keep the unity of the body of Christ. Jesus told Peter in Matthew 18:21-22, "Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive

him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven." Here we see that Jesus made it clear that we are to continue to forgive each time a person repents.

When Jesus told the disciples to forgive even if it meant forgiving seven times in one day, we see the response of the disciples in Luke 17:5-6 where we read, "And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you." Many of the rabbis taught the Jews that it was not necessary to forgive a person more than three times. As a result, the teaching of Jesus was radically different from that of the Jewish rabbis when Jesus told the apostles that they should forgive a person that repented seven times in a single day. That is why they asked Jesus to increase their faith.

Jesus answered their statement by using the mustard seed as an illustration. Jesus described a mustard seed in Mark 4:31-32 where we read, "It is like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade." A mustard seed was the smallest seed that the Jews planted. However, that seed produced a bush that might grow to between ten and fifteen feet high and have large enough branches for a bird to build its nest on them. Our faith may be small but if that faith is in a big God, He can do all things in us and through us that He chooses to do. If our faith is in God, He can and will do what is impossible for us to do.

Jesus went on to give an illustration of the fact that it is our duty to ask Him for the strength to forgive other Christians when they sin against us. Luke 17:7-10 says, "And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'? But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'? Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'"

The word translated "servant" is the word for a bondservant. This is a word that Paul frequently used. In Philippians 1:1 we read, "Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." Paul called he and Timothy bondservants of Jesus Christ. Then in 2 Timothy 2:24-26 we read, "And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will." Here we see the attitude that we are to have when we rebuke a brother because this is the kind of attitude that will keep the unity of the faith.

Since we are also bondservants of Jesus that is why Jesus gave the illustration of a bondservant who came in from working in the field. A bondservant may have been working out in the field all day or been herding the sheep all day. Since that person is a bondservant (slave) he did not expect his master to have supper ready for him when he came in from the field. Instead, a slave expected the master to tell him to prepare supper for his master. The slave was expected to feed his master first before he even thought about his own need for food. Only after the master was satisfied could the slave go and prepare his own supper.

The slave did not expect the master to thank him for preparing and serving the meal. Jesus wanted the disciples in that day and we who are followers of Jesus today to realize that we are to be obedient servants. As Christians, we can look forward to eternal rewards as we follow the

instructions of 1 Corinthians 10:31, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” Meanwhile on this earth we do not need any special honor to motivate us to carry out the work that the Lord has called us to do. Instead, our motivation for serving the Lord is explained in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 where we read, “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” It is the love of Christ that He has shown for us that motivates us and not the desire for honor in this world.

The word translated “was our duty” means what we ought to do or what we owe. The word is translated ought in John 13:14 where we read, “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.” In this verse, Jesus explained to the disciples that it was their and our duty to serve one another as Christians. In Romans 15:1 we read, “We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.” In this verse, we see that as stronger Christians we are to be patient with those who are weaker Christians as a part of our ministry to them. Ephesians 5:28 says, “So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.” This verse makes it clear that it is the duty of the husband to love his wife as he loves his own body. Finally 1 John 4:11 says, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” The reason that we realize that it is our duty to love one another is due to the fact that God has already shown that love to us.

Jesus taught us that we are to forgive one another and love one another. In the same way we want to show our physical and spiritual children by our example the importance of forgiving and loving others. They will learn to forgive and love as they see our example of forgiveness and love. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to forgive and how to love as God loved us.

Jesus Cleansed Ten Lepers

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to forgive one another. We also saw that we want to show our children by our example the importance of being obedient servants to Jesus. We are to do that in love because He chose to first show His love to us. In our topic today, we will see that Jesus healed ten lepers. Then he used the actions of one of those lepers to show us the importance of having a thankful attitude.

We saw several chapters ago that Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem. He made a quick trip to Bethany which was close to Jerusalem to raise Lazarus from the dead. Because the Jewish religious leaders then wanted to kill Jesus, He went out into the wilderness to a city named Ephraim. This was probably on the boundary of Judea and Samaria. Now in our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus makes one final extended trip on His way to Jerusalem. Luke 17:11-13 says, "Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" Here we see that Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem from the wilderness but that He passed through Samaria and Galilee again on the way to Jerusalem which means He went north before He went south.

It was probably as Jesus traveled north and was near the border of Samaria and Galilee that Jesus entered the particular village mentioned in these verses. As Jesus came close to that village He met a group of men that were lepers. God had given instructions about what a person was to do if that person had leprosy. Leviticus 13:45-46 says, "Now the leper on whom the sore is, his clothes shall be torn and his head bare; and he shall cover his mustache, and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!' He shall be unclean. All the days he has the sore he shall be unclean. He is unclean, and he shall dwell alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp." As a result, these lepers could not live in the village. That is also why they had to stand at a distance and shout to Jesus.

These men had apparently heard that Jesus had healed the sick and cleansed the lepers. As a result, they began to cry with loud voices to Jesus. They said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" This particular word translated "master" was used only by Luke in the New Testament. It meant one who was a chief, a commander or an overseer and spoke about the authority of a person. It is the word that the disciples used when speaking to Jesus during the storm in Luke 8:24 where we read, "And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm." In this case the disciples recognized that Jesus had authority over the storm. Since these lepers had probably heard that Jesus had healed other lepers, they realized that He had the authority to heal them of their leprosy.

These lepers asked Jesus to have mercy on them. They knew that there was no help for their condition unless they found someone who had authority over leprosy and they knew that Jesus had that authority. That is why they begged Him to show mercy to them. Jesus responded and told them in Luke 17:14, "So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed." Any person that had leprosy had to be declared clean by the priests if the person was cleansed. Leviticus 14:2-3, 7 says, "This shall be the law of the leper for the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the priest. And the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall examine him; and indeed, if the leprosy is healed in the leper... And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed from

the leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose in the open field.” Then the leper also had to offer certain sacrifices.

Jesus just told the lepers, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” Jesus chose to heal people in many different ways. In this case these lepers were cleansed as they were on their way to the priests. We will see that Jesus had a particular reason for causing them to be suddenly healed while they were on their way to see the priests in the next few verses. Jesus had explained to a leper early in His ministry why He was to go show himself to the priests. Luke 5:14 says, “And He charged him to tell no one, “But go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as a testimony to them, just as Moses commanded.” The reason the lepers were to go and show themselves to the priests and offer a sacrifice for their cleansing was due to the fact that was what Moses had commanded in the book of Leviticus but also as a testimony to the priests.

The lepers were obedient to the statement of Jesus and they were healed as they were on their way to the priests. The word translated “cleansed” means to make clean, to pronounce clean or free from the defilement or guilt of sin. In this case we see that all ten of the lepers were made clean from the leprosy that had affected their bodies. This is the way that the word is used in Matthew 11:5 where we read, “The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.” Jesus provided physical healing to many lepers during the time of His ministry.

However, that did not mean that all of those who were healed of leprosy were also made clean from the defilement and guilt of sin. That only happened to those lepers who also showed true repentance for their sins. The leper in Luke 5:12 showed an attitude of true repentance when Jesus healed him. That verse says, “And it happened when He was in a certain city, that behold, a man who was full of leprosy saw Jesus; and he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”” Here we see that He recognized Jesus as Lord and fell on his face and begged Jesus to heal him.

We go on to read here in Luke 17:15-19, “And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, “Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?” And He said to him, “Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.”” Here we see that one of the ten that was healed also received spiritual healing from the defilement and guilt for sin.

There are two things about this former leper that showed that he had true repentance and had placed his faith in Jesus. First, we see that he glorified God with a loud voice. This man was not ashamed to give glory to God for what the Lord had done in his life. 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” This man recognized that it was God who had healed him.

Second, we see that he was thankful and expressed His thanks to Jesus. Ephesians 5:20 says, “Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The giving of thanks is not common in the lives of those who are not Christians. However, it is the will of God for us to give thanks. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says, “In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” Even though this verse was not yet written at the time this man returned to give thanks, he recognized that the Lord had changed his life and he wanted to give thanks.

We also see that this man was a Samaritan. Since Jesus had told the ten men to go show

themselves to the priests, most of them were Jews. The Jews as a whole did not respect or show kindness to the Samaritans. Here we see that Jesus had the same love for the Samaritans that He had for people of any group including the Jews. Jesus had shown this love for the Samaritans early in His ministry when He purposely chose to go through Samaria to give some Samaritans eternal life. John 4:4 says, "But He needed to go through Samaria." The result of that trip is seen in John 4:41-42 where we read, "And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.""

Jesus has a great love for people of every ethnic group in the world.

Jesus asked three very important questions when He said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" Here we see that the nine were only concerned for their own physical healing and they did not even think about giving thanks. In contrast, Jesus told the Samaritan that he had received both physical and spiritual healing. Jesus said that his faith had made him well. The word translated "well" is the word that is usually translated save. Matthew 1:21 says, "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Here we see that the promise was given that Jesus would save His people from their sins. We will see that Jesus again used this word in Luke 19:9-10 where we read, "And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." Jesus came to save and give spiritual healing.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that Jesus came to give spiritual life to all who would receive it. Nine lepers received physical healing but no spiritual life. In contrast, this Samaritan received both physical healing and spiritual life. As we help our children to understand the real purpose that Jesus came, we will help them learn to explain to others how to have spiritual life. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip your children to share the message of life with others.

Jesus Taught about the Kingdom

In our last topic, we saw that we want to teach our physical and spiritual children the importance of being thankful for what Jesus has done in their lives. Jesus healed ten lepers and only the Samaritan returned to give thanks to Jesus. We saw that Jesus told him that he had received spiritual life as well as physical healing. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus answered a question of some Pharisees who asked when the kingdom of God would come.

In Luke 17:20-24 we read, “Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." Then He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. And they will say to you, 'Look here!' or 'Look there!' Do not go after them or follow them. For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day.” The Pharisees and many of the other Jews were looking for the Messiah to come and set up the kingdom of God.

However, they were thinking of a political kingdom. They wanted a Messiah who would come and conquer the Romans and set up a kingdom on this earth. Jesus told the Pharisees that they would not see such a kingdom during their time. Instead, Jesus said that the kingdom of God is within. We will see that Jesus does answer the questions of His disciples about a future kingdom but at that time He told the Pharisees that His plan for the present was a very different kind of kingdom. Jesus had told Nicodemus what was necessary to enter the kingdom of God when He said in John 3:5, “Jesus answered, Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” Here we see that Jesus said that the kingdom of God is only for those who have spiritual life. That is why Romans 14:17 says, “For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

Jesus later explained to His disciples some of the things that would happen in the future on the earth before Jesus sets up the earthly kingdom promised in Revelation 20:1-6. Jesus said that the days would come in the future when the ones who trust in Jesus will long for Him to return to the earth. In that day there will be many false leaders who will tell the people to look here or there for the Son of Man. Jesus warned in Matthew 24:23-24, “Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” Jesus said not to be deceived and follow such false leaders. Jesus said that the true coming of the Son of Man will be as sudden as a flash of lightning. No one will be able to prepare when He comes because His coming is sudden.

Jesus went on to explain to His disciples that He must first be rejected. Luke 17:25-30 says, “But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.” Jesus said that the thing that was going to happen in

His life was that He would be rejected by that very generation. This rejection had been predicted by Isaiah. Isaiah 53:3 says, "He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him." Jesus knew that His rejection was coming very soon.

Then Jesus went on to say that at the time of the coming of the Son of Man to rule that the world would be like it was in the days of Noah. Genesis 6:5 describes the days of Noah when that verse says, "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Here we see that the hearts of the people were filled with evil. At the same time the people in the days of Noah were making no preparation for the future. Matthew 24:37-39 says, "But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. They were doing all the things of normal life when suddenly the flood came and destroyed them all.

The same thing happened in the time of Lot. The people of Sodom were doing all of the normal things that people do in their lives. However, that suddenly changed the day the angel took Lot out of the city of Sodom. Genesis 19:23-25 says, "The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar. Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens. So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground." Jesus said that just as people were unprepared in both the time of Noah and the time of Lot, that people would be unprepared on the day when the Son of Man is revealed to rule.

That is why Jesus went on to talk about the need for people to be prepared. Luke 17:31-37 says, "In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left." And they answered and said to Him, "Where, Lord?" So He said to them, "Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.""

When the antichrist sets up his image in the temple, the Jews will not have time to prepare for persecution. Matthew 24:15-18 says, "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes." We see that the Jews will have no time to get ready when the antichrist sets up his image in the temple.

That is why Jesus told the disciples to remember Lot's wife. Genesis 19:24-26 says, "Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens. So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt." Lot, his wife and two daughters were fleeing from the judgment that God brought on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot's wife paused just long enough to look back and as a result she did not escape the judgment but was destroyed with Sodom. The same thing will happen to any Jews who hesitate when the antichrist sets up his image in the temple.

When the antichrist sets up his image in the temple people will be required to take the mark of the antichrist in order to be able to buy food. Revelation 13:16-18 says, "He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666." Most people will take that mark because they think that the mark will save their lives. Instead all who take that mark will experience eternal judgment. God spoke through John in Revelation 14:9-10 and warned, "Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb." That judgment will face all who take the mark of the antichrist.

When Jesus comes to rule in the earthly kingdom this judgment will come on all unbelievers on the earth. Those who are prepared for His coming will be left on the earth to enter into His earthly kingdom. Those who are unprepared will experience eternal judgment. The disciples asked when that time would come that the unbelievers would be taken off the earth. Jesus said that the time of that sudden judgment will happen when the eagles gather where the body is. Matthew 24:28-30 says, "For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Jesus will come at the very time when the antichrist is ready to completely destroy all Jews that still remain on the earth. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the need to warn all people of the need to be ready because each of these things will happen suddenly and there will be no time to prepare. People must be prepared in advance because they will have no time to prepare when judgment comes. May the Lord richly bless you as you help you children learn to warn others to be prepared at all times.

Jesus Taught about Prayer

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to explain to others the need to be prepared at all times. Those who prepare will be ready when Jesus comes to take the church to heaven at the rapture. After the rapture the earth will experience the tribulation described in Revelation 6-19. Those who have never heard will have the opportunity to believe during the tribulation so that they can be ready when Jesus returns to rule in an earthly kingdom. In this topic we are going to see that Jesus taught His disciples some key lessons about prayer.

Jesus had just taught the disciples about difficult times coming in the future and so He wanted to teach them several lessons about prayer. Luke 18:1-6 says, “Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'” “Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said.” Jesus wanted the disciples to understand the importance of prayer.

The word translated “ought” means it is necessary or it is right. The word translated “faint” means to be utterly spiritless or to be exhausted. Here we see that Jesus made it clear to the disciples that it was right for them to pray so that they would not be exhausted and spiritless. The same is true for us in our lives. When we depend on our strength, we will be spiritless or exhausted. When we pray and ask the Lord for His strength we are able to act in the power of the Holy Spirit. To illustrate the fact that God would hear them and give them strength, Jesus told a parable about an unjust judge.

The judge did not fear God and he did not respect people. This meant that this judge was a very evil man. In contrast, Jesus wanted the disciples to know that God would hear them and answer their prayers. One day a widow came to this evil judge. She asked him to give her justice from her adversary. The word translated “get justice” means to defend. An adversary was a person that was an opponent in a lawsuit or an enemy. At first the evil judge did not want to give the widow justice from her enemy. Later we see that he changed his mind and we are given the reason that he changed his mind. He changed his mind because the woman kept coming back to him with her request. Then the evil judge decided that even though he did not fear God or respect people that he would honor the request of this widow so that she would stop bothering him. Jesus wanted the disciples to hear what the evil judge did even though he was evil.

In contrast, the next verses go on to tell us what God will do when we pray. Luke 18:7-8 say, “And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” Here we see that God will certainly defend His elect who are crying out in prayer to Him day and night. Here we see that God will judge evil people even though He is very patient with those who are evil.

In 2 Peter 3:8-9 we read, “But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” Here we see why God is so patient. He waits a

long time to bring judgment on unbelievers because it is His desire that they would come to repentance. However, once God is ready to bring judgment on the unbelievers, that judgment will be very swift.

We saw in our last topic that Jesus said that the time of His coming would be like the time of Noah. That is why Jesus asked here if He will really find faith on the earth when He comes. In 2 Timothy 3:1-5 we see that many will live to please themselves rather than turning to Jesus prior to His coming. Those verses say, “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!” Later in that same chapter we read in 2 Timothy 3:12, “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” When people turn away from God Christians need to be prepared for persecution because we see that persecution will come. That is why the Son of Man will act swiftly when He does come to judge.

Jesus went on to give a parable to show the difference between false prayers and genuine prayer. Luke 18:9-14 says, “Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” Jesus had told the Pharisees in chapter 17 that the kingdom of God in their time would be in the hearts of people. In this parable Jesus gave a warning to the Pharisees about their false prayers.

Jesus knew that many of the Pharisees that heard Him were people who trusted in themselves. They thought that their lives were right in the sight of God and that they would be accepted by Him because they taught the commandments of God. At the same time they despised other people especially the tax collectors and sinners. The word translated “despised” means to treat with contempt or to despise completely. This same word is used in Luke 23:11 where the soldiers of Herod mocked Jesus. That verse says, “Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate.” These Pharisees felt the same way toward tax collectors and sinners as they felt toward Jesus.

In this parable we see that Jesus made it very clear that pride is just as sinful as any other sin and is the sin of those who think that they can earn their salvation and become righteous in the sight of God. In this parable Jesus identified the two groups of people so that there would be no question about what Jesus taught that day. Jesus said that a Pharisee and a tax collector both went to the temple to pray. The prayer of the Pharisee is given first. Jesus chose to say that the Pharisee prayed a prayer about himself. This Pharisee mentions nothing about his own sin. Instead, he tries to tell God that he should be accepted into heaven because of his own works to earn his salvation.

First, the prayer of the Pharisee told everyone who could hear him pray that he did not think that he was a sinner. He said that he was not like other men. He was not an extortioner – a robber who robs in a different way than the average robber. He said that he was not unjust – one who is sinful or unrighteous. He said that he was not an adulterer – one who commits

sexual sin or who is faithless toward God. He said that he was not like the tax collector. Here we see that this Pharisee had a very good opinion of himself. Second the prayer of the Pharisee told everyone who could hear him the works that he was doing that he thought would earn him salvation. He said that he fasted (abstained from food) two days each week. He said that he paid a tithe (10%) of all that he earned or acquired. It was very clear that he thought that he did more than God required.

In contrast, the tax collector stood a great distance from the temple. He did not even raise his eyes toward heaven. The word translated "lift up" means to raise up or to exalt one's self. He also struck himself on the chest. Then he said, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" This man realized that he needed the mercy of God because he knew that he was a sinner. The word translated "be merciful" means to make propitiation or to be satisfied. He knew that because of his sin that he needed a sacrifice that would satisfy God to take away his sin. He also knew that there was nothing in his life that would provide that satisfaction. He knew that he needed someone that would pay the penalty for his sin so that God could deal with him in mercy. Jesus was the One who paid his penalty

Jesus told those who were there that day that the man who was a sinner was able to go to his home justified rather than the Pharisee who thought that his own efforts would satisfy God. The sinner was declared righteous in the sight of God while the Pharisee took his sins home with him. Jesus said that any person that exalts himself will be humbled. That meant that all those who exalt themselves continue to face eternal judgment. In contrast, Jesus said that any person who humbles himself will be exalted. God said that those who humble themselves will be raised to a place of honor by God.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others what Jesus taught about prayer. God will hear and answer the prayers of those who accept the payment of Jesus for their sins and come to the Father with humility. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand the attitude that God desires.

Jesus Taught the Danger of Riches

We saw in our last topic that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the attitude that God wants us to have as we come to Him in prayer. God will always hear the prayer of those who humble themselves and come to Him asking Him to show mercy. He will not hear those who think that they can earn their salvation by their own works. In this topic we will see that Jesus also gave a warning about those who try to depend on their riches.

As Jesus was getting near the time of His death, there were many areas of ministry that Jesus wanted to make sure that His disciples understood. One of the things that Jesus wanted to teach them was the importance of little children. Luke 18:15-17 says, "Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to Him and said, 'Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.'" The word translated "infants" speaks of a newborn child or a baby. In Luke 1:41 and 1:44 the word is used to speak of John the Baptist before his birth. In Luke 2:12 the word is used to speak of Jesus at the time of His birth. It is used in a spiritual sense in 1 Peter 2:2 where we read, "As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" In this verse, we see that the word speaks of new Christians.

Many of the Jews did not think that young children were important. As a result, the disciples rebuked the parents who brought these infants so that Jesus could touch them. Jesus used that opportunity to teach the disciples the importance of young children when He said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God." Then Jesus said that all people had to have the same kind of faith that a very young child has in order to enter the kingdom of God. A very young child cannot do any works. However, even infants give us an example of faith because they learn to trust a loving parent at a very early age. In the same way it is that childlike faith that is pleasing to God. We will see that lacking in the next event in these verses.

Luke 18:18-23 says, "Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, 'Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?'" So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'" And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth." So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich." We see a little more about this ruler in Mark 10:17 where we read, "Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, 'Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?'" Since this man was very rich, he had probably received much of his wealth by inheritance and thought he could inherit eternal life.

Jesus began His answer by asking an important question, "Why do you call Me good?" The word translated "good" means that which is good in its nature and beneficial in its effects. Jesus wanted to make it clear to this ruler that God is the only One that can be called good. The Ten Commandments divide into two sections. The first section talks about the relationship of man to God. The second section talks about the relationship of man to man. We see that Jesus only asked the ruler about the second section of the law. This ruler had so deceived himself that he thought that he had kept the part about his relationship to others perfectly from the time of

his youth.

Jesus chose not to challenge the ruler regarding his relationship with other men. Instead, since Jesus knew that his riches were his god, Jesus told him to get rid of his god of riches, distribute that money to the poor and come and follow Jesus. Suddenly the ruler had to make a choice. 1 Timothy 6:9-10 say, "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." This ruler wanted earthly riches and gave no thought to spiritual riches.

Suddenly that thought changed his whole way of thinking. We read that he became very sorrowful. The word translated "very sorrowful" means to be filled with sorrow. Jesus used this word when He asked the disciples to pray with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus left part of the disciples near the entry to the Garden. Then Mark 14:32-34 says, "Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray." And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch." Here we see that this sorrow of Jesus was so great that He compared it to death. Jesus was teaching this young man that he could not serve two masters. Either God would be his master of riches would be his master. This made the choice very difficult for the ruler because he was very rich.

We see that the ruler had to make his choice. Mark 8:36-37 says, "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" The rich ruler made his choice. Mark 10:22 says, "But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." In his sorrow the ruler chose to follow his riches and in making that choice also made the choice not to follow Jesus. He made a choice that had eternal consequences.

Jesus then used this opportunity to explain the danger that faces the rich. Jesus said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" Many people today are deceived in the same way that this young ruler was deceived. In fact many today teach that riches are a sign of God's blessing. That was the same attitude that the Pharisees and religious leaders had in the time of Jesus. That is why Jesus said in Matthew 6:24, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (riches)." Many of those who teach that riches are a sign of God's blessing have deceived themselves in our day just as the Pharisees deceived themselves in the time of Jesus. Such individuals have made riches their god.

Jesus went on to describe what He meant by His statement that it is hard for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God. Jesus said, "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Here we see that Jesus made it very clear that it is completely impossible for anyone to be saved by their riches or their works. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." Romans 3:19-20 add, "Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin." No riches and no works can ever pay or earn the way of anyone into heaven.

Those who heard Jesus say this immediately asked, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus responded by saying that the things that are impossible with man are possible with God. That is why the

verse in the previous paragraph says that we must be saved by God. Instead of being saved by the Law, we see that the Law brings a curse because it shows that all are guilty before God. That is why Galatians 3:13-14 tell us, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Here we are reminded that salvation can only be received through faith.

Peter had been listening to all that Jesus said and now asked his question. Peter said, "See, we have left all and followed You." Peter and the other disciples had done just exactly what Jesus told the rich ruler to do. Jesus said that all those who make that choice will receive both present and future blessing. Jesus said that those who have followed Jesus and made sacrifices on this earth will receive many times more in this present time. The blessings that Jesus gives on this earth are spiritual blessings rather than material blessings. For example, Jesus will give us spiritual children in addition to our physical children. Paul said in Philemon 1:10, "I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains." Here we see that Onesimus became one of the many spiritual children that the Lord gave to Paul.

Jesus also said that all those who follow Him will receive eternal life in the age to come. Romans 8:16-17 say, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together." Here we see that in addition to eternal life that we also become joint heirs with Jesus and will share the riches of God throughout all eternity. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that God gives us much greater blessing than any earthly riches could ever give either in this age or in the age to come. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to understand these eternal blessings that God has promised to us.

Jesus Restored the Sight of a Blind Man

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the much greater value of spiritual riches than earthly riches. The riches of this world keep many people from following Jesus because such people have the same focus in their lives that the rich young ruler had in his life. Such people have to make the choice whether to follow Jesus or to follow their riches. They also need to understand that the choice they make will have eternal consequences. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus restored the sight of a blind man.

Jesus and His disciples were getting very close to the city of Jerusalem. As a result, Jesus took the twelve aside and told them what would happen to Him when they went to Jerusalem. Luke 18:31-34 says, "Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished. For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. They will scourge Him and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again." But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know the things which were spoken." Here we see that Jesus explained to His disciples again what was going to happen to Him at Jerusalem. Again we will see that they did not understand. However, it was important for Jesus to tell them because He knew that they would understand when He explained these things to them after the resurrection.

Jesus explained to the disciples that they would soon be in Jerusalem. There Jesus said that He would fulfill the things that had been written by the prophets about what would happen to the Son of Man. The word translated "shall be accomplished" means to bring to a close, to finish or to end. Jesus would say just a short time later in John 19:30 as He hung on the cross, "It is finished". When Jesus spoke those words, He had accomplished the payment for our sin so that we could receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Jesus said that first the Son of Man must be delivered to the Gentiles who would mock Him, insult Him and spit upon Him. Mark 15:16-19 describes how these statements were fulfilled. Those verses say, "Then the soldiers led Him away into the hall called Praetorium, and they called together the whole garrison. And they clothed Him with purple; and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it on His head, and began to salute Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Then they struck Him on the head with a reed and spat on Him; and bowing the knee, they worshiped Him."

Next Jesus said that the Gentiles would scourge Him and kill Him. The scourging is recorded in John 19:1 where we read, "So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him." Then Luke 23:32-33 says, "There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left." However, Jesus also promised that He would fulfill the Word of God by rising again on the third day. In Luke 24:6-8 we read, "He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.' " And they remembered His words." The disciples did not come to an understanding of what the Scriptures had said until the evening of the day Jesus rose from the dead. Luke 24:45 says, "And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures." It was only after Jesus explained what the Scriptures taught that the disciples understood.

At Jesus and His disciples were walking along the road on their way to Jerusalem they were getting close to the city of Jericho. There Jesus had a blind man cry to Him for mercy. Luke

18:35-39 says, "Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" In the time of Jesus those who were blind or crippled had no way to support themselves except by begging. Such individuals would often sit alongside a road that had many people pass by and beg.

A blind man was sitting close to the road that Jesus was taking. The blind man was near the city of Jericho. Mark 10:46 says, "Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging." Here we see that the name of this man was Bartimaeus. He was begging in order to survive. He heard a large crowd passing by the place where he was sitting. Bartimaeus asked someone why there were so many people all traveling together. He was told that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by that place and a large crowd was with Him. Bartimaeus immediately began to cry out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Here we see that Bartimaeus had been hearing many things about Jesus over the previous three years so he knew about Jesus.

Bartimaeus recognized that Jesus was the Son of David. Psalm 132:11-12 says, "The Lord has sworn in truth to David; He will not turn from it: "I will set upon your throne the fruit of your body. If your sons will keep My covenant and My testimony which I shall teach them, their sons also shall sit upon your throne forevermore." The Jews recognized that One from the family of David would sit on the throne forever. As a result, each of those who called Jesus "son of David" recognized that Jesus was the promised Messiah who would sit on that throne. That was why Bartimaeus recognized that Jesus could help him and show mercy to him because Bartimaeus recognized Jesus as the Messiah.

The people who were walking in front of Jesus immediately told Bartimaeus to keep quiet. We see that these people had no concern for the physical or spiritual need of Bartimaeus. They just did not want to be bothered as they walked along the road. Here we see a common attitude when people lack compassion. In contrast, Jesus was moved with compassion because He saw both the physical and spiritual needs of people. Matthew 9:36 says, "But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd." Instead of causing him to become quiet, that only caused Bartimaeus to cry out even louder. He recognized that Jesus was the Messiah.

We go on to read what Jesus did to help Bartimaeus because of His compassion. Luke 18 40-43 says, "So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God." Jesus immediately stood still and asked the people there to bring Bartimaeus to Him. Jesus knew that Bartimaeus recognized Him as the Messiah and He wanted others to recognize that Bartimaeus was showing true faith.

Jesus began His discussion with Bartimaeus by asking him the question, "What do you want Me to do for you?" Jesus knew that his answer would reveal his faith to the crowd traveling with Jesus. Bartimaeus answered, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." The word translated "Lord" means the one to whom a person or thing belongs. It was a title that the Jews commonly used to refer to God or to the Messiah. In fact in the New Testament this title is used to refer to Jesus or to the Father a total of 667 times. The fact that Bartimaeus used this title spoke of His faith and showed that He recognized Jesus as the promised Messiah.

After recognizing Jesus as Lord, Bartimaeus went on to tell Jesus his request as he requested that he might receive his sight. Jesus wanted all of the people who heard him that day to recognize the faith of Bartimaeus. That is why Jesus said, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." Jesus wanted the people to recognize that Jesus was giving both physical and spiritual sight that day. The word translated "made you well" is the word that is normally translated "to save". That is the way the word is translated in many passages including Luke 19:10 where Jesus said, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

In addition to receiving spiritual sight that day, Bartimaeus also received physical sight. We see that he received physical sight immediately. Bartimaeus was a changed man. We read that he followed Jesus, glorifying God. The word translated "followed" means to accompany a person or to join with a person as a disciple. It is the same word that Jesus used in Matthew 4:19-20 when He said, "Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him." The same word is used in Matthew 9:9 where we read, "As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him." Bartimaeus had his life changed and transformed.

Since there was a large group of people with Jesus, they also saw what Jesus had done and heard the words of Bartimaeus. That also caused the people with Jesus to give praise to God for what Jesus had done that day by giving both physical and spiritual sight. We also want to show our physical and spiritual children the same attitude as we give glory to God for what He has done in our lives. They will learn to give glory to God as they see our example by our words and actions. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children the importance of giving glory to God for the salvation that He gives.

Jesus came to Seek and to Save the Lost

In our last topic, we saw that we want to show our physical and spiritual children by our example the importance of giving glory to God for what He has done in our lives. We saw that Jesus gave both physical and spiritual sight to Bartimaeus because of the fact that He recognized Jesus as the Lord and the Messiah. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus also gave salvation to Zacchaeus.

Zacchaeus was a tax collector and was considered a sinner by the people of the city of Jericho and the surrounding area. However, we see that Zacchaeus was willing to do whatever it took to see Jesus. Luke 19:1-4 says, "Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way." Here we see that Jesus had now arrived at the city of Jericho as He traveled on His way to Jerusalem.

We learn several things about Zacchaeus in these verses. First, we see that he was a chief tax collector. A chief tax collector was over a larger region and usually had other tax collectors working for him. Tax collectors worked for the hated Roman government and also charged much more than they were supposed to charge. As a result, that is why the tax collectors were considered among the worst of sinners by the other Jews. Second, we see that he was rich. This was probably the result of making the people pay more taxes than they were required by the Roman law to pay. Third, Zacchaeus had heard so much about Jesus that he had a great desire to see Him. Fourth, Zacchaeus could not see Jesus over the crowd because he was a very short man and could not see over the other people.

The fact that Zacchaeus had a great desire to see Jesus would indicate that he had heard that Jesus had a great concern for sinners. Of course, one of the disciples of Jesus was a former tax collector. Matthew 9:9 says, "As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, 'Follow Me.' So he arose and followed Him." Jesus had shown at the house of Matthew that He accepted tax collectors and sinners as Matthew 9:10 says, "Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples." Jesus also made it clear that it was possible for tax collectors to be forgiven. Matthew 9:13 says, "But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Whatever Zacchaeus had heard about Jesus caused him to want to see Jesus personally.

As a result of his desire to see Jesus, Zacchaeus did something that most rich people would never do. He ran ahead of the large crowd of people that surrounded Jesus. Then he climbed up into a sycamore tree so that he could see Jesus because he knew that Jesus would have to pass by that tree as he went. Many people are like Zacchaeus. Regardless of their past lives they want to learn more about Jesus because they have heard that Jesus forgives sinners. In order to help them learn about Jesus we need to share what the Bible teaches about Jesus. John 16:8-10 says, "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more." Here we see that the Holy Spirit convinces those who are not Christians of the fact that Jesus is the Righteous One who can forgive sin because He is without sin and paid our penalty.

For many years Zacchaeus had felt rejected by the people of Jericho because they considered him a sinner. In contrast, we see that Jesus showed love to Zacchaeus. Luke 19:5-7 says, "And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house." So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner." Here we see the way that Jesus showed His acceptance and love for Zacchaeus.

We see that Jesus told Zacchaeus to hurry and get down out of the tree. Jesus said that very day He was coming to visit the home of Zacchaeus and spend some time with him. This is actually the only recorded place where Jesus invited Himself to the home of someone. In every other recorded case the people invited Jesus to their home. One of the greatest ways that a tax collector could feel accepted was to know that Jesus wanted to come to his house to spend time with him and eat his food. Most of the people did not want to be associated with the tax collectors and sinners in any way. Zacchaeus was so excited that he really hurried to get down from the tree. He was filled with joy to think that Jesus would be willing to come to his house.

In contrast, many of the other people from Jericho were not happy at all to see Jesus go to the home of Zacchaeus. In fact it says that they all complained. The word translated "complained" means to angrily complain or to complain to one another about what a person is doing. The only other place in the New Testament where we see this word used is in Luke 15:1-2 where we read, "Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them." As you remember from an earlier topic, the complaining in that verse led Jesus to give the parable of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost sons. Any Pharisees or scribes that were standing there when Jesus said that He was going to the home of Zacchaeus certainly complained that day as well.

However, we see that they were not the only people that complained. This verse says that all of the people complained. Even the people that were not scribes and Pharisees hated the tax collectors and wanted nothing to do with them. In contrast, Jesus was giving everyone there that day an example of the fact that He loved even the greatest sinners and wanted to forgive their sins. Jesus has said three years earlier in Matthew 9:12-13 when He had called Matthew to follow Him, "When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Christ came to call sinners to repentance. Jesus also promised in John 6:37, "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out." Jesus came to offer forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

Zacchaeus did not even wait until he got to his home to make it clear that Jesus had changed his life at that very moment. Luke 19:8-10 says, "Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." The very first thing that Zacchaeus did when he got to the ground was to recognize that Jesus is Lord. His statement reminds us of the statement of Saul in Acts 9:6 where we read, "So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.""

Zacchaeus showed that there had been true repentance in his heart by what he said next as he said that he was going to give half of his money to the poor and he was going to repay everything that he had taken by false accusation by giving the person four times as much. This is a very direct contrast to the rich ruler that asked Jesus how to inherit eternal life in the

previous chapter. Luke 18:22-23 says, "So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich." The rich young ruler went away sorrowful because he was very rich and his riches were his god. In contrast, true repentance gave Zacchaeus a desire to do what was good and right. Zacchaeus had probably gotten part of his money by charging people more taxes than the law required. By the time Zacchaeus gave half of his money to the poor and repaid each of those he had cheated four times as much, Zacchaeus probably became a poor man. However, he had gained eternal riches.

Jesus told everyone there that day about the change that had happened in the life of Zacchaeus. Jesus said that Zacchaeus had received salvation. The word translated "salvation" means deliverance from the penalty and power of sin. 2 Corinthians 7:10 says, "For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death." Here we see that godly repentance leads to salvation and deliverance from the penalty of sin. Then Galatians 5:1 says, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage." In this verse, we see that Jesus has given us liberty so that we are now free to serve Him. Galatians 5:13 adds, "For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." That liberty makes it possible for us to serve one another in love.

Jesus also made it clear that He came to seek and to save those who are lost. Jesus has shown throughout the book of Luke that He is seeking the lost. In Luke 15 we saw the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost sons and the rejoicing that there is in heaven when one sinner repents. We also want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the desire of Jesus both to seek and to save those who are lost. Jesus is the only one that can save. However, He wants us and our children to join Him in seeking the lost by sharing the message of the Gospel with the lost. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children the importance of joining Jesus in seeking the lost.

Jesus Gave the Parable of a Long Journey

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that Jesus came to seek and to save those who are lost. We also saw that we want to join Him and help Him seek the lost by sharing the Gospel with those who are not yet Christians. Jesus then went on to give a parable to show each of His followers that we are to carry out His work of sharing the Gospel until He returns. We will also see that Jesus wants each of us to be faithful servants until He returns.

This parable that we will study in our topic today is the last words of Jesus that Luke recorded before Jesus made His entry into Jerusalem just a few days before His crucifixion. As a result, Jesus gave a parable to share a command with His disciples and all who have followed Him since. We see that Jesus gave His servants a command to do business until He comes. Jesus then showed the judgment that will come to those who reject. Luke 19:11-14 says, “Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. Therefore He said: 'A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.'”

Many of the followers of Jesus thought that He was going to Jerusalem to immediately set up the kingdom of God. They were looking for an earthly kingdom. However, Jesus had told the Pharisees in Luke 17:20-21, “Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, 'The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.'” The fact that Jesus said that the kingdom of God is within you is why Jesus gave this parable to show what was going to happen.

In this parable Jesus called Himself a certain nobleman. Jesus said that the nobleman went to receive for himself a kingdom and then he would return. However, before the nobleman left he called his ten servants and gave each a mina and told them to do business until he returned. The word translated “mina” was worth a little more than three months of wages for a hired servant. Each of the servants was then told to business until the master returned. Here we see that Jesus gives every Christian the opportunity to serve the Lord as we wait for the return of the Lord.

We also see that there is a second group of people. These people are called the citizens of the land. We see that these citizens hated the nobleman. Jesus was actually using a historical illustration to show how the Jews would reject Him. When Herod the Great (the one who tried to kill Jesus at His birth) died, his son Archelaus traveled to Rome to receive his appointment as the ruler of Judea. The Jews hated him so much that they sent a delegation or group of people to say that they did not want Archelaus to rule over them. He was appointed anyway but was soon removed and over the next thirty years several different men were appointed as the governor of Judea by the Roman emperor. Pilate was the fifth of these several men to become governor after Archelaus. Jesus used the rejection of Archelaus by the Jews to illustrate His rejection by the Jews.

Jesus went on to tell how He would reward those who faithfully served Him when He returns. Luke 19:15-19 says, “And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he

might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.'" Here we see that in the parable the nobleman called his servants to give a report of what they had gained by trading while he was away.

The first servant to report said that the mina of the master had gained ten more minas. The master said, "Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities." The master commended this servant for being faithful. The master said that he had been faithful in something that was very little and so he was given a reward of additional responsibility for being faithful. The second servant to report said that the mina of the master had earned five minas. This servant had also been faithful and he was also given a reward of additional responsibility for being faithful. This reminds us that one of the things that Jesus desires in our service for Him is faithfulness. 1 Corinthians 4:2 says, "Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful." Faithfulness in service will be rewarded.

However, there is also a second thing shown by these rewards. The first servant was rewarded with authority over ten cities because of his effectiveness while the second servant was rewarded with authority over five cities because of his effectiveness. Both had been given one mina but one had done business so that his mina gained ten more minas while the other had gained five minas. Here we see that these servants were also rewarded for their effectiveness in their service. This means that it is very important to understand the difference between success and effectiveness. The world usually measures success by numbers.

In contrast, God measures effectiveness by reproduction that produces eternal results. 2 Timothy 2:2 says, "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." Paul told Timothy that his effectiveness would be measured by the fact that he passed on the things that he had learned to faithful men in such a way that they were equipped to teach others. Paul told the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 4:16-17, "Therefore I urge you, imitate me. For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church." Paul had helped Timothy to become a faithful "adult son" and now Timothy was able to remind the Corinthians to imitate the ways of Paul and do just as Paul had done.

Jesus then went on to show that He could not reward those who were unfaithful and failed to serve Him. Luke 19:20-27 says, "Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.' (But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.')

For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me.' "" We see that two groups are mentioned here – a wicked servant and enemies.

The unfaithful servant had failed to do business with the mina that his master had given to him to do business. He had just wrapped the mina in a handkerchief and put it away. We see that he had a wrong understanding of the master. The word translated "austere" means harsh, rough or rigid. The only two places this word is used in the New Testament are in these verses. We

see that Jesus calls this servant a wicked servant. We see that this wicked servant accused the master of trying to take advantage of him. He had some knowledge of Jesus but he put away what he had been given and did nothing with it. As a result, Jesus said that what he had been given would be taken away.

The word translated “wicked” is usually translated evil and means bad in nature or condition. The word is used twice in Matthew 7:18 where the word is translated bad, “A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.” The whole context of Matthew 7:15-23 is talking about those who make a false profession of being followers of Jesus. Matthew 7:21-23 says, “Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” True followers of Jesus do the will of the Father while those who make a false profession practice lawlessness. This describes a professing Christian who never placed his faith in Jesus.

The last group of people in these verses is the group who openly rejected Jesus and did not want Him to reign over them. We see that this group will also be judged. The final judgment of both of these last groups is described in Revelation 20:15 where we read, “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” Both groups will experience eternal judgment.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children grow and become fruitful Christians who faithfully serve the Lord. Then they will be able to look forward to the rewards that Jesus will give for faithfulness and effectiveness. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to be faithful servants of the Lord.

Jesus was Welcomed as the King

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn that Jesus has given them the opportunity to serve Him as they wait for His coming. We also saw that the Lord will reward both faithfulness and effectiveness in that service for the Lord. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus came to Jerusalem and rode into the city on a donkey as His followers said, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

Jesus and the people with Him had traveled up the mountain from Jericho to Jerusalem. When they were close to the city of Jerusalem, Jesus instructed two of His disciples to go and get the donkey of a colt for Him to ride into the city. He also told them what to say to the owner of the colt. Luke 19:28-32 says, "When He had said this, He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. And it came to pass, when He came near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mountain called Olivet, that He sent two of His disciples, saying, 'Go into the village opposite you, where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose it and bring it here. And if anyone asks you, 'Why are you loosing it?' thus you shall say to him, 'Because the Lord has need of it.' "So those who were sent went their way and found it just as He had said to them." Jesus and the people with Him had to go up about 4000 feet in the 20 miles from Jericho to Jerusalem because Jericho was near the Dead Sea and over 1000 feet below sea level while Jerusalem was at the top of the mountain range and the mountains were about 3000 feet high.

Bethany and Bethphage were two villages very close together and only about a mile from the city of Jerusalem. Bethany was the place where Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. These villages were very close to the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two disciples to one of the villages and gave them instructions about what they were to do when they reached the village. Jesus said that when they entered the village that they would find a colt. Zechariah 9:9 says, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey." This colt was a young colt and had never been ridden before. Jesus told the two disciples to get the colt and bring it to Him.

Jesus also told the two disciples what to say if anyone asked them why they were loosing the colt. Jesus gave them a very specific answer to give to the person that questioned them. They were to say, "Because the Lord has need of it." Jesus was well known in these two villages because He had raised Lazarus from the dead just a few weeks earlier in Bethany. The disciples then went to the village. Exactly as Jesus had said there was a colt tied when they entered the village. Since Jesus was just coming to this area from Jericho, this is another thing that showed that Jesus is God and knows all things because He had just arrived and told the disciples exactly where to find the colt.

Luke 19:33-36 says, "But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, 'Why are you loosing the colt?' " And they said, "The Lord has need of him." Then they brought him to Jesus. And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him. And as He went, many spread their clothes on the road." Here we see that the owners of the colt were the ones who asked the disciples why they were untying the colt. The two disciples gave the answer that Jesus had told them to give when they were asked the question. The owners immediately let the two disciples take the colt.

The two disciples brought the colt to Jesus. Then they placed their own robes on the colt so that

Jesus could sit on their robes. Jesus was then placed on the colt. By this action the multitude of disciples following Jesus immediately recognized that they were about to see a fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9 quoted above. However, they probably also expected to see the fulfillment of Zechariah 9:10 which says, "I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem; the battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be 'from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.'" This verse said that the King would end all fighting, bring peace to all of the nations and rule to the ends of the earth. As we see in many places both in the Old and the New Testaments, that will only be fulfilled at the Second Coming of Jesus when He comes to rule the whole earth.

The people would also have been familiar with the prophecy in Zechariah 14:4 which says, "And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south." Since these two villages were right next to the Mount of Olives, many of the disciples may have thought that Jesus would soon fulfill Zechariah 14:8-9 which says, "And in that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; in both summer and winter it shall occur. And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be--"The Lord is one," and His name one." Many in the multitude were expecting Jesus to establish that rule immediately.

That is why many of the people began to spread their clothes on the road. The spreading of their clothes was the way that people had shown their recognition of a much earlier king of Israel. 2 Kings 9:13 says, "Then each man hastened to take his garment and put it under him on the top of the steps; and they blew trumpets, saying, "Jehu is king!"" As a result, this action was an act of respect as the people chose to show that they thought Jesus had come to fulfill the promises in Zechariah. The people certainly did not understand that there would be both a first and a second coming of Jesus.

However, we see that Jesus was recognized by His disciples and many others in the multitude that day as the King. Luke 19:37-40 says, "Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, saying: "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out." Many Jews had long looked forward to the coming of their promised King and they now recognized Jesus as that King. What they did not understand was the fact that He will become the King at His second coming.

We do see how the disciples of Jesus celebrated the arrival of Jesus as He came into Jerusalem that day. They began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice. They were also shouting about all of the mighty works and miracles that they had seen Jesus do during the previous three years. The Jews would normally sing Psalms 113-118 during their celebration of the Passover. Psalms 113 and 114 were sung before the meal and Psalms 115-118 would then be sung at the conclusion of the meal. We see that a part of Psalm 118 was what the people began to sing as Jesus was riding from the Mount of Olives to the city of Jerusalem.

Psalm 118:22-26 says, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Save now, I pray, O Lord; O Lord, I pray, send now prosperity. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We have blessed you from the house of the Lord." We will see that Jesus quotes verse 22 in Luke 20:17 as He describes how the Jews

would reject Him. However, as Jesus rode into Jerusalem the Jews were quoting from verses 25 and 26. Matthew 21:9 says, “Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' Hosanna in the highest!” Hosanna means “Save Now” which are the first two words of Psalm 118:25. Then “Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!” is the first half of Psalm 118:26. This was a very clear statement that the multitude that day recognized that Jesus was the Messiah who fulfilled the promises of the Old Testament.

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd immediately reacted and called to Jesus from the crowd saying, “Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.” The Pharisees were very angry because they clearly understood that the disciples were saying that Jesus was the Messiah. The word translated “rebuke” means to not honor, to reprove or to charge sharply. The Pharisees made it very clear that they wanted the disciples of Jesus to stop saying what they were saying because the Pharisees recognized that the disciples were calling Jesus the Messiah and the made the Pharisees very angry.

Instead of rebuking His disciples, Jesus answered the Pharisees by saying, “I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.” Jesus may have been using Habakkuk 2:10-11 as He answered the Pharisees. Those verses say, “You give shameful counsel to your house, cutting off many peoples, and sin against your soul. For the stone will cry out from the wall, and the beam from the timbers will answer it.” This would be both a rebuke to the Pharisees and a statement saying that if His disciples did not say that He was the Messiah that the very rocks would cry out and say that He was the Messiah. This certainly made the Pharisees and the other Jewish religious leaders even angrier because this meant that Jesus was making the statement that He was the Messiah. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain why the disciples of Jesus were saying that Jesus was the Messiah and that Jesus Himself also said that He was the Messiah. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to understand that Jesus was the promised Messiah.

Jesus Cleansed the Temple

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children clearly understand that the disciples were recognizing Jesus as the Messiah when Jesus rode into the city of Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey. Many of the crowd who were with the disciples were looking for Jesus to set up an earthly kingdom immediately. In our topic today, we will see two of the things that Jesus did as He came into the city of Jerusalem.

Jesus knew that He would be crucified in just a few days. However, Jesus had a very great love for Jerusalem and the people of the city. As Jesus came close to the city of Jerusalem we see that Jesus wept over the city. We saw in our last topic that some of the Pharisees told Jesus to rebuke His disciples. We also saw that there were many people in that multitude that were looking for Jesus to immediately set up an earthly kingdom. Here we see that Jesus knew the condition of the hearts of the Pharisees and many of the others in the multitude. As a result, we see that Jesus began to weep as He saw the city.

Jeremiah has said several hundred years earlier that the temple in the city would be made desolate. Jeremiah 22:5 says, "But if you will not hear these words, I swear by Myself," says the Lord, "that this house shall become a desolation." " Jesus had quoted from this verse when He said in Luke 13:34-35, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'" Now as Jesus rode into Jerusalem He could see the temple as He came. He knew what would happen to the temple, the city and the people in the city only forty years later. As a result, He wept as He thought of that judgment that would soon come.

The desire of Jesus was that the people of Jerusalem would experience His peace. He knew that desire could not be fulfilled at the present time because the people would reject Him and crucify Him. As a result, all He could do was weep as He thought about the judgment that would come on Jerusalem instead. The things that would bring that peace were hidden from the eyes of the people of Jerusalem. Zechariah 12:10 says, "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn." Then Zechariah 13:1 adds, "In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." There will be a future cleansing when the people of Jerusalem will experience that peace but Jesus knew that would be at His second coming and not at His first coming.

Jesus then spoke about the coming judgment that would soon come on the city of Jerusalem. Luke 19:43-44 says, "For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation." In these verses, we see that Jesus went on to speak about the judgment that would come on Jerusalem beginning just at the end of the Passover forty years later.

On April 9, A.D. 70 the Roman emperor came and surrounded the city of Jerusalem. This came at a time when many thousands of Jews in addition to the regular population were still in

Jerusalem for the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This verse says that the enemies of the Jews would build an embankment around the city and close the city in on every side. That is exactly what Titus and the Roman army did. They built a barrier entirely around the city. This meant that no food or other supplies could get into the people that were in the city. It also meant that people that were inside the city could not escape. Throughout the summer as the people were getting weaker from lack of food, the Romans began to destroy one section of the city at a time. The destruction of the last section of the city happened in early September.

In the process the Roman army fulfilled each of the statements that are mentioned in verse 44. They killed all of the people including the children. They completely leveled the buildings to the ground. They did not leave one stone upon another so that the destruction was complete. The temple and all the homes in the city were completely destroyed. Jesus then said that this happened because the Jews did not know the day of their visitation. The day of their visitation was the coming of Jesus as the Messiah. Instead of recognizing Him as the Messiah, we will see that the Jewish religious leaders rejected Him, condemned Him to death and then turned Him over to Pilate to put Him to death. As a result, this destruction of the city of Jerusalem was the judgment for their rejection of Jesus.

When Jesus came into the city the first place that He went was to the temple. Luke 19:45-48 says, "Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, saying to them, 'It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.' " And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him." Jesus actually cleansed the temple twice. This is the second time.

The first time that Jesus cleansed the temple was at the beginning of His public ministry and was at the time of the Passover three years earlier. That cleansing is recorded for us in John 2:13-16 which says, "Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers doing business. When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves, 'Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!'" The Jewish religious leaders were using the temple courtyard to make money for themselves. Some were selling animals to the people to offer as sacrifices. Others were changing the money of the Jews from other countries so that they could buy their sacrifices. All of them were cheating the people to make money for themselves. At that time Jesus told them that they were making His Father's house a house of merchandise.

Now three years later we see that these same people were back in the temple doing the same thing. Jesus began to drive out those who were buying and selling in the temple. As He drove them out, Jesus quoted from two Old Testament passages. Isaiah 56:7 says, "Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." Then Jeremiah 7:11 says, "Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it," says the Lord." The purpose of the temple was to be a place of prayer for the people of all nations. Instead, the Jewish religious leaders had turned that place of prayer into a place where they were stealing from those who came to the temple. Needless to say, the Jewish religious leaders were not happy to have their corruption publicly exposed by Jesus cleansing the temple.

We also see what Jesus did each day for the next several days. We see that He was teaching daily in the temple. During the time before the Feast of the Passover, Jews came to Jerusalem

from many different countries. Many times as many as a half million people would come to Jerusalem for the Passover or one of the other main Jewish feasts. During the day many of these people would gather in the courtyard that surrounded the temple. Jesus went to the temple each day and taught the people that gathered around. We see that there were two attitudes among the people that came to the courtyard of the temple.

First, we see the attitude of the chief priests, the scribes and the leaders of the people. The chief priests were responsible for the offering of the sacrifices and the oversight of the temple. Most of the high priests were Sadducees. The Sadducees did not believe in miracles or the resurrection. In contrast, most of the scribes were Pharisees. Because the scribes spent much of their lives making copies of Old Testament books, they were considered experts in the Old Testament law and that is why they were often called lawyers. The rulers of the people were some of the most influential Jews and had a great influence regarding the things that happened in the temple. These three groups together controlled much of what happened in the temple. All three groups wanted power and control and so they all wanted to kill Jesus because they saw Him as a threat to their power and control.

In contrast, we see that all of the common people were very attentive to Jesus. They wanted to hear every word that Jesus taught. Many times we see these same attitudes today. The people with power are eager to maintain their control over the rest of the people. However, the common people are often very interested to learn more about Jesus and the things that He taught. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand this difference. We are called to share the good news about the death and resurrection of Jesus with all people. Because of their desire for power, the people who are considered leaders are often not ready to hear the Word of God. In contrast, the common people are often open and want to learn more so we want to help our children learn to continue to share with those who are seeking truth. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to share the Word of God with the attentive.

Jesus Gave the Parable of the Vineyard Owner

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand two very common groups of people that they will meet. Those who desire to have power and control over other people will often reject the Word of God. In contrast, the common people are often eager to learn more about Jesus. In our topic today, we are going to see that the religious leaders asked Jesus who gave Him the authority to teach. Jesus answered their question with a question. Then Jesus spoke to the people and gave them a parable about a vineyard owner.

One day the religious leaders challenged the authority of Jesus to teach in the temple. Luke 20:1-8 says, "Now it happened on one of those days, as He taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, that the chief priests and the scribes, together with the elders, confronted Him and spoke to Him, saying, 'Tell us, by what authority are You doing these things? Or who is he who gave You this authority?' But He answered and said to them, 'I also will ask you one thing, and answer Me: The baptism of John--was it from heaven or from men?' And they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet.'" So they answered that they did not know where it was from. And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things." Here we see that Jesus was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the Gospel to them.

The chief priests (mostly Sadducees), the scribes (mostly Pharisees) and the elders (the seventy men who were the Sanhedrin) all came together and asked Jesus who gave Him the authority to teach the people. We saw in the last topic that these were the very groups that wanted to kill Jesus because they were afraid of losing their power and control over the people. Instead of answering their question immediately, Jesus asked them to answer one question for Him before He answered their question. Then Jesus asked them, "The baptism of John--was it from heaven or from men?" Suddenly the religious leaders realized that they were going to trap themselves if they answered the question of Jesus.

They had two choices. They could say that the baptism of John came from heaven but they knew that Jesus would then ask them why they did not believe the message of John if his message was from heaven. These religious leaders were totally unwilling to admit that the message of John came from God because they had rejected his message. In contrast, they could say that the baptism of John was from men. However, they were afraid to give this answer because of their own fear. They were afraid that the common people would stone them because the common people were convinced that John was a prophet who had been sent by God. The religious leaders did not want to give either answer. As a result, they said that they did not know whether the baptism of John was from heaven or from men. Jesus then said that in that case He would not tell them by what authority He was teaching and doing the miracles that He had done.

Jesus knew that the religious leaders were trying to control the people because they loved power. As a result, Jesus told the people a parable. Luke 20:9-12 says, "Then He began to tell the people this parable: 'A certain man planted a vineyard, leased it to vinedressers, and went into a far country for a long time. Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the vinedressers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Again he sent another servant; and they beat him also, treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. And again he sent a third; and they

wounded him also and cast him out.” We see that Jesus gave this parable both to the religious leaders and to the common people. It became very clear by the time that Jesus finished this parable that the man who planted the vineyard was really a picture of God.

The man planted a vineyard and leased it to the vinedressers. Isaiah 5:1-2 says, “Now let me sing to my Well-beloved a song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard: My Well-beloved has a vineyard on a very fruitful hill. He dug it up and cleared out its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, and also made a winepress in it; so He expected it to bring forth good grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes.” This passage from Isaiah was very familiar to the Jews and Isaiah 5:7 says, “For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. He looked for justice, but behold, oppression; for righteousness, but behold, a cry for help.” God chose the nation of Israel to have a special relationship with Him. As a result, this passage from Isaiah makes it very clear that the nation of Israel is the vineyard and the people of Israel and Judah are the vinedressers.

We read that the owner of the vineyard sent various servants to get the fruit from the people who were taking care of the vineyard. We see that the people caring for the vineyard mistreated the various servants that the owner sent to them. Hebrews 11:36-37 give us just a small picture of the way that the people of Israel mistreated the Old Testament prophets that God sent to them. Those verses say, “Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—.” Here we see that Jesus said that the people beat one servant and sent him away empty-handed. Another servant they beat and treated him shamefully and also sent him away empty-handed. A third servant they wounded and cast him out. Throughout the Old Testament we see various ways that the people of Israel rejected the prophets that God had sent to them.

We see that as Jesus continued the parable that He said that the owner of the vineyard finally sent His Son to get the fruit. Luke 20:13-18 says, “Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect him when they see him.' But when the vinedressers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.' So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others." And when they heard it they said, "Certainly not!" Then He looked at them and said, "What then is this that is written: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone'? "Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."” Since we look back at this parable, we can recognize that as Jesus told the last part of the parable that He was talking about Himself and what the Jews were going to do to Him within a few days.

The owner of the vineyard then decided to send his beloved son to get the fruit from the people who were caring for his vineyard. Jesus said that the vineyard owner thought that the people would respect the son of the owner. Instead, we will see that Jesus went on to describe exactly what the Jews were going to do to Him in the next few days. The people caring for the vineyard talked among themselves and said, “This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.” John 11:49-53 says, “And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish." Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad. Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.” Here we see that from the day that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead that the Jewish religious leaders began to plot the death of Jesus.

Jesus was telling what the Jewish religious leaders were going to do to Him when He said that the people caring for the vineyard cast the son out of the vineyard and killed him. Then he asked the people listening that day what the owner of the vineyard would do to the people caring for the vineyard. Jesus said that the owner of the vineyard would come and destroy the workers in the vineyard and give the vineyard to others. The people who heard Jesus answered, "Certainly not!" The Jewish religious leaders who had been plotting the death of Jesus for a period of months recognized that Jesus was saying that judgment would come upon them.

Then Jesus quoted Psalm 118:22 which says, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone." At the time that Solomon was building the temple in Jerusalem the materials were prepared at another site and brought to the site of the temple. A stone was brought that the workers could not determine where it would fit and so was thrown on the rubbish pile. Later, when they could not find the cornerstone the men realized that they had thrown away the cornerstone which was the most important stone because it determined how every other stone was placed. The Jewish religious leaders were preparing to kill the One who is the Son of God. Jesus gave one more warning to these Jews when He said, "Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." Jesus is that stone. For some Isaiah 8:14 had warned, "He will be as a sanctuary, but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, as a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. For others Daniel 2:45 warned, "Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold--the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure." Some were ignoring Jesus and others were fighting Him but all who rejected faced judgment. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to understand that Jesus warned the Jews of coming judgment.

Jesus Answered the Herodians

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to explain to others the warning that Jesus gave the Jews about coming judgment. We will see in our topic today that the Herodians then came with a question to try and trap Jesus and the next topic will be about a question that the Sadducees asked Jesus in their final effort to try and trap Jesus.

Jesus had just given the parable of vineyard owner. Most of the time Jesus spoke in parables so that the crowds would not understand but then Jesus would explain them to His disciples later. Jesus had told His disciples in Luke 8:10, "And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'" However, we see that the Jewish religious leaders did understand at least part of the parable about the vineyard owner. Luke 20:19 says, "And the chief priests and the scribes that very hour sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people--for they knew He had spoken this parable against them." Most of the scribes were Pharisees.

Here we see that both the chief priests and the scribes recognized that the parable of the vineyard owner was spoken against them. Jesus had concluded that parable by saying in Luke 20:15-18, "So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others." And when they heard it they said, "Certainly not!" Then He looked at them and said, "What then is this that is written: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone'? 'Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.'" The chief priests and scribes may not have understood the entire parable but they certainly understood that when Jesus said that the owner would destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others that Jesus had said that they would be judged.

These religious leaders wanted to lay hands on Jesus that very hour because they knew that Jesus had spoken this parable against them. However, we see that the religious leaders feared the people. That fear is explained in more detail in Luke 22:2-6 where we read, "And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people. Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude." Here we see that the Jewish religious leaders promised to give Judas money if he would betray Jesus to them in the absence of the people. We see that the Jewish religious leaders wanted to catch Jesus when no one was around, put Him on trial and then turn Him over to the Romans to kill Him without most of the people realizing what had happened until Jesus was on the cross.

However, Judas had not yet agreed to betray Jesus and so we see that the Jewish religious leaders sent spies to trap Jesus. Luke 20:20-21 says, "So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, that they might seize on His words, in order to deliver Him to the power and the authority of the governor. Then they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, we know that You say and teach rightly, and You do not show personal favoritism, but teach the way of God in truth." Here we see that the Jewish religious leaders thought that they had figured out a way to trap Jesus and give them an excuse to turn Jesus over to the Romans so that the Romans would put Jesus to death. Matthew 22:15-16 say, "Then the Pharisees went and plotted how

they might entangle Him in His talk. And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men." Here we see that the Pharisees decided to trap Jesus by sending both Pharisees and Herodians together to question Jesus.

The Herodians were a political party that supported the rule of Herod as the Roman governor. In contrast, the Pharisees hated the Roman government and wanted to get rid of the Romans. Jesus had already been told that Herod wanted to kill Him. Luke 13:31 says, "On that very day some Pharisees came, saying to Him, "Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You.'" As a result, the Herodians who wanted to keep Herod in power would report anything to the Romans that would give the Romans an excuse to get rid of Jesus. However, both the Herodians and the Pharisees were so fearful of Jesus that they both wanted to get rid of Him. By coming to Jesus together the two groups thought that they could trap Jesus.

Before asking Jesus the question that they thought would trap Jesus, we see that the religious leaders sent spies who pretended to be righteous. These men thought that they could trap Jesus by His words because they hoped to get Jesus to speak against Caesar, the Roman emperor. If Jesus spoke against the Roman emperor than the Herodians would have turned Jesus over to the Roman governor, accused Jesus of speaking against Caesar and then demand that the Roman governor put Jesus to death for treason against the Roman government.

The spies wanted to hide their real goal and so they praised Jesus for several things before they asked their question. First, they said, "Teacher, we know that You say and teach rightly." Here we see that they said that they recognized that the things that Jesus said and taught were right. Second, they said, "You do not show personal favoritism." In this statement we see they recognized that Jesus did not treat His friends in a different way than He treated those who spoke against Him. Third, they said, "You...teach the way of God in truth." Even though these men were trying to trap Jesus, they had to recognize that He taught the way of God and He spoke the truth. These things were all true of Jesus. However, these spies were only saying them to cover up the fact that they were actually trying to trap Jesus. This shows us that it is possible for people to know and even speak the truth at the same time that their hearts are deceitful and desperately wicked. These spies were willing to do whatever it took to trap Jesus.

We go on to read the question of the spies and see the way that Jesus answered. Luke 20:22-26 says, "Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" But He perceived their craftiness, and said to them, 'Why do you test Me? Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?' They answered and said, 'Caesar's.' And He said to them, 'Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.' But they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people. And they marveled at His answer and kept silent." This might sound like a simple question. However, we have seen that both Herodians and Pharisees were there. The Herodians were looking for an excuse to say that Jesus had told the people to disobey the Roman law. The Pharisees were looking for an excuse to say that Jesus was not honoring God. Jesus knew that both groups were actually trying to test Him with the question.

Jesus recognized that these men were trying to test and trap Him. Then Jesus asked them to show Him a Roman coin. He asked those who were questioning Him whose picture was on the coin and whose title was on the coin. The men said that the picture and the title both belonged to the Roman Caesar. The word translated "render" means to give or to pay what is due. As a result, Jesus was saying what is due to Caesar pay to Caesar and what is due to God give to God. The reason that God has established human government is explained in Romans 13:2-4 which say, "Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil.

Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil." In these verses, we see that governments are established to maintain good works and punish evil works.

Suddenly these spies realized that Jesus had answered their trick question in such a way that neither the Herodians nor the Pharisees could condemn the answer of Jesus. Instead of tricking Jesus by getting Him to criticize the Roman government, Jesus answered in such a way that all of the people present realized that they had a responsibility to human government and they had a responsibility to God. Here we are reminded that God can even work through evil governments to maintain order in a country. Later Peter taught this same principle when he said in 1 Peter 2:13-14, "Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good."

The Jewish religious leaders were very upset that they could not catch Jesus by the words that He spoke. They had wanted to get Jesus to say something that would have made it possible for them to bring an accusation against Jesus to the Roman governor. The religious leaders wanted to do this while there were other people around Jesus who would have heard the words of Jesus. That way the religious leaders felt that they could not be blamed if the Romans arrested Jesus. Here we see that the Pharisees and Herodians had failed in their attempt to trick Jesus with their question. We want to help our physical and spiritual children realize that they will also face people who want to trick them by the way that they ask questions. We want to help our children learn to realize the importance of asking the Holy Spirit for guidance as they answer such questions. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip your children to answer the questions of others.

Jesus Answered the Sadducees

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how Jesus answered the questions of the Pharisees who came with the Herodians in such a way that neither group could condemn Jesus. We want to help our children learn to depend on the Holy Spirit for guidance as they answer the questions of those who would try to trap them. When the Sadducees heard that Jesus had answered the question of the Pharisees and Herodians, some of the Sadducees decided that they would try to trap Jesus with His words. That will be the focus of our topic today.

Luke 20:27-28 says, "Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, saying: "Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother." The high priest and his family were Sadducees and so the Sadducees controlled the temple and the things that went on in the temple during the time of Jesus. The Sadducees were actually only a small group of people but because of controlling the temple they had great authority. They accepted only the Pentateuch. They did not believe in angels, miracles or the resurrection. As a result, we see that they tried to trap Jesus by asking a question about the resurrection.

Since the Sadducees only accepted the Pentateuch, they asked a question about what Moses had written in the Law. Deuteronomy 25:5-6 says, "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. And it shall be that the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel." In order to make sure that every man had a son to carry on his family, the Law said that if a man died without a son that the brother of that man was to marry the wife of the brother. Then the first son of that couple was recognized as the son of the brother that had died without a son. The Sadducees used that instruction as the basis for their question.

We see that the Sadducees tried to trap Jesus with a question about marriage and the resurrection. Since the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, this was clearly a trick question to try and trap Jesus. The question of the Sadducees is given in Luke 20:29-33 where we read, "Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her as wife, and he died childless. Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife." The Sadducees said that there was a family with seven brothers. The first brother died and did not have any children. As a result, the second brother obeyed the instructions of the Law and married the woman and she became his wife. They were going to recognize the first son as the son of the brother that had died.

However, the second brother also died without having any children. The Sadducees said that the third, the fourth, the fifth and the sixth brothers each married this woman when the previous brother died without having any children. Finally after the sixth brother died the seventh brother also married the woman. However, they did not have any children either and one day he also died. Then after all seven brothers had died the woman finally died. After telling this story to Jesus, the Sadducees finally asked Jesus their question. The Sadducees then asked, "Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife."

Since the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, this question quickly showed that they were only trying to trap Jesus.

Matthew and Mark both record one statement that Jesus made before He gave the answer that is written here. Matthew 22:29 says, "Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God." Here we see the two mistakes that every person who is not a Christian will make when they try to trap Christians with questions about the Bible. First, a person who is not a Christian cannot really understand the Scripture. 1 Corinthians 2:14 says, "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Then Hebrews 4:12 adds, "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." A person who is not a Christian cannot understand that the Word of God discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart of that person.

Second, a person who is not a Christian cannot understand the power of God. Several verses help us to understand the power of God. 1 Corinthians 1:18 says, "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." Here we see that the message of the cross shows those who are Christians the power of God. 1 Corinthians 1:24 adds, "But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." Only those who are called experience the power of God. 1 Corinthians 2:5 says, "That your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." Here we see that our faith is in the power of God.

2 Corinthians 13:4 tells us, "For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you." Here we see two things. Jesus is alive by the power of God and we can look forward to living with Him by the power of God. Finally 1 Peter 1:3-5 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." Here we see that we are kept by the power of God through faith and that has given us an eternal inheritance. The Sadducees could understand none of these things because they did not know the power of God.

Back in Luke 22:34-38 we read, "And Jesus answered and said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. But even Moses showed in the burning bush passage that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him." In these verses, we see several other things that the Sadducees could not understand.

In the present age, we do have marriage on this earth. Genesis 2:18 says, "And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."" However, those who are raised from the dead to eternal life will be in the presence of the Lord for all eternity. We will never be alone again. As a result, there will be no need for marriage in eternity and we do not need to ever think about death because no one will die in eternity. Instead, this passage says that we will be equal to the angels in eternity. However, we will also have greater privileges than the angels because of the fact that we are the sons of God. Romans 8:16-17 says, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and

if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.” We will also be joint heirs with Jesus because of the fact that we are the sons of the resurrection. Here we see that Jesus clearly showed that the teachings and beliefs of the Sadducees denied the power of both the Word of God and of the power of God.

However, since the Sadducees recognized the Law, Jesus went on to teach about the resurrection from the book of Exodus. At the burning bush Moses asked the Lord what he should say when he went to speak to the people of Israel in Egypt. Exodus 3:13-14 says, “Then Moses said to God, 'Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?'” And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'” God did not just exist in the past or He would have had to say “I WAS”. God will not just exist in the future or He would have had to say, “I WILL BE”. Instead, God is the “I AM” who always was and always will be. Although Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had experienced a physical death, they still had spiritual life and so He is still their God because God is the God of the living. In fact all people will live for eternity. Paul told Felix in Acts 24:15, “I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.” The just will be raised to eternal life and the unjust will be raised to eternal judgment.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to clearly come to a clear understanding of both the Scriptures and of the power of God. That will prepare them to patiently explain to those who are not yet Christians how such individuals can receive forgiveness of sins and receive eternal life. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip your children to answer the questions of others with the Scriptures.

Jesus Questioned the Scribes in the Temple

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to follow the example of Jesus and answer the questions of others from the Scriptures. We have seen that Jesus repeatedly used the Scriptures to answer the questions both of those who believed and of those who rejected Him. We want to help our children learn to answer questions with Scriptures instead of their own opinions. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus first questioned the scribes and then warned His disciples not to follow the actions of the scribes.

Luke 20:39-44 says, "Then some of the scribes answered and said, "Teacher, You have spoken well." But after that they dared not question Him anymore. And He said to them, "How can they say that the Christ is the Son of David? Now David himself said in the Book of Psalms: 'The Lord said to my Lord, sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" ' Therefore David calls Him 'Lord'; how is He then his Son?" The scribes realized that Jesus had given a good answer to the Sadducees. They realized that they could not trap Jesus with questions. As a result, they were afraid to ask Jesus any more questions.

Instead, Jesus asked them a question. One of the things that the Jewish religious leaders often did was to refer to the Christ as the Son of David. That was one of the ways that they tried to avoid admitting that the Christ is God. Jesus then quoted Psalm 110:1 and asked them to explain what that verse meant since David had written that Psalm. That Psalm says, "The Lord said to my Lord, sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool." Jesus quoted that statement and then asked His question, "Therefore David calls Him 'Lord'; how is He then his Son?" The religious leaders immediately realized that they could not answer that question without admitting the fact that the Christ is God. As a result, they did not answer His question.

Here we see that Jesus was forcing the religious leaders to make a choice. Christ is the translation of the Hebrew word for Messiah. This verse speaks of the fact that the Messiah would be sitting at the right hand of the Father. If they answered the question, they would have to recognize that the Christ is God because David had said that His Son was also his Lord. The Jewish religious leaders refused to admit that fact. A few years later Stephen said in Acts 7:54-58, "When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with *their* teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast *him* out of the city and stoned *him*. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul." It was some of these very same religious leaders that were cut to the heart by the words of Stephen

Luke 20:45-47 goes on to say, "Then, in the hearing of all the people, He said to His disciples, 'Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.'" In these verses, we see that Jesus was teaching His disciples. However, He also gave the whole crowd an opportunity to hear what He said to His disciples. The scribes tried to control the people by claiming that they had a superior knowledge of the Word of God since they spent much time making copies of Old Testament scrolls. Instead, Jesus made it very clear to His disciples and the other people listening that the scribes were hypocrites and controlled by pride.

The word translated “beware” means to listen closely and pay attention or to devote thought and effort to something. Jesus wanted the disciples to think about the true inner character of the scribes. The word translated “desire” means to purpose, to love or to be determined to do something. First the scribes loved to go around in long robes. The word translated “long robes” spoke of the long outer garments that extended to the feet and were worn by kings, priests or people of high rank. Proverbs 16:18 says, “Pride *goes* before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” Here we see that the scribes wanted to show their pride by their robes.

Second, we see that the scribes wanted greetings in the marketplaces. These were words of praise to the scribes because of the titles that they gave themselves. John 12:42-43 says, “Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” Many of the scribes were leaders in their synagogues and belonged to the Pharisees rather than the Sadducees. Here we see that pride was shown by the fact that many of the rulers were more anxious for the praise of people than they were for the praise of God.

Third, we see that the scribes loved the best seats in the synagogues. The bench next to the box where the Old Testament scrolls were stored was considered the bench with the best seats in the synagogue because that bench was reserved for the leaders and well known visitors who visited their synagogue. Christ had said in Luke 11:43, “Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces.” Closely related to the best seats in the synagogues were the best places at feasts. Luke 14:7-8 says, “So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: ‘When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him.’” Christ had made it clear that those who loved the best seats would be judged for their pride.

Fourth, we see that Christ said the scribes devoured the houses of widows and for a pretense made long prayers. The word translated “devour” means to consume by eating, to waste or to steal the property of widows. Here we see that the scribes were quick to steal the property of widows to increase their own riches. Then they would try to cover up the fact that they had robbed the widow by praying a long prayer for the widow. Jesus said that such scribes would receive a greater judgment for their sin.

As Jesus was speaking about the actions of the scribes, He was close to the thirteen chests where the people gave their various offerings. Jesus had just spoken about the hypocrisy of the scribes and the way that they cheated poor widows. At that very time, Luke 21:1-4 says, “And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. So He said, ‘Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had.’” Many of the rich were putting large gifts into these chests where they gave their offerings. In contrast to the rich, there was also a very poor widow who came to give her gift to the Lord by placing her offering in one of those chests.

The woman put two copper coins into a money chest. The two copper coins were worth about 1/32 of a denarius (a day’s wage in that time). Matthew 20:2 says, “Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard.” In that day a worker would usually work twelve hours to earn a day’s wages. That meant that this poor widow was putting in the amount of money that could be earned in a little over twenty minutes of work out in a vineyard.

Many of the disciples and the crowd were probably watching the rich as they placed large gifts in the offering chests. Suddenly Jesus said something that probably shocked most of the people that could hear Him. Jesus said that the extremely poor widow had given a larger offering than any of the rich. Most of the Jews thought that those were the rich were the most likely to get to heaven because they thought that God was showing them His favor by giving them riches. (Many people today have that same attitude.) Jesus had said in Luke 18:23-25 when the rich young ruler went away from Him in sadness. “But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, ‘How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.’” Here we see that Jesus said that it was difficult for those who are rich to enter the kingdom of God. This is due to the fact that people who depend on their riches instead of depending on Christ put their trust in those riches and not in the Lord.

In contrast, this woman showed by her actions that her trust was in the Lord. She did not have riches but she did have true faith. Here faith was shown by the fact that she trusted the Lord to supply the food that she would need that very evening. She was thankful for the fact that she had something to give to the Lord. This caused her to trust the Lord to supply her needs. The Christians in Philippi understood this same thing. In spite of their poverty Philippians 4:17-19 says, “Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things *sent* from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” The Philippians gave to the Lord with the same attitude as this poor widow. In the same way we want to show our children by our example that we trust in the Lord to supply our needs.

Jesus Taught about the Suffering to Come

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to fully understand that Christ is God. We also saw that we want to show them by our own example that we can trust the Lord to supply our needs just as the poor widow trusted the Lord to supply her needs. Jesus said that she gave much more than the rich because she gave her entire livelihood out of her extreme poverty. In contrast the rich gave a very small part of their riches to the Lord. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus warned His disciples about the suffering that would come in the future.

Luke 21:5-7 says, “Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, ‘These things which you see—the days will come in which not *one* stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down.’ So they asked Him, saying, ‘Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign *will there be* when these things are about to take place?’” Jesus had compared the wealthy and their gifts to the poor widow. However, many of those listening were focused on the wealth that had been used to make the temple a very beautiful place. The rich and even Herod had given much wealth to beautify the temple courtyard and walls. Some of the people began pointing out these beautiful decorations to Jesus.

Jesus used that opportunity to help the disciples realize that their focus was not to be on the building. Jesus said that the days were coming when there would not be one stone left upon another. Jesus made it clear that the temple and everything in it would be destroyed. In the year 70 A.D. the Romans came and completely destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple. They took all of the gold and everything else of value in the temple before they destroyed it. The disciples wanted to know when this would happen. The disciples also included one more question that is mentioned in Matthew 24:3, “Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” Here we see that they also asked about the end of the age. Jesus used the questions of the disciples to tell them about the things that would happen before He returned to rule on the earth so these verses also give us a description of the events that will happen to Israel during the seven year period known as the tribulation.

Jesus did not want the disciples or any future Christians to be deceived. Luke 21:8-9 says, “And He said: “Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am *He*,’ and, ‘The time has drawn near.’ Therefore do not go after them. But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end *will not come* immediately.” Jesus said there would be many false teachers. Many of these false teachers will even claim to be Christ. False teachers often use non-Biblical teachings about the future to try and deceive Christians. Some false teachers even set specific dates for the coming of Christ. Jesus did not want us to be deceived and led astray by such false teachings. Instead, Jesus said that we should expect to hear about wars, disturbances and confusion. Jesus said we do not need to be terrified by such things. Jesus that these things had to happen before His coming and that they did not mean the end would come immediately.

Jesus said that there would be great signs before His coming to rule on the earth. Luke 21:10-11 says, “Then He said to them, ‘Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.’” Here we see that there will be much conflict and many wars between the nations of the world before Christ comes to rule on the earth. Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 57:20-21, “But the wicked *are* like the troubled sea, when it cannot

rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. ‘*There is no peace,*’ says my God, ‘for the wicked.’” As long as there are evil people there will not be peace between the nations.

Jesus said that there will also be other things that happen on the earth before His coming. He said that there will be great earthquakes in various places. In fact Romans 8:20-22 says that the earth itself is looking forward to deliverance. Those verses say, “For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.” These great earthquakes will even happen in areas that do not normally have earthquakes. Jesus also said that there would be famines and pestilences (plagues).

Then Jesus said that there would be fearful sights and great signs from heaven before His coming to rule on this earth. Mark 13:24-25 says, “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.” Revelation 6:13 adds, “And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.” Then Revelation 8:12 says, “Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.” These fearful sights and great signs in the heavens will force everyone on earth to realize that something unusual is happening.

However, in addition to what is happening to the earth and the heavens, many things will also happen to the people who become followers of Christ during the tribulation. Luke 21:12-19 says, “But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute *you*, delivering *you* up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name’s sake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. Therefore settle *it* in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put *some* of you to death. And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But not a hair of your head shall be lost. By your patience possess your souls.” Here we see that those who truly follow Christ can expect to suffer. This will be especially true during the seven year period known as the tribulation.

Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:12, “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” From the time of the apostles, persecution has been present. Acts 5:40-41 says, “And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” The followers of Christ began to experience this persecution very soon after Christ returned to heaven.

Jesus also gave instructions about what to do when any follower faces persecution. He told the disciples that when a follower is brought before kings and rulers for the sake of Christ that He will cause that to turn out to be an opportunity to speak for Christ and share the Gospel. Paul certainly demonstrated this in the book of Acts. Christ said that His followers did not need to prepare in advance what they should say. Instead, Jesus promised that He will give the words to speak in such situations and those in opposition will not be able to contradict or resist the wisdom that Jesus gives. Stephen demonstrated this in Acts 6:10 where we read, “And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.”

Jesus also warned the disciples that His followers would even be betrayed by family or friends. In fact Jesus warned the disciples that some of them would even be put to death. James was the

first of the Twelve to be killed. Acts 12:1-2 says, “Now about that time Herod the king stretched out *his* hand to harass some from the church. Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword.” Throughout the generations from the time Jesus returned to heaven, followers of Jesus have suffered persecution and death from those who reject Christ. That will happen to an even greater degree during the seven years of the tribulation just before Christ returns to rule on the earth.

Those who are killed during the seven years of tribulation will be raised back to life to rule with Jesus on the earth for a thousand years. Revelation 20:4 says, “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” Here we see that the followers in that time will be raised back to physical life.

However, there is even more promised for the future after that time. Christ promised that all who follow Him will experience eternal life that will last forever. That is why Jesus said, “By your patience possess your souls.” The word translated “possess” means to acquire or obtain something. Jesus said in John 10:27-28, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.” This is a promise that we want to make certain that our physical and spiritual children understand. Even if they suffer for Jesus for a time on this earth, they can look forward to the eternal life that will never end because of the fact that Christ will keep all of His promises. That is the promise for every follower of Jesus.

Jesus Taught about His Return to Earth

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to prepare for any suffering that might come in their lives. The apostles experienced such suffering soon after Jesus returned to heaven. Others throughout the centuries have also experienced such suffering. Today, in many parts of the world, Christians continue to suffer for their faith. Such suffering will happen until Jesus comes back to rule on this earth for a thousand years so we need to prepare every follower of Jesus for the fact that those who live godly will suffer for Jesus. In our topic today, we see that Christ went on to tell the disciples about the things that will happen at the end of the tribulation just before Jesus comes back to rule on this earth.

Jesus had told the disciples that Jerusalem would be destroyed. We will see in these verses that the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. is just a little picture of the destruction that will happen during the time of the seven year tribulation. Luke 21:20-24 says, “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” Here we see that Jerusalem will suffer until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

The destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans was very complete but was just a preview of a later destruction. These verses talk about that future destruction. Here we see that these verses describe the days of vengeance when all things that are written will be fulfilled. Mark 13:14-16 says, “So when you see the ‘*abomination of desolation*,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.” Here we see that this destruction will come at the time when the ‘*abomination of desolation*’ first announced by Daniel is set up in the temple at Jerusalem. That did not happen at the time that Rome destroyed Jerusalem.

At this future time of destruction we see that the people in Judea are told to flee to the mountains. Those in the city are to get out very quickly or they will not escape. Those in the country are not to enter Jerusalem or they will not escape. We see that those days are called the days of vengeance. Once the ‘*abomination of desolation*’ is set up in the temple in Jerusalem the antichrist will only have 3 ½ years before Christ will come to bring an end to the times of the Gentiles. However, those 3 ½ years are called the time of Jacob’s trouble. Jeremiah 30:7 says, “Alas! For that day *is* great, so that none *is* like it; and it *is* the time of Jacob’s trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.” This will be an especially terrible time for those who are pregnant or are nursing babies. However, it will be a day of great suffering for all of the Jews. Many of the Jews will be killed. Others will be taken as captives to nations throughout the earth. That suffering will only be brought to an end by the return of the Lord to rule on the earth.

Luke 21:25-28 says that Jesus will return to rule on the earth with power and great glory. Those verses say, “And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them

from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.” The coming of Christ at the Rapture to take the Christians to heaven will have no advance warning and that coming is compared to a thief in the night. However, this time when Christ comes back to rule at the end of the tribulation has plenty of advance notice.

First, it will happen 3 ½ years after the ‘*abomination of desolation*’ is set up in the temple at Jerusalem. Second, we see in these verses that they will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. Third, on the earth there will be distress of nations and the people will be perplexed. Fourth, unusual things will be happening to the oceans and great tossing of the waves. Fifth, the hearts of the people on the earth will be failing them because of their great fear at all of the things that are happening and other things that they expect to happen. Sixth, the powers of the heavens will be shaken. It is when all of these things are happening that suddenly the Son of Man will come in a cloud with power and great glory. Nothing will be normal on the earth when Christ comes. That is why Christ told the disciples that the followers of Christ are to look up and lift up their heads when these things begin to happen. They can know at that time that their redemption is getting close

To illustrate the time of His coming to rule on the earth, Jesus then gave the disciples a parable. Luke 21:29-33 says, “Then He spoke to them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.” Jesus used the fig tree for this parable but He said that the same thing will happen with all of the other trees. Israel is called the fig tree in Hosea 9:10 where we read, “I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstfruits on the fig tree in its first season. *But* they went to Baal Peor, and separated themselves *to that* shame; they became an abomination like the thing they loved.” As a result, when the things mentioned as happening to Israel begin to happen it is time to realize that the coming of Christ as King will arrive very soon.

When the ‘*abomination of desolation*’ is set up in the temple, this passage and others warn the people of Israel that it is time to flee to the mountains to prevent immediate destruction. Jesus then gave a promise to let the disciples know how close the coming of the Lord would be when the Jews will need to escape to the mountains immediately to escape death. Jesus said that the generation of people that is alive at that time will not pass away until all the things take place and Christ comes back to rule on the earth. This event is so certain that Matthew, Mark and Luke all say the same thing about the certainty of that event. Mark 13:31 says, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.” Matthew says the same thing in Matthew 24:35.

Then Jesus gave a warning for all people of the need to be ready. Luke 21:34-38 says, ““But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”” And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet. Then early in the morning all the people came to Him in the temple to hear Him.”

The word translated “take heed” means to think about or to pay attention to. The desire of Jesus

is for every person to pay attention to this warning. Then Jesus warned of three things that affect the heart and will keep people from paying attention to His words. The word translated “carousing” is speaking of the morning after headache that people experience when they drink wine to excess. This prevents a person from thinking clearly and allowing the Holy Spirit to work in his or her heart. Proverbs 31:6-7 says, “Give strong drink to him who is perishing, and wine to those who are bitter of heart. Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.” This can become like a heavy weight in the life of a person.

The second word is drunkenness. The word speaks about a person that is intoxicated by alcohol at that very moment. Belshazzar was intoxicated when God caused the fingers of a man’s hand to write on the wall. When the king saw the writing going on the wall, Daniel 5:6 says, “Then the king’s countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his hips were loosened and his knees knocked against each other.” Here we see that the king could see the writing but he could not think clearly. Instead, his thoughts troubled him and he began to shake. At the same time his knees were knocking against each other.

Third we see that the cares of this life affect the heart and keep people from paying attention to the words of Jesus. The word translated “cares” means anxiety or worry. Luke 8:14 says, “Now the ones *that* fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.” Here we see that worry, riches and pleasures of life also keep people from really hearing the Word of God. Such people will not be prepared for Christ when He comes back to rule on this earth. In contrast, those who are prepared will escape all these things and stand before the Son of Man instead.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children be prepared for the coming of Christ at the Rapture of the church so that they will escape the seven years of tribulation as well as the eternal judgment to come. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children prepare for and be eagerly looking for the coming of Christ.

Judas Agreed to Betray Jesus

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children be prepared for the coming of the Lord. Then they will be taken to heaven at the Rapture of the church. That will make it possible for them to enjoy the liberty that we have in Christ because they will not need to fear either the seven years of tribulation that are coming or eternal judgment. In this topic we will learn about one who is experiencing eternal judgment because of the choices that he made in his life. We will see that Judas agreed to betray Jesus to the Jewish religious leaders.

During the last week before the crucifixion, chapter 21 concluded by saying that Jesus was teaching in the temple during the day. At night He and the disciples went out of the city and camped on the mountain called Olivet. This area was just a short walk across the Kidron Valley from the area where the temple was located in the city of Jerusalem. That made it easy for Jesus to return to the temple each morning to teach the many people who came to hear Him teach. However, at the same time the chief priests and the scribes were looking for an opportunity to kill Jesus but they did not know how to do that without any people around since the crowds arrived to hear Jesus at the temple early in the morning.

Luke 22:1-6 says, “Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people. Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude.” Suddenly we see in these verses that the chief priests and scribes were given a way to kill Jesus by Judas even though He was one of the Twelve.

The time for the Feast of Unleavened Bread was getting very close and the chief priests and scribes probably began to wonder how they could catch Jesus without any crowds around since the crowds gathered to hear Jesus teach early each morning. The Feast of Unleavened Bread began with the Passover and was followed by seven days when the people did not put any yeast into their bread. This was done each year to remember how the Lord had delivered the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt when they were slaves. God had told Moses in Exodus 12:11, “And thus you shall eat it: *with* a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It *is* the LORD’s Passover.” Then God said in Exodus 12:14-15, “So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.” Large crowds had come to Jerusalem to celebrate this feast.

It was at this very time that the chief priests wondered how to catch Jesus that Satan entered into Judas. Judas was one of the Twelve and had deceived all of the other disciples who thought that he was a faithful follower of Jesus just as they were. Jesus had told the disciples much earlier in John 6:70-71, “Jesus answered them, ‘Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?’ He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.” Judas knew that Jesus was talking about him but none of the other disciples even suspected Judas. Once Satan entered Judas he went to the chief priests and captains and asked them how he could betray Jesus to them.

The chief priests and captains were happy to hear the statement of Judas and agreed to pay him money to betray Jesus to them. Matthew 26:14-15 says, “Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, ‘What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?’ And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver.” From that moment on Judas had begun to look for the opportunity to betray Jesus to the chief priests at a time when none of the multitude would be present.

Jesus knew exactly what Judas was planning to do. As a result, Jesus was the One who controlled the time when Judas would betray Him. Jesus was carrying out the plan of the Father for Him right down to the exact moment that each thing happened. Luke 22:7-9 says, “Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, ‘Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat.’ So they said to Him, ‘Where do You want us to prepare?’” Here we see that Jesus sent Peter and John to prepare the Passover. This meant that Judas did not know where Jesus was going to eat the Passover until he went with Jesus to the Passover that evening. This meant that Judas could not betray Jesus during the Passover meal. As we see in John chapters 13 through 17 it was during and after the Passover meal that Jesus shared some of His most important teachings with the disciples. Judas had no understanding of the love that Jesus had for him. In addition, he was also showing his complete lack of love for Christ.

The New Testament clearly shows that Judas said and did the things that he said and did because he was controlled by an evil heart. John 12:4-5 says, “But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, who would betray Him, said, ‘Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?’ This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.” These verses show that the heart of Judas was motivated by self gain and the love of money. 1 Timothy 6:9-10 says, “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” Judas certainly showed the destructiveness of this root.

In fact it was after Judas left the upper room where Jesus and His disciples ate the Passover meal that Jesus gave His disciples the new commandment. John 13:30 says, “Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.” Then Jesus said just a few minutes after Judas went out in John 13:34-35, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” Judas could certainly not carry out this command and so Jesus waited until he was gone to give this commandment to the other disciples.

Luke 22:10-13 goes on to tell about the instructions that Jesus gave to Peter and John as He sent them to prepare the Passover. Those verses say, “And He said to them, ‘Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. Then you shall say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, ‘Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?’” Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready.” So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover.”

Here we see that Jesus gave Peter and John very exact details about the way that they would find the house where they were to prepare the Passover. Jesus told the two what to do once they had entered the city of Jerusalem. They were to look for a man carrying a pitcher of water. Normally women were the ones who went to the wells to get water. John 4:7 says, “A woman

of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give Me a drink.’” As a result, a man carrying a pitcher of water would be easily recognized. Peter and John were to follow this man to the house where he was taking the pitcher of water. The fact that Jesus knew that the man would be carrying a water pitcher and that he would go to the house where Jesus wanted to celebrate the Passover with His disciples is just a reminder of the fact that Jesus knew all things

Then they were to talk to the owner of the house and tell him, “The Teacher says to you, ‘Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?’” Here we see that Jesus was known at least by those who were followers of Jesus as The Teacher. That is a key thing to observe because it shows us that even though Jesus did many miracles that He was known as The Teacher rather than the miracle worker. He did miracles as a part of His ministry but that was not the main emphasis of His ministry.

Jesus said that the owner of the house would show them a large furnished upper room. Jews came to Jerusalem from many different places to celebrate the various Jewish feasts. As a result, there were many houses in Jerusalem where the owners had large rooms on the top story of the house that groups of Jews from other areas of the country or world could rent so that they could celebrate these feasts together. Jesus told Peter and John that the owner would show them such a room. Peter and John saw everything that Jesus had said would happen did happen. That was where they were to prepare for Jesus and the disciples to eat the Passover. Peter and John then prepared the Passover.

Judas showed that it was possible to deceive the other disciples so that they all thought that he was a true follower of Jesus. However, instead he was controlled the entire time by an evil heart of unbelief. We want to help our physical and spiritual children realize that not everyone who claims to be a Christian has a true faith. That is why it is important for them to understand how to clearly explain the message of repentance and faith to any who do not give evidence of true faith. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain the Gospel clearly.

Jesus Celebrated the Last Passover with His Disciples

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to realize that not everyone who claims to be a Christian has truly repented of their sin of unbelief and placed their faith in Christ and His death and resurrection. We want to help our children learn to explain the Gospel clearly from the Word of God. Then the Holy Spirit can use the Word of God that was shared to convict those who are not true Christians of the sin of unbelief, the fact that Jesus Christ is the Righteous One and that Satan has already been judged – John 16:8-11. In this topic we are going to see that Jesus celebrated the Passover with His disciples.

Peter and John had prepared the Passover for Jesus and the twelve to celebrate the Passover together. Luke 22:14-16 says, “When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. Then He said to them, ‘With *fervent* desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.’” Here we see that at sundown when it was time for the Passover dinner that Jesus and the other disciples arrived to eat the Passover together.

Jesus knew that He would be crucified the next day. He had a great longing to eat this Passover with the twelve before the suffering of the crucifixion. The Jews had celebrated the Passover for many years as they remembered how the death angel had passed over the homes of the Israelites as He went through Egypt. Exodus 12:12-13 says, “For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.” It would be the blood of Jesus that He would shed as He hung on the cross that next day that would make it possible for the Father to accept the blood of Jesus as the payment for our sin as our substitute.

Jesus told the disciples that night that the next time that He would eat the Passover would be when this was fulfilled in the kingdom of God. By His statement here, Jesus showed that the Passover had a greater meaning than just the deliverance of Israel from the land of Egypt. The Passover also gave a picture of the fact that Jesus would be the sacrifice that would make it possible for the Father to forgive the sins of all those who repented of their sin of unbelief and placed their faith in the death and resurrection of Christ. Jesus said that when He next ate the Passover in the Kingdom of God that it would be a fulfillment of the fact that the Father had blotted out our sins and had given us life in the eternal Kingdom.

Jesus also instituted the Lord’s Supper at the Passover that night. Luke 22:17-23 says, “Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, ‘Take this and divide *it* among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.’” And He took bread, gave thanks and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them, saying, ‘This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’ Likewise He also *took* the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup *is* the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you. But behold, the hand of My betrayer *is* with Me on the table. And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!’ Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing.” The Passover included the sharing of four cups. As a result, Luke mentioned both the first and the last cup. The first cup was a cup of thanksgiving and was prior to Jesus introducing the Lord’s Supper.

Jesus waited until it was time for the last cup to be shared before introducing the Lord’s Supper.

By this time Judas had already left the room. Then Jesus said something that had never before been said as the Jews ate the Passover. Jesus took some bread and broke the bread into pieces. He passed these pieces to the disciples. Then Jesus told the disciples, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." Suddenly Jesus had given a whole new meaning to the Passover. He had just shown by His words that the original Passover had also given a picture of the fact that He would be the One who would pay the penalty for sin and make possible the forgiveness of sins. Then Jesus said, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." The Old Covenant was the Ten Commandments. All that the Old Covenant could do was show that every person was guilty of sin.

Jesus said that His body would be given for them and that also includes us. He said that as we eat the bread that we are to remember Him. Jesus also gave new meaning to the final cup that was shared. Jesus said that this cup represented His blood which was shed for the disciples and also for all people. Jesus said that this was a New Covenant which now made possible the forgiveness of sins. The Jews had three kinds of covenants. The first was a salt covenant which meant that it was in effect until one of the persons making that covenant died. The second was a shoe covenant which was in effect as long as either of those making the shoe covenant had any descendants. The close relative of Boaz made a shoe covenant in Ruth 4:8 when he took off his shoe and handed it to Boaz. That verse says, "Therefore the close relative said to Boaz, 'Buy it for yourself.' So he took off his sandal." The third kind of covenant is a blood covenant which is an eternal covenant.

God made a blood covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15:5-7. When it came time to confirm that covenant, Genesis 15:17 says, "And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces." Here we see that only God signed the covenant because He put Abraham to sleep while He went between the pieces. In the same way, when Christ died on the cross, only Christ was on the cross and our sins were placed on Him. This means that only God signed the New Covenant and so only God could break the New Covenant.

Jesus also told the disciples that one of them would betray Him. Jesus said that the One who betrayed Him would face judgment because He had never repented of His sin and placed His faith in Christ. Jesus knew the hearts of each of the disciples. John said in John 6:70-71, "Jesus answered them, 'Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?' He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve." Jesus had shown the same love to Judas that He had shown to each of the other disciples so each one questioned who would do such a thing.

However, the disciples were also thinking about other things that night. Luke 22:24-27 says, "Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. And He said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' But not so *among* you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who *is* greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? *Is* it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.'" At the very time that Jesus was talking about His coming death, the disciples were debating which of them would be considered the greatest. This debate may have been the reason why John 13:1-17 tells us about Jesus washing the feet of the disciples and telling them that He had given them an example to follow.

These verses tell us why they needed that example. Each of the disciples wanted to be the most important disciple. In contrast, Jesus wanted each disciple to understand they were thinking the way that the world thinks instead of thinking in a way that brings glory to God. The Gentile kings wanted to be called 'benefactors' which means one who had done service for their

country. At the same time that the kings wanted such titles they were actually often dictators who served only themselves.

Jesus told the disciples that if they wanted to be the greatest, they should be like the youngest or the one that serves. In Mark 10:42-45 we see that Jesus had told the disciples earlier, “But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, ‘You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.’” At that time Jesus had told the disciples that the one who desires to be great serves others. He said that true greatness is the result of becoming the bonds slave of all.

Jesus gave an example that night of serving one another by washing the feet of the disciples. John 13:15-17 says, “For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” Jesus gave an example and said, “Do as I have done to you.” He then told them that true blessing comes from doing and not just knowing.

We also want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to serve others. We want to show them by our example that serving others is a key way to show the love of Christ. Galatians 5:13 says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to serve others in love.

Jesus Told Peter that he would Deny Jesus

In our last topic, we saw that Jesus celebrated the Passover with His disciples. We see that as they were observing the Passover that Jesus also showed them the importance of serving one another in love. We also want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to serve one another in love by giving them an example to follow. In this topic we are going to see that Jesus also took time that night to teach Peter a very important lesson about trying to serve the Lord in his own strength.

Jesus had shown the disciples the importance of serving one another and then told them that they would be blessed as they served one another. Then Jesus went on to say in Luke 22:28-30, “But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed *one* upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Here we see that Jesus went on to tell the disciples about the reward that they would receive for their faithful service to Him.

The word translated “bestow” and “bestowed” means to make a covenant or to arrange. Here we see that Jesus made a promise or a covenant with the disciples that the earthly kingdom promised in the Old Testament would be established although that would not happen immediately. Just before Jesus returned to heaven Acts 1:6-7 says, “Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, ‘Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’” And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.” Jesus said that the Father had promised Him this earthly kingdom and here Jesus promised the disciples that they would be in that kingdom.

Later John learned more about the time of that kingdom which is still future and will come just before the final judgments. Revelation 20:4 says, “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” In the first six verses of Revelation 20 we see it mentions six times that the length of this earthly kingdom will be one thousand years.

Jesus told the disciples that they would eat and drink at His table in that kingdom. David had illustrated what it meant to eat at the table of a king when he told Mephibosheth in 2 Samuel 9:7, “So David said to him, ‘Do not fear, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father’s sake, and will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather; and you shall eat bread at my table continually.’” Those who ate at the table of the king were those whom the king honored. In addition, Jesus also told the disciples that in the kingdom they would sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Jesus went on to warn Peter about the danger of depending on his own strength. Luke 22:31-34 says, “And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren.’” But he said to Him, ‘Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.’ Then He said, ‘I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me.’” In these verses, we see that Christ chose to use the name Simon and repeat it twice even though Jesus was the One who had changed his name from Simon to Peter. Jesus knew that Peter would depend on his own

strength when he was tested later that night.

Here we see that Satan had asked specifically for permission to sift Peter and the other disciples as wheat. The word translated “sift” means to shake in a sieve or to try to test a person so strongly that the person would reject their faith in Christ. Many years earlier Satan had spoken to God about Job in Job 1:10-11 and said, “Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!” Satan had seen that Job did not reject his faith. However, Satan wanted to try and see if he could get Peter to reject his faith.

Jesus said that He had already prayed for Peter that his faith would not fail. Peter would deny that night that he knew Jesus but that did not mean that his faith would fail. Instead, it would mean that he felt like a failure. Here we see two key things that Satan wants to do. First, he would love to overthrow the faith of a person. It would be illustrated again that night that Satan cannot overthrow true faith. Jesus said in John 10:27-28, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.” Christ made it clear that genuine faith cannot be overthrown.

However, Satan also has a second goal. Even if he cannot overthrow the faith of a person, he wants to make a Christian feel like such a failure that the person feels that the Lord can no longer use that person. Jesus also told Peter that he would deny Him three times. Peter certainly felt like such a failure when he did deny Jesus three times later that night. In fact Peter felt like such a failure that we see in John 21 that he decided to return to fishing. However, Jesus made it clear that even when a person fails that his faith has not failed. Jesus knew that He was going to restore Peter and that Peter would turn back to Him and show true love and obedience. As a result, Jesus told him that when he returned that Jesus had a ministry for him to strengthen the other brethren.

John 21:15-17 says, “So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Feed My lambs.’ He said to him again a second time, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Tend My sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?’ Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed My sheep.’” That morning Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him more than he loved the fish. Peter made it clear that he loved Jesus more than the fish. As a result, Jesus told him to feed and tend the lambs and sheep. In fact Jesus even gave him the opportunity to preach on the Day of Pentecost just a few weeks later when 3000 repented, believed and became followers of Jesus in Acts 2.

Luke 22:35-38 says, “And He said to them, ‘When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?’ So they said, ‘Nothing.’ Then He said to them, ‘But now, he who has a money bag, let him take *it*, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: *‘And He was numbered with the transgressors.’* For the things concerning Me have an end.’ So they said, ‘Lord, look, here *are* two swords.’ And He said to them, ‘It is enough.’” The last part of Isaiah 53:12 says, “And He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” This was the reason why Jesus said that a sword was needed in order to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah.

That very night Jesus would be a part of a group that would use a sword to try and destroy. John 18:10-11 says, “Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus. So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?” Jesus knew that Peter would try to defend Him in Peter’s own strength before he would deny Jesus. Luke 22:50-51 adds, “And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus answered and said, ‘Permit even this.’ And He touched his ear and healed him.” Peter could have been charged with attempted murder but Jesus removed the evidence by healing the ear.

Christ did a second thing in these verses. He reminded the disciples how he had provided for them when He sent them out two by two. Jesus asked the disciples if they lacked anything when He sent them. When Jesus sent out the twelve and later the seventy, He knew that they needed to learn to trust Him to supply their needs. That is one of the key lessons that every Christian needs to learn as he begins to serve the Lord. A Christian that has never learned that the Lord can supply his needs will often be fearful and focus on human plans instead of learning to trust the Lord. Philippians 4:6-7 says, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Those who do not learn to trust are often driven by the fear of people or things instead of learning to be led by the Lord.

At the same time, Christ also let the disciples know that it was all right to take the things that they needed with them as they traveled. This would indicate that they what they had learned about trust would give them great boldness as they also learned to depend on the Holy Spirit beginning with the Day of Pentecost. These are two lessons that we also want to help our physical and spiritual children learn. We want to help them learn to trust the Lord to supply their needs and also help them learn to yield to the Holy Spirit moment by moment so that they are able to serve the Lord with boldness.

Jesus was Betrayed by Judas

In our last topic, we saw that Jesus wanted to help the disciples learn to depend on Him for strength instead of trying to serve the Lord in their own strength. At the same time we have seen that it was also important for them to remember that Jesus is able to supply their needs as they serve Him. Today, we are going to see that one of the disciples never did learn either of these lessons.

We go on to see that Jesus demonstrated the importance of prayer especially in times of testing. Luke 22:39-40 says, “Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. When He came to the place, He said to them, ‘Pray that you may not enter into temptation.’” In all of our lives we experience times when we have to deal with temptation. That is due to the fact that temptation comes from three different sources. 1 John 2:16 says, “For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.” Jesus knew that both the disciples and all Christians will deal with temptation. As a result, He illustrated two ways to avoid entering into temptation – one at the beginning of His ministry and the second in this passage. In Luke 4:1-13 we see that each time that Jesus was tempted that He answered the temptation with the Word of God and experienced victory over the temptations of Satan.

Here we see that Jesus took the disciples with Him to the garden on the Mount of Olives where He normally went for prayer when He spent time in the city of Jerusalem. The word translated “enter” means to come into or to take possession of. Jesus realized that the disciples would soon have temptation take possession of their thoughts and hearts. As a result, Jesus told them how to avoid yielding to temptation. Jesus said that the way to avoid letting temptation take possession of them was to pray. Jesus had warned Peter and the other disciples that Satan had asked for Peter so that he could sift him as wheat.

Jesus gave an example by His own prayer of the kind of prayer that will give us victory over temptation. Luke 22:42 says, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.” Here we see that the way to have victory over temptation is to pray for the will of God rather than praying for our own desires. 1 John 5:14-15 says, “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” When we pray for the will of God we can know that God will both hear us and also answer our prayer according to His will. As a result, we will have victory over temptation.

We see that Jesus moved a short distance from the disciples before He began His prayer to the Father. Luke 22:41-46 says, “And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, ‘Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.’ Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. Then He said to them, “Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation.”

We see how the Father answered Jesus when Jesus prayed for the will of the Father to be done. We see that the Father sent an angel from heaven to strengthen Him. The word translated “strengthen” means to make strong. The only other place this word is used in the New

Testament is Acts 9:19 where we read, “So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.” In Acts we see that Saul was given physical strength. Here in our passage we see that the Father sent an angel to give Jesus spiritual strength. The same is true in our own lives. When we pray for the will of God to be done the Lord will give us the spiritual strength that is needed to carry out His will.

Jesus was experiencing great agony in the garden that night. First, He knew that He would soon bear our sins on the cross. 1 Peter 2:24 says, “Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.” Second, and much more difficult for Jesus was the fact that He knew that He would be separated from the Father during the time that He bore our sins. Mark 15:33-34 says, “Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which is translated, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’” This is the only time that the Father and Son ever experienced or will experience separation.

Because of this coming separation, we see that Jesus was in great agony. We see that the way that Jesus responded to this great agony was by praying more earnestly. Again we have an example for our own lives. We also see that the sweat of Jesus became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. This was not sweat from hot weather because John 18:18 said just a short time later, “Now the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself.” Here we see that it was quite cold. Hematidrosis is a condition where the small blood vessels break causing blood to mix with sweat. This can happen when a person is experiencing very severe mental or physical suffering. Here we see that blood mixed with sweat was coming from the skin of Jesus in such large amounts that there were great drops of blood falling to the ground. Jesus prayed earnestly in this great agony and the Father sent an angel to strengthen Him.

After praying Jesus returned to the disciples. There He found them sleeping. We see that they were sleeping because of their great sorrow since they did not fully understand but they knew that something very difficult was going to happen that night. Here we see a great contrast. Jesus prepared for His suffering by praying. The disciples did not prepare but slept instead. We will see that they were not prepared when testing came and a short time later forsook Jesus and fled. That is why Jesus told them here, “Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation.” The word translated “enter into” means to come into a house or a city. The disciples were going to come into a time of great temptation because they failed to pray and they would fail that night.

At that very moment Judas was leading a large group of people to the garden so that he could betray Jesus to them. Luke 22:47-53 says, “And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, ‘Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?’ When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they said to Him, ‘Lord, shall we strike with the sword?’ And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus answered and said, ‘Permit even this.’ And He touched his ear and healed him. Then Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders who had come to Him, ‘Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs? When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.’” Here we see that Judas chose to use a kiss which normally speaks of love as the way to betray Jesus.

The disciples suddenly realized what was going to happen. Peter immediately took action.

John 18:10 says, “Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus.” Since Luke was a doctor, he mentioned that it was the right ear that Peter cut off. Peter was standing next to Christ and was ready to take on a whole army of men. Later that night he would be sitting around a fire with some of these men and deny that he even knew Jesus. That is why Jesus told the disciples to pray that they would not enter into temptation.

However, we also see that Jesus protected Peter. There were many witnesses there that night who could testify that Peter was guilty of attempted murder. However, Jesus touched the ear of Malchus and healed the ear. Jesus healed people completely so there was no evidence that the ear of Malchus had been cut off. As a result, there was no evidence that anyone could use to convict Peter of attempted murder. At the same time we do not read that any of those who came to arrest Jesus believed in Jesus that night even though they saw Jesus perform this miracle. That group included the chief priests, the Levites who kept guard in and around the temple and the Sanhedrin (elders). As a result, this group is called a great multitude in Matthew 26:47 and Mark 14:43.

After healing the ear of the servant, Jesus then asked the entire group that had come to arrest Him a question and also made a statement, “Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs? When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.” Jesus forced the chief priests, the captains of the temple and the elders to think about what they were doing by His question. They had to recognize that they were treating Him like a robber. Jesus actually confronted them by reminding them that they had not tried to seize Him in the temple when he was in the temple each day. However, the most powerful statement about their actions was when He told them that they had chosen to arrest Him under the cover of darkness. This was really evidence of the fact that they knew exactly what they were doing and knew that what they were doing was totally wrong. We want to help our physical and spiritual children realize that when people are doing what they know is evil that they want to use the darkness to hide their sinful deeds.

Jesus was Condemned by the Sanhedrin

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children realize that when people know that what they are doing is evil that they try to hide their deeds under the cover of darkness. Jesus said in John 3:19, “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” The chief priests, elders and Judas certainly demonstrated the truth of that verse that night. We will see that these leaders continued to demonstrate their evil hearts by holding a trial for Jesus in the middle of the night which was against the law.

It was probably now close to midnight. Luke 22:54-62 says, “Having arrested Him, they led *Him* and brought Him into the high priest’s house. But Peter followed at a distance. Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. And a certain servant girl, seeing him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said, ‘This man was also with Him.’ But he denied Him, saying, ‘Woman, I do not know Him.’ And after a little while another saw him and said, ‘You also are of them.’ But Peter said, ‘Man, I am not!’ Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, ‘Surely this *fellow* also was with Him, for he is a Galilean.’ But Peter said, ‘Man, I do not know what you are saying!’ Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ So Peter went out and wept bitterly.” Here we see that the first trial of Jesus was at the home of the high priest in the middle of the night.

John tells us in John 18:13-14, “And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.” Then Mark 15:54-55 adds, “Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree.” Finally the high priest said in Matthew 26:63-66, “But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, ‘I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.’ Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, ‘He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?’ They answered and said, ‘He is deserving of death.’” Here we see that their goal was to pronounce Jesus guilty and condemn him to death.

Meanwhile, Peter had followed Jesus at a distance and had entered the courtyard of the high priest. Some of the men started a fire in the courtyard and sat down together. Then Peter sat down with them. One of the servant girls saw Peter sitting by the fire and said, “This man was also with Him.” Peter immediately denied and said, “Woman, I do not know Him.” Here we see that Peter was depending on his own strength and he acted and spoke out of fear. A little while later another person said, “You also are of them.” Peter again spoke out of fear and said, “Man, I am not!”

About an hour later someone else said with great confidence, “Surely this *fellow* also was with Him, for he is a Galilean.” Matthew 26:73 says, “And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, “Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you.” Here we see that Peter spoken with a Galilean accent and so his own words caused this person to recognize

that Peter was a follower of Jesus. Peter gave his third denial and said, “Man, I do not know what you are saying!” At that very moment the rooster crowed and Jesus looked at Peter with an intent look. This was probably also a look of great compassion because Jesus had warned Peter earlier that this was exactly what he would do. Then Peter remembered the words of Jesus and realized what he had just done. Peter was suddenly filled with grief for what he had just done and went out of the courtyard to a place where he could be alone and there he wept bitterly.

Back in the courtyard Luke 22:63-65 says, “Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him. And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, ‘Prophecy! Who is the one who struck You?’ And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him.” Here we see that the chief priests and the others who were there that night did many things to show their hatred against Jesus. This was not a legal trial because it was done at night and under the cover of darkness the religious leaders showed their hatred for Christ by the way that they physically and verbally abused Jesus.

They mocked Jesus and spoke abusive words to Him. They beat Him. They also taunted Him by blindfolding Him and then taking turns striking Him on the face and asking Him to tell them who had hit Him. They also spoke many things that were blasphemous against Jesus. Leviticus 19:15 says, “You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor.” The things that the chief priests and elders were doing to Jesus were all various forms of injustice and so they were against the law because the law required that everyone be judged in righteousness.

The Jewish leaders actually had two trials during the night which was illegal because it was not considered legal to have a criminal trial during the night. The first trial was before Annas who was considered the high priest by the Jews. That trial is recorded in John 18:13-24. The second trial was before Caiaphas whom the Romans had appointed as the high priest in place of Annas. That trial is recorded in Matthew 26:57-68 and Mark 14:55-65. These trials were actually held before the chief priests and council because Mark 14:55-56 says, “Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree.” Here we even see that they were looking for false witnesses to give them an excuse to condemn Jesus.

However, Luke 22:66-71 says, “As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council, saying, ‘If You are the Christ, tell us.’ But He said to them, ‘If I tell you, you will by no means believe. And if I also ask *you*, you will by no means answer Me or let *Me* go. Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God.’ Then they all said, ‘Are You then the Son of God?’ So He said to them, ‘You *rightly* say that I am.’ And they said, ‘What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth.’” Here we see that the chief priests and council knew what they had done at night was illegal and so they waited until daybreak to give their formal judgment to make it appear like they had obeyed the law.

Here we see that they asked Jesus the same basic questions that they had asked Jesus during the night. They immediately asked Jesus, “If You are the Christ, tell us.” Before answering their question, Jesus summarized their unbelief. He told them that they would not believe even if He told them that He was the Christ. In addition, Jesus told them that there were two other things that they would not do. They would not answer His questions and they would not let Him go. By this last statement Jesus made it clear that this was not a trial but was actually the carrying out of a decision that they had made much earlier. There was no way that they would have an honest trial because an honest trial would have shown that Jesus was innocent.

Then Jesus said, “Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God.” This statement caused the religious leaders to be filled with anger because they knew that Jesus was saying that He was the Son of God and that He would sit on the right hand of the Father. This anger was shown by all those who tried to deny that Jesus was the Son of God. Later in Acts 7:56-57 we read, “And said, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord.” Here we see that when Stephen said that Jesus was standing on the right hand of the Father that the Jews there plugged their ears because they did not even want to hear. This same attitude was present in the lives of the Sanhedrin as they looked for a way to destroy Jesus.

Finally the Sanhedrin asked Jesus directly, “Are You then the Son of God?” Jesus made no effort to try and please or deceive the Sanhedrin when they asked a direct question. Immediately Jesus answered, “You *rightly* say that I am.” The 70 men that made up the Sanhedrin suddenly had to make a choice. They had to decide if Jesus was insane, if He was a liar or if He was telling the truth. His miracles including the raising of Lazarus from the dead after four days showed that He was not insane and that He was not a liar. That left the Sanhedrin with another choice. They had to recognize that Jesus is God and worship Him or they had to deny what they knew to be true. Nearly all of the men on the Sanhedrin chose to accuse Jesus of blasphemy instead of worship Him.

Many people today are like the Sanhedrin. They are choosing to deny that Jesus is the Christ so that they can continue to follow their own sinful ways. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to obey the words of Ephesians 4:15 which says, “but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ.” Christ showed love and forgiveness even to those who put Him to death. We want to help our children learn to show that same love by our own example. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children by example the importance of speaking the truth in love even when people strongly oppose.

Jesus was Tried by Pilate and Herod

In our last topic, we saw that we want to show our physical and spiritual children by our example the importance of showing love even when people accuse us falsely or even persecute us. Jesus gave us His example when He forgave those who chose to accuse Jesus of blasphemy rather than recognize Him as God and worship Him. In this topic we will see that they took Jesus to Pilate so that he would be the one who gave the permission for Jesus to be crucified.

The Jewish Sanhedrin said that Jesus was guilty of blasphemy. However, that was not the charge that they gave when they took Jesus to Pilate. Luke 23:1-5 says, “Then the whole multitude of them arose and led Him to Pilate. And they began to accuse Him, saying, “We found this *fellow* perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.” Then Pilate asked Him, saying, “Are You the King of the Jews?” He answered him and said, “*It is as you say.*” So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, “I find no fault in this Man.” But they were the more fierce, saying, “He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place.” In this charge we see that the Sanhedrin wanted to make it appear that Jesus was a threat to the Roman government. They made three specific charges.

First, they accused Jesus of perverting the nation. The word translated “perverting” means to turn aside from the right path or to corrupt. The Sanhedrin wanted Pilate to think that Jesus was corrupting the nation. Second, they accused Jesus of forbidding the people to pay taxes to Caesar. This was an effort to try and convince Pilate that Jesus was a threat to the Roman government. Of course that charge was totally false because Luke 20:24 says, “And He said to them, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” Third, the Sanhedrin accused Jesus of calling Himself Christ, a King. It was their hope that Pilate would feel that was the basis for an attempt to lead a rebellion against Roman rule.

Pilate immediately asked Jesus about this third charge when he said, “Are You the King of the Jews?” John 18:36-37 gives the full answer that Jesus gave to Pilate when those verses say, “Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.’ Pilate therefore said to Him, ‘Are You a king then?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.’” Pilate immediately knew by this answer that Jesus was no threat to the Roman government. Pilate then answered, “I find no fault in this Man.”

The answer by Pilate only caused the Jewish religious leaders to shout louder. They said, “He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place.” Pilate had an idea when the religious leaders said that Jesus was from Galilee. Luke 23:6-8 says, “When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked if the Man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that He belonged to Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long *time* to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him.” Suddenly Pilate saw a way to shift the decision to Herod.

Herod was the Roman ruler who was over the area of Galilee at that time. In addition, Herod also happened to be visiting Jerusalem at that very time. Pilate immediately asked if Jesus was a Galilean. When Pilate learned that Jesus was from Galilee, Pilate immediately sent Jesus to

Herod. Herod was very happy to see Jesus. He had wanted to see Jesus for a long time. There were actually two reasons why he had wanted to see Jesus. One is mentioned here. We see that Herod had heard about the many miracles that Jesus had done and he hoped to see Jesus perform a miracle.

However, there was also a second reason that Herod wanted to see Jesus. Matthew 14:1-3 says, "At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him." For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife." Herod had later beheaded John the Baptist. Then he started hearing about the miracles that Jesus was doing. Herod said that the miracles were being done by John the Baptist whom he thought had risen from the dead.

From the time that Herod thought that John had risen from the dead he had desired to see Jesus. This was probably due to the fact that his conscience continued to bother him. Matthew 14:6-10 says, "But when Herod's birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod. Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, "Give me John the Baptist's head here on a platter." And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded it to be given to her. So he sent and had John beheaded in prison." Here we see that the second reason why Herod wanted to see Jesus for a long time was due to the fact that he wanted to make certain that John, the one he had beheaded, had not risen from the dead. Here we see that a conscience can have a very powerful impact on a person because of the guilt that the person feels.

We read what happened when Pilate sent Jesus to Herod. Luke 23:9-12 says, "Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked *Him*, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other." Herod was very anxious to see Jesus but we see that He had the same attitude that Pilate had shown.

Herod asked Jesus many questions. However, Jesus responded to Herod in a very different way than He had responded to Pilate. Instead of answering Herod, Jesus did not give any answer. Mark 6:17-20 says, "For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. Because John had said to Herod, 'It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.' Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly." Herod had often listened to John the Baptist and had chosen each time to reject his message. Instead, he had John beheaded to please Herodias. As a result, Jesus knew that Herod had made the choice to harden his heart and reject the message so Jesus gave no answer to Herod that morning.

Meanwhile the chief priests and scribes made loud accusations against Jesus. Herod heard those accusations and saw that Jesus did not answer them. Then Herod gathered his men of war. Herod and the men of war treated Jesus with great contempt. They treated Jesus as though He was worthless. Then they chose to mock and make fun of Jesus. They even chose to put a gorgeous robe on Jesus to show their contempt as they mocked Him.

Mark 15:16-20 describes the treatment that Jesus received from the soldiers, "Then the soldiers led Him away into the hall called Praetorium, and they called together the whole garrison. And

they clothed Him with purple; and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it on His *head*, and began to salute Him, “Hail, King of the Jews!” Then they struck Him on the head with a reed and spat on Him; and bowing the knee, they worshiped Him. And when they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him.” Whether the Roman soldiers of Pilate did this at a separate time than Herod’s men of war is unclear but Herod and the soldiers of both Pilate and Herod showed great contempt for Jesus.

We also see that the common rejection of Jesus by both Pilate and Herod changed their relationship with each other. We see that Herod and Pilate became friends that day. Prior to that time the two men had enmity and hatred toward one another. We see that this friendship was formed because of their mutual rejection of Jesus. They both knew that Jesus was innocent and they both chose to reject Him. Pilate said at least three times “I find no fault in Him.” – John 18:38, 19:4 and John 19:6 Pilate even tried to wash His hands of the whole thing as Matthew 27:24 says, “When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, “I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it.” Herod also knew that Jesus was innocent and he also chose to reject Jesus. Here we see that the evil hearts of both men caused them to become friends because of the way that they chose to reject Jesus.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that when people choose to rebel and reject Jesus that many times their mutual rejection will cause them to form a friendship. However, such a friendship is based on their own fear of judgment and not on their trust of one another. That kind of a friendship will never bring inner peace. Instead, it will cause great fear and guilt. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand why such friendships can never bring inner peace.

Jesus was Condemned by Pilate

In our last topic, we saw that Jesus experienced trials before both Pilate and Herod. After Herod and his men of war finished mocking Jesus we see that Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate. We also saw in our last topic that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand why Pilate and Herod became friends based on their mutual rejection of Jesus that day. However, that friendship could never bring inner peace. In this topic we see that Pilate formally condemned Jesus and ordered His crucifixion.

Pilate made one final attempt to release Jesus before he gave into the will of the chief priests and Sanhedrin. Luke 23:13-17 says, “Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, said to them, “You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined *Him* in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him. I will therefore chastise Him and release *Him*” (for it was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast).” Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate. Pilate then called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people who were there that morning.

Pilate summarized the charges that this crowd had made against Jesus. He summarized those charges by saying, “You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people.” The word translated misleads means “to turn away”. Pilate understood the real reason why the Jews had brought Jesus. Matthew 27:17-18 says, “Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?” For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.” Pilate knew that the religious leaders were controlled by envy and that Jesus had committed no crime.

Pilate said that he and Herod had both examined Jesus while the religious leaders had observed and that neither of them had found any fault with Jesus regarding any of the accusations that the religious leaders had brought against Jesus. Both Roman leaders said that Jesus had done nothing worthy of death. John 18:38 says, “Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?” And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, “I find no fault in Him at all.” Pilate recognized that Jesus was innocent of any crime and that he should have immediately released Jesus.

However, Pilate wanted to please the Jews. As a result, Pilate said, “I will therefore chastise Him and release *Him*.” Pilate wanted to please the Jews to try and maintain a good relationship with them. Here we see that Pilate was willing to give a Roman beating to Jesus in order to please the Jews as he apparently thought that would satisfy their envy. John 19:1-3 says, “So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. Then they said, “Hail, King of the Jews!” And they struck Him with their hands.” A Roman scourging was a beating by several Roman soldiers who used a wooden handle to which several leather thongs were attached. At the end of each leather thong was a piece of sharp metal which would sometimes cut clear to the bones. Some people given a Roman scourging died during the beating. Pilate probably thought that the Jews would be satisfied once Jesus had been severely beaten.

Instead of satisfying the Jews Luke 23:18-22 says, “And they all cried out at once, saying, ‘Away with this *Man*, and release to us Barabbas’— who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder. Pilate, therefore, wishing to release Jesus,

again called out to them. But they shouted, saying, ‘Crucify *Him*, crucify Him!’ Then he said to them the third time, ‘Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let *Him* go.’” Here we see that the Jews made it clear to Pilate that they would not be satisfied if he just gave Jesus a scourging. They wanted His death.

Pilate knew that it was necessary for him to release one prisoner to them at the time of the feast. One of the worst criminals in the prison at that time was a man by the name of Barabbas. This man had been involved in a rebellion so the Romans had a reason why they would like to kill him. We also see that Barabbas was guilty of murder. Normally people do not want a murderer released because they fear that the murderer will kill additional people. As a result, Pilate gave the Jewish religious leaders a choice between Jesus and Barabbas. John 18:39-40 says, “But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?” Then they all cried again, saying, “Not this Man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a robber.” These verses also tell us that Barabbas was a robber. Pilate probably thought that the Jews would much rather have Jesus freed than Barabbas.

However, the religious leaders continued to demand that Jesus be crucified. Pilate asked the Jews for a third time what Jesus had done because Pilate said that he had found no reason why Jesus should be put to death. As a result, he again offered his compromise of just giving Jesus a Roman scourging. It was at this point that the scourging was actually given and the Roman soldiers mocked Jesus and placed a crown of thorns on His head. John 19:4-6 says, “Pilate then went out again, and said to them, ‘Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him.’ Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, ‘Behold the Man!’ Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, ‘Crucify Him, crucify Him!’ Pilate said to them, ‘You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him.’” Pilate did everything that he could do without crucifying Jesus to try and please the Jews.

Pilate told them again that he did not find any fault in Jesus. He even told the Jews that they could take Jesus and crucify Him. Here we see that Pilate knew Jesus was innocent and did not want to be held responsible for the death of Jesus. In fact Matthew 27:24 says, “When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, “I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it.” Pilate had said three times that Jesus was innocent so he actually gave testimony that the Jewish religious leaders were guilty. They accepted that guilt that day because the Jews said in Matthew 27:25, “And all the people answered and said, “His blood be on us and on our children.” Later the high priest would try to deny their guilt. In Acts 5:28 the high priest said, “Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!” The religious leaders accepted blame at that moment but later did not want to accept blame for their choice.

However, Pilate also had to make a choice that day. He had to decide whether he would condemn an innocent man to death in order to please the Jews or do what he knew was right and release Jesus. Luke 23:23-25 says, “But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed. So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested. And he released to them the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will.” The Jews were not ready to quit demanding the crucifixion of Jesus even though Pilate had already given Jesus a scourging.

The religious leaders were very insistent in their demands. That began to shout with loud voices that Jesus should be crucified. Pilate had condemned the chief priests, the rulers and the

other people that were there that day when he had declared three times that Jesus was innocent. Now Pilate was forced to make his own choice. He could do what he knew was right and release Jesus or he could make the choice to condemn himself by satisfying the Jewish religious leaders. We see that Pilate condemned himself and made the choice to satisfy the Jewish religious leaders by commanding what the religious leaders were demanding. Pilate may try to wash his hands throughout eternity because of the choice that he made that day.

Pilate then released Barabbas even though he was guilty of rebellion, murder and robbery. Then he delivered Jesus to the will of the Jewish religious leaders. Here we see that both the Jewish religious leaders and Pilate had made their choice to reject Jesus and condemn him to death. We do see the great love and mercy of Jesus shown that day. Later as Jesus hung on the cross, Luke 23:34 says, "Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.' And they divided His garments and cast lots." Pilate, the Jewish religious leaders, the soldiers and everyone else involved that day will not be judged at the final judgment for their evil deeds that day because Jesus in His mercy asked the Father to forgive them for their sins of that day.

Instead, each person who rejects Jesus will be judged according to all of their other works excluding those that were committed that day. Revelation 20:12-13 says, "And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works." The religious leaders, Pilate and all of the others who reject Christ will be judged for their sinful works excluding those committed that day. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that Jesus died for all our sins and so we helped to place Jesus on that cross. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand the mercy that Jesus showed to all of us that day.

Jesus Showed Mercy as He was Crucified

In our last topic, we saw that both the Jewish religious leaders and Pilate were guilty because of their part in condemning Jesus to death. However, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that it was really our sins and the sins of the whole world that caused Jesus to willingly to go to the cross to pay the penalty for the sins of all people. We mentioned that Jesus showed His mercy as He was crucified. We will learn more about that mercy in this topic.

Once Pilate gave his word to crucify Jesus, Jesus was immediately led away for crucifixion. Luke 23:26-31 says, “Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear *it* after Jesus. And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. But Jesus, turning to them, said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, ‘Blessed *are* the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!’ Then they will begin ‘*to say to the mountains, “Fall on us!” and to the hills, “Cover us!”*’ For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?” The soldiers led Jesus from the place where He was judged to the place where He would be crucified.

Jesus was forced to carry His own cross as they started toward the place where He would be crucified. John 19:17 says, “And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha.” However, the scourging that the soldiers had given Jesus had been very severe. As a result, Mark 15:21 says, “Then they compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear His cross.” The fact that Mark named the two sons of this man is an indication that he and his family became followers of Jesus and were known to at least some of the early Christians. This Rufus may even be the one mentioned in Romans 16:13 where we read, “Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.” If so, the wife and son of Simon were still alive when the book of Romans was written. Simon was just coming in from the country when the soldiers commanded him to carry the cross of Jesus to the place where Jesus was crucified.

Many people followed Jesus as He was led away to be crucified. This great multitude included both men and women. Jesus turned and spoke to the women to warn them what would later happen to them and their children. Jesus said to these women, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.” Then Jesus went on to explain why the women of the city of Jerusalem should weep for themselves and for their children. Jesus said that terrible days would be coming for the city of Jerusalem in the near future. Jesus was speaking about the total destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. which happened only 40 years later.

Jesus knew that the coming destruction of Jerusalem would bring both great sorrow and also death to anyone who was in Jerusalem at that time. The women who were alive when that destruction came would say that the women who were blessed were those who had no children because they would not have to see their children killed. Such women would never have known the joy of giving birth or the joy of holding those children close as they nursed them after birth. However, those women who had never experienced that joy would be blessed because they would not have to watch those children as they were tortured and put to death.

Jesus said that the women would cry out to the mountains and hills to fall on them and cover them so that they would not see their children tortured and killed in that coming destruction. Then Jesus gave a very interesting comparison as he said in Luke 23:31, “For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?” Jesus compared Himself to a green tree. He was still young and in the prime of His life. He was also the source of life for others. Just a few weeks earlier Jesus had said in John 11:25, “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.’” In contrast, the Jewish nation had existed for a long time and had rebelled against God throughout that time so the nation was like the dry wood that was ready for judgment and many would soon be destroyed and burned.

Luke 23:32-34 says, “There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.’” Here we see that there were also two others who were crucified at the same time that Jesus was crucified. However, they were criminals and were going to pay the penalty for their own sins. Matthew and Mark mentioned that these men were robbers but the Romans did not put people who were just robbers to death. They had probably also been followers of Barabbas in the rebellion since Jesus replaced Barabbas. Jesus was crucified at the place called Calvary. Mark 15:22 says, “And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull.”

We see that Jesus was placed in the middle with one criminal on each side of Him. This would have been an additional insult by the Roman soldiers because they treated Him like He was the worst of the common criminals. However, the soldiers did not realize it but they were fulfilling prophecy from the Old Testament. Isaiah 53:12 says, “Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” Jesus was placed between the two criminals because Isaiah had prophesied that He would be numbered with the transgressors. We see in the next verse that Jesus also prayed for all of those who were involved in His crucifixion.

After Jesus was placed on the cross He prayed, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” Here we see that Jesus prayed for the Jewish religious leaders, Pilate, Herod, the soldiers and everyone else involved in His crucifixion that day. Acts 13:27-28 says, “For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him. And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death.” They did not know Jesus because they did not believe that He was the Messiah. As 1 Corinthians 2:8 says, “Which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” However, because Jesus prayed to the Father and asked Him to forgive the sins that those men had committed that day, those sins committed that day related to the crucifixion of Jesus will not be written in the books of the sins of any person who stands before God at the final judgment in Revelation 20:11-15.

We see the response of the soldiers who crucified Jesus as we read in Luke 23:35-38, “And they divided His garments and cast lots. And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, ‘He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.’ The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, and saying, ‘If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.’ And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.” Here we see that for the soldiers that this was just another day and they were carrying out the job that they were assigned to do.

When the Roman soldiers crucified a person, they were allowed to take the clothes of that person as a bonus for themselves. John 19:23-24 says, “Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. They said therefore among themselves, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,” that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: “*They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.*” Therefore the soldiers did these things.” The soldiers did not realize that they were fulfilling the prophecy given in Psalm 22:18.

We also see that both the rulers and the soldiers mocked and made fun of Jesus. The rulers did their mocking by their words as they sneered at Him. This was a fulfillment of the prophecy given about Jesus in Psalm 22:7-8 which says, “All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*, He trusted on the LORD *that* he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.” Even though the rulers had probably read the words of Psalm 22 many times, they could not understand the Word of God because they did not believe God. As a result, they did not realize that they were fulfilling an Old Testament prophecy by their words.

The soldiers showed their contempt both by their words and their actions. They offered Jesus sour wine to drink. They spoke words of contempt as they said, “If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.” Pilate had ordered a sign placed over the head of Jesus on the cross which said, “THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.” He refused to change what he had written when the Jewish leaders tried to get him to change it. He just said in John 19:22, “Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.” We see that each person showed their rejection in their own way. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand why Christ chose to forgive these particular sins even though these people all showed their rejection of Jesus. May the Lord richly bless you as you help them understand that Jesus why Jesus died for all people.

Jesus Died in Our Place for Our Sin

In our last topic, we saw that Jesus showed mercy to others even as He was being crucified. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand why Jesus even showed love to those who crucified Him that day. In fact Jesus even asked the Father to forgive the people for what they had done to Him that day. In this topic we are going to see that Jesus died in our place to pay the penalty for our sins.

In Luke 23:44-47 we read, “Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, “Father, *‘into Your hands I commit My spirit.’*” Having said this, He breathed His last. So when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, ‘Certainly this was a righteous Man!’” Here we see that God sent a supernatural darkness on the earth from noon until 3 in the afternoon.

It was during this three hour period that our sins and the sins of the whole world were placed on Jesus. Mark 15:32-33 says, “Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which is translated, “‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’” Here we see that because of the fact that our sins were placed on Jesus that His fellowship with the Father was broken because the Father cannot look on sin with favor. Before the darkness, Jesus had said in Luke 23:34, “Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” And they divided His garments and cast lots.” After the darkness was over Jesus said in Luke 23:46, “And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, “Father, ‘into Your hands I commit My spirit.’” Having said this, He breathed His last.” The fact that Jesus said, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” near the end of the darkness shows that the greatest suffering of all that Jesus experienced was the loss of fellowship and separation from the Father during the time that our sins were placed on Him.

We also see that the veil of the temple was torn in two. In the temple the veil separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. The High Priest was the only one who went into the Holy of Holies and He did that once a year on the Day of Atonement. On that day he took blood as a covering for his own sins and placed it on the mercy seat. Once he had placed blood as a covering for his sins, then he placed blood on the mercy seat as a covering for the sins of the people. No one could go into the Holy of Holies on any other day of the year. However, John the Baptist introduced Jesus in John 1:29 by saying, “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” Matthew 27:51 says, “Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split.” Here we see that the veil was torn by the Father from the top to the bottom. Hebrews 10:19-20 says, “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh.” We no longer need a priest that offers blood once a year for us to cover our sins. Instead, we now come directly to the Father with boldness because Jesus provided a new and living way for us to come directly to the Father.

Once Jesus said “It is finished.” John 19:30 says, “So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.” Jesus had paid the penalty for sin in full. As a result, Jesus then said, “Father, ‘into Your hands I commit My spirit.’” We see that even the way Jesus spoke just prior to His death had an impact on the centurion who was in charge of the soldiers at the cross that day. We read that the centurion glorified God, saying, “Certainly this was a righteous Man!” The word translated “certainly”

means truly and speaks of something that is fact. In Luke 24:34 the word is translated indeed. That verse says, “The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” This word would indicate that the centurion came to true faith in Jesus and received forgiveness for all of his sins and not just those sins committed that day.

We also see the responses of other people that were gathered there that day. Luke 23:48-49 says, “And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned. But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.” First, we see the response of the crowd that was gathered there that day. The word translated “beat” means to hit with the fist or to make a person feel guilty in his or her conscience. This word is used in Luke 18:13 where we read, “And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’” In this case we see that guilt caused the tax collector to come to true repentance. In 1 Corinthians 8:12 we read, “But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.” In this verse, it talks about wounding the conscience of a weaker Christian. However, in Luke 23:48 we see that it only produced a feeling of guilt as the people went back to their homes.

We see another group that was gathered there that day. Those were the acquaintances of Jesus and the women that had followed Jesus from Galilee. They stood farther away from the cross than the soldiers or the crowd. Mark 15:40-41 says, “There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome, who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem.” These women had been a part of the large group that traveled with Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem for the Passover.

Some of these women had ministered to Jesus during much of the time that Jesus was in Galilee. Luke 8:1-3 says, “Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with Him, and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance.” Here we see that these women had used their money and other things to provide for the needs of Jesus and His disciples as they had traveled throughout Galilee. Now they had watched in sorrow as Jesus died on the cross.

Luke 23:50-56 says, “Now behold, *there was* a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. He had not consented to their decision and deed. *He was* from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb *that was* hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near. And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.”

We learn several things about Joseph, the one who took the lead in the burial of Jesus. He was from the city of Arimathea (this name means heights and was located about 20 miles northwest of Jerusalem. He was a member of the Sanhedrin. However, we see that he had not agreed with the decision and actions of the Sanhedrin as they had condemned Jesus and delivered Him to Pilate to be put to death. We see that he was a man of good character and was described as one who was just. A just or righteous person is a person that is acceptable and approved by God because that person has come to God by faith.

Matthew 27:59-60 says, “When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed.” Here we see that this tomb was the tomb that Joseph had prepared for his own family and so it had never been used. We see that Nicodemus brought spices to use and helped Joseph wrap the body in John 19:39-40. Those verses say, “And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.” Since these men were both rich men their actions also fulfilled the prophecy in Isaiah 53:9 which says, “And they made His grave with the wicked—but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth.” Jesus was crucified with the wicked but buried by the rich.

The Sabbath began at sundown and so Joseph and Nicodemus had to bury Jesus quickly before the Sabbath started. We also see that the women that had come from Galilee followed Joseph and Nicodemus to see where they buried Jesus. They saw the tomb and exactly where Jesus was laid in the tomb. These women also wanted to show their love for Jesus and so they prepared spices and ointments to put on His body in addition to the spices provided by Nicodemus. They had to wait until after the Sabbath to bring these spices and so they rested on the Sabbath.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the love that was shown both by Joseph and Nicodemus and also by the women who had followed Jesus from Galilee. They did whatever they could to show that love for Jesus. In the same way we want to show our children that we can show our love by our obedience to Jesus. May the Lord richly bless you as you provide an example by your obedience to Christ.

Jesus Rose Again on the Third Day

In our last topic, we saw that Jesus died in our place and for our sin. We also saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to show their love to Jesus by their obedience to Him. We saw that the way to help them learn to be obedient to Jesus was to provide an example by our own lives. In our topic today, we are going to see what happened the morning that Jesus rose from the dead.

We saw as we concluded the last topic that the women who followed Jesus had prepared spices to place on the body of Jesus. Luke 24:1-3 says, “Now on the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain *other women* with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.” The women had rested on the Sabbath but very early on the first day of the week (Sunday morning) those women went to the tomb to bring the spices that they had prepared. This is why we worship on Sunday and call the day the Lord’s Day because each week we are celebrating the resurrection of Jesus.

The women had one question as they talked together while they were walking to the tomb. Mark 16:3-4 says, “And they said among themselves, ‘Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?’ But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large.” The women realized that they had a problem. The stone that covered the entrance to the tomb was so large they knew that they would not be able to roll the stone from the entrance to the tomb. As a result, they discussed among themselves what they would do as they walked toward the tomb.

However, when they got close to the tomb they saw that their problem was solved. They saw that the stone had already been rolled away. Matthew 28:2 tells how their problem was solved. That verse says, “And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it.” Here we see that the problem had been solved for them by God because He had sent the angel to move the stone and show that the tomb was empty.

The women immediately found that they had a new problem. They went into the tomb but then they did not find the body of Jesus. Instead, they found someone else inside the tomb. Mark 16:5-6 says, “And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, ‘Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.’” Here we see that one angel spoke to the women. Luke mentioned the fact that there was also a second angel there that morning.

Luke 24:4-7 says, “And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. Then, as they were afraid and bowed *their* faces to the earth, they said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’” These two who looked like men were actually angels. The women were greatly perplexed and filled with amazement as they saw the angels. The word translated “perplexed” means to be entirely at a loss or to be in doubt. Peter had this same experience in his vision in Acts 10:17 which says, “Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon’s house,

and stood before the gate.” Here the word is translated wondered within.

Only one angel and said that he knew that they were seeking Jesus. He told them that he knew that Jesus had been crucified. Then the angel asked the women a question which caused the women to be even more confused, “Why do you seek the living among the dead?” The place to look for a person that is dead is in a grave. However, the angel asked the women why they were looking for someone who was living. The angel told the women that Jesus had risen from the dead and was no longer at the tomb.

Then the angel reminded the women that Jesus had told them when they were in Galilee that He would be crucified and rise again the third day. Jesus had said in Luke 9:22, “The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.” Jesus had begun to tell His followers while they were still in Galilee about His coming sufferings and death. He had also told them that He would be raised the third day. That was why the angel reminded the women what Jesus had said so that they could remember that Jesus had predicted that these things would happen.

Luke 24:8-12 goes on to say, “And they remembered His words. Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary *the mother* of James, and the other *women* with them, who told these things to the apostles. And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.” Here we see that the women remembered the words that Jesus had spoken in Galilee. Although the women remembered what Jesus had said that did not mean that all of the women believed that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Mary Magdalene went back to the tomb later. John 20:11-13 says, “But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping?’ She said to them, ‘Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.’” Here we see that Mary thought that someone had moved the body rather than understanding that Jesus was alive.

Mary had her understanding opened by Jesus just a few minutes later. John 20:16-18 says, “Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to Him, ‘Rabboni!’ (which is to say, Teacher). Jesus said to her, ‘Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.’ Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.” After Jesus spoke to her Mary was a changed woman and was eager to tell the disciples that Jesus was alive and that she had seen Him that morning.

Meanwhile we see that the eleven and the other followers of Jesus that were gathered together heard the report of the women. When the women told the apostles and the others that Jesus had risen, the followers gathered there did not believe the words of the women. The apostles thought that the words of the women were idle tales. The word translated “idle tales” means idle talk or nonsense. Here we see that the first response of the disciples was to think that the women were imagining these things because of their great sorrow at the death of Jesus. As we saw even though Mary and the others told the apostles what the angel had said, Mary either did not understand or did not believe what she and the other women told the disciples.

Peter and John immediately ran to the tomb to see what had happened. John 20:3-7 says, “Peter

therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself.” Peter saw that the linen cloths were lying there. He saw the napkin that had been wrapped around the head of Jesus folded and placed in a separate place.

John went in after Peter. John 20:8-9 says, “Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.” We see the two departed and they were amazed at what had happened. Jesus had told the disciples about His coming death and resurrection several times. However, the disciples did not understand. That is why we read what happened that evening when Jesus appeared to the disciples. Luke 24:44-45 says, “Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.” Here we see that Jesus had to open their understanding before they could comprehend the Scriptures.

This is an important key for us to understand as we teach our physical and spiritual children. People actually learn in three stages. First, they gain knowledge of the Scriptures. Second, they gain understanding. Third, they learn how to apply the Scriptures to their daily lives. Spiritual understanding only comes from the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 2:10 says, “But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.” Here we see that the Holy Spirit is the source of spiritual understanding. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to depend on the Holy Spirit for spiritual understanding.

Jesus Appeared to Two on the Road to Emmaus

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children grow in their understanding of the resurrection of Jesus. We saw that the Holy Spirit is the One who gives them that spiritual understanding. In this topic and the next topic we will see how two of the followers of Jesus received spiritual understanding directly from Jesus as He explained the Old Testament Scriptures about Himself as they walked together from Jerusalem to the town of Emmaus.

Two of the disciples of Jesus were walking to their home in the town of Emmaus. Luke 24:13-16 says, “Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.” We see that these two were part of the larger group of disciples of Jesus because they were not Apostles. In fact in verse 18 we will see that one of the two was named Cleopas.

The two were talking about all of the things that had happened in the city of Jerusalem during the previous few days. The main event that had happened had been the death of Jesus on the cross and people throughout Jerusalem were talking about that event. However, these two had also heard about the report of the resurrection before they left Jerusalem that day. As a result, they were talking about the things that had happened and what they had heard. Jesus caught up with the two and began to walk with them. God had restrained their eyes so that they would not recognize Jesus.

As Jesus began to walk with the two, Luke 24:17-18 says, “And He said to them, “What kind of conversation *is* this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?” Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, “Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?” Here we see that Jesus began His conversation with a question. This question gave the two an opportunity to express their thoughts, feelings and opinions about all of the things that had happened in Jerusalem during the previous week.

Many times people are not able to really hear what a person is saying until they have had the opportunity to share their burdens and fears. This question caused Cleopas to ask two questions of his own. First he asked Jesus, “Are you only a stranger in Jerusalem?” Before Jesus could answer that question, Cleopas asked a second question which was, “Have you not known the things which happened there in these days?” When people are sad, their greatest need is often to have someone that cares enough that the person is willing to listen while the person shares his or her burden. Since Jesus is God, He knew every word that the two had said as they walked along the road. However, Jesus also knew that the two needed someone who cared and was ready to listen as they talked about the reason why they were sad. Jesus showed by His example the importance of taking time to listen to the burdens of others before He started trying to give them answers to their burdens and questions.

Luke 24:19-21 says, “And He said to them, “What things?” So they said to Him, “The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened.” Here we see that Jesus answered the question of Cleopas with just two words, “What things?” That was an invitation

for Cleopas to continue talking and share the reason why the two of them were so sad that day.

Cleopas immediately began to talk about Jesus. He made it clear that it was the Jesus that had come from the town of Nazareth. He said that Jesus was a Prophet that was mighty in deed and word. We see that this is the name that the people of the city of Jerusalem had given to Jesus. Matthew 21:11 says, "So the multitudes said, 'This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee.'" Here we see that the people of Jerusalem distinguished Jesus from any other person named Jesus by calling Him, "The Prophet from Nazareth of Galilee." Jesus had become well known for two reasons. First, Jesus was well known because of the deeds that He did. Although Jesus did many miracles, the most recent deed was chasing out those who bought and sold in the temple. Second, Jesus was well known for the words that He spoke. Matthew 21:12-13 says, "Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. And He said to them, 'It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'" These actions and words showed His authority as God.

Cleopas said that the actions and words of Jesus were recognized by both God and the people. Many of the people wondered if Jesus was the promised Messiah. That was the thing that the chief priests, elders and scribes asked Jesus as they had Him on trial. Luke 22:67-71 says, "'If You are the Christ, tell us.' But He said to them, 'If I tell you, you will by no means believe. And if I also ask you, you will by no means answer Me or let Me go. Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God.' Then they all said, 'Are You then the Son of God?' So He said to them, 'You rightly say that I am.' And they said, 'What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth.'" Jesus said many times that He was the Messiah. However, the religious leaders refused to accept His words and recognize Him as the Messiah.

That was the very reason that the chief priests and elders delivered Jesus to Pilate and demanded that he crucify Jesus. They had seen the miracles that Jesus had done. They had heard His words. However, they chose to reject Jesus as the Messiah because they were more concerned about holding on to their own power. That was why they demanded that Pilate crucify Jesus. That was why they were there when Jesus was crucified because they wanted to make certain that Jesus died.

Cleopas also told Jesus about his hopes and desires and those of the other disciples. They were all hoping that Jesus was the One who would redeem Israel. The disciples wanted Jesus to immediately set up His earthly kingdom. This desire was still being shown on the day that Jesus returned to heaven. In Acts 1:6 the disciples asked Jesus the question, "Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, 'Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?'" Jesus knew that the disciples were thinking of an earthly kingdom and so we are going to see that Jesus had to open the understanding of these two disciples and then the other disciples in order for them to be able to carry out the work that Jesus had for them to do on this earth.

Cleopas went on to say that this was now the third day since Jesus had been crucified. Then Luke 24:22-26 says, "Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. And certain of those *who were* with us went to the tomb and found *it* just as the women had said; but Him they did not see." Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" In these verses, we see that Cleopas told about the amazing news that the women had brought to the disciples after they had gone to the tomb early that morning.

Cleopas said that the women had reached the tomb but did not find the body of Jesus. Instead, he said that the women had seen a vision of angels who said that Jesus was alive. Here we see that Cleopas and the other disciple did not really believe the women. Instead, they just thought that the women had seen a vision of angels. We see the action of two of the disciples in John 20:2-3 which say, "Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.' Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb." Cleopas said that Peter and John had found that what the women had said was correct. However, they did not see Jesus.

Once Jesus had given Cleopas time to tell why he was so sad, Jesus then began to speak to the two disciples. Jesus began by explaining to the two disciples that the reason they could not understand was due to the fact that they were slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken. Many Old Testament prophecies talked about the sufferings and death of Jesus. Jesus said that the disciples did not believe everything that the prophets had written. They believed what was written about the kingdom but failed to believe and understand what was written about the sufferings, death and resurrection of Jesus. Here we see one thing that is very common. People can be selective in what they believe without even realizing that they fail to believe everything in the Bible.

Jesus said that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory. This same thing is necessary for our children. Here we see the importance of showing our physical and spiritual children the importance of believing all that is written in the Bible. Paul wrote in Acts 20:27, "For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God." Here we see that the way to help our children believe the whole counsel of God is to teach them the whole counsel of God and not just our favorite topics. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children become familiar with the whole Word of God so that they know what the whole Word teaches about Christ.

Jesus Opened the Eyes of the Disciples

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand all that the Word of God teaches about the sufferings and death of Jesus. That includes both the Old Testament and the New Testament teachings about His sufferings and death. Today, we are going to see how Christ helped two disciples understand all that the Old Testament taught about His sufferings, death and resurrection.

We saw in our last topic that Jesus asked the two disciples, “Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” Then Luke 24:27-31 says, “And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. But they constrained Him, saying, ‘Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.’ And He went in to stay with them. Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.” Here we see how Jesus opened the eyes of the disciples that day.

As Jesus and the two disciples walked along the road Jesus began with the first five books of the Old Testament and taught all the things that those books taught about the Christ and especially His sufferings, death and resurrection. He was actually teaching them what those books taught about Himself. Then Jesus continued through the rest of the Old Testament explaining each of the other passages that taught about Himself. One of the things that the two realized that day was that the Old Testament talked many times about the sufferings, death and resurrection of the Christ. We also want our children to understand this same thing. That will only happen as we help them become familiar with the Old Testament.

The time passed quickly that day as Jesus walked with the two disciples and explained what the Old Testament taught about Himself. As they approached the place where the road to the village of Emmaus turned off from the main road, Jesus walked as though He planned to go on further. Then the two disciples begged Jesus and asked Him to come spend the night with them and told Him that it was getting close to evening. I am sure that they had many questions that they wanted to ask that night so that they could understand even better the things that Jesus had been explaining along the road.

Jesus accepted their invitation and went to stay with them. The two prepared a meal and then they sat down to eat. During the meal Jesus suddenly did something as they were looking at Him. We read that Jesus, “Took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave it to them.” Suddenly the eyes of the two were opened and they recognized that their visitor was Jesus. They knew for sure that it was Him. Then just as quickly, Jesus vanished from their sight. Luke 24:35 says, “And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.” It was the way that Jesus broke the bread that caused these two disciples to suddenly realize that Jesus was the One who had been talking to them that day as they walked along the road.

The two disciples immediately had their lives changed and they now had a new purpose for their lives. Luke 24:32-35 says, “And they said to one another, ‘Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?’ So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those *who were* with them gathered together, saying, ‘The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!’ And they told about the things *that had happened* on the road, and how He was known to them in the

breaking of bread.” The two could not keep quiet about what had happened in their lives.

The word translated “burn” means to burn or to set on fire. The teaching that Jesus had given to the two disciples as they had walked along the road together had set their hearts on fire. However, their hearts had really been set on fire as they had been given understanding of the Word of God. The two would never be the same again. John 5:35 says, “He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.” In this verse, burning is used to describe John the Baptist. Because John the Baptist had his heart set on fire by the Lord, He had been a bold witness of the kingdom of God. These two disciples were going to become bold witnesses for Jesus. This will be true of all Christians that have their hearts set on fire because they more fully understand the Word of God. That is one reason why Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit. John 14:26 says, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” The Holy Spirit will give understanding as we ask Him to help us understand the Word.

We see that the two disciples were moved to immediate action because the Lord had set their hearts on fire. They left that very hour to return to Jerusalem and tell the other disciples. They found the disciples gathered together when they reached Jerusalem. Mark 16:12-13 says, “After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. And they went and told it to the rest, but they did not believe them either.” The disciples questioned whether the Lord had really appeared to Peter so they did not fully believe him. These two disciples gave the disciples additional testimony of the fact that Jesus had been raised from the dead. In 2 Corinthians 13:1 Paul wrote, “This will be the third time I am coming to you. ‘By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established.’”

As a result, the two gave the other disciples further details about the appearance of Jesus to them. They explained what Jesus had taught them as He walked along the road with them. Then they explained how they recognized Jesus when He broke the bread. Here we see that these two disciples were given their first opportunity to explain to others the understanding that Jesus had given to them as they walked along the road. Each time that we explain the Word of God to others, the things that we explain become clearer in our own minds. The disciples did accept the witness of these three different witnesses but some of them still had doubts in their own minds.

Luke 24:36-43 explained what happened next. Those verses say, “Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, ‘Peace to you.’ But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, ‘Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.’ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, ‘Have you any food here?’ So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took *it* and ate in their presence.” Here we see that Jesus personally came so that none of the disciples would have any doubts about His resurrection.

Jesus did several things that night to erase any doubts that any of the disciples might have about the resurrection. First Jesus spoke to them. That did not get rid of their doubts. Instead, they were terrified and frightened. They actually thought that they were seeing a spirit and not Jesus. Then Jesus asked them two questions. Jesus asked the disciples why they were troubled. Then He asked the disciples why they had doubts in their hearts. Jesus knew that the disciples needed more than words so He gave them additional evidence. Jesus then showed the disciples the holes in His hands and His feet that were the result of the nails that held Jesus on the cross.

He next invited them to handle Him so that they could feel His body so that they would be convinced that He had flesh and bones. He also reminded them that a spirit does not have flesh and bones.

The disciples were still having a hard time believing. They were filled with joy and amazement but it was very difficult for them to believe because they knew that there was no question about the fact that He had been crucified and that He had died. We see that Jesus understood their doubts. As a result, we see that He continued to give them further evidence of the fact that He was really alive. Jesus then asked the disciples if they had any food there that night. They gave Jesus a piece of broiled fish and a honeycomb. Then Jesus ate those things as the disciples watched.

Since Thomas was not there that night, he was given a special invitation a week later. The next week Jesus appeared again. John 20:27-29 says, "Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.' And Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'" Acts 1:21-22 tells us the most important ministry of the apostles when those verses say, "Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection." To be accurate witnesses of the resurrection every apostle had to be absolutely convinced.

In our next topic we will see that Jesus did even more to help every disciple become fully convinced of His resurrection. However, we see that it is important that we fully believe and are convinced of the resurrection ourselves so that we can help out physical and spiritual children develop that same strong conviction. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children by your belief that you believe in the reality of the resurrection.

Jesus Opened the Understanding of the Disciples

In our last topic, we saw that we want to follow the example of Jesus and do whatever it takes to help our physical and spiritual children become fully convinced of the resurrection of Jesus. We saw that Jesus gave the disciples witnesses, He appeared to them Himself. He had them handle Him to see that He had flesh and bones. He invited them to put their fingers in the nail holes. He ate food as they watched. In this topic we are going to learn about the other things that Jesus did so that His disciples would be fully convinced of His resurrection.

We see that the next thing that Jesus did was open the understanding of the disciples so that they understood what the Word of God taught about His resurrection. Luke 24:44-45 says, "Then He said to them, 'These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me.' And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures." Here we see that Jesus re-explained the very same Scriptures that He had explained to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus earlier that day. Jesus had taught these things to the disciples before the crucifixion.

However, Jesus took several hours that night to go through each of those Old Testament Scriptures again to open the understanding of the disciples. Here we see that all Christians learn the Word of God in three stages. First, we must receive the knowledge of the Word of God. Second, we will only gain understanding if we are given that understanding by the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 2:14 says, "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Third, we are only able to apply what we learn as we are led by the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:14 says, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." This is why our preaching only involves one third of the learning process as we help people to gain knowledge of the Word of God.

Since Christ had not yet sent the Holy Spirit, Christ personally opened the understanding of the disciples so that they could comprehend the Scriptures. The word translated "comprehend" means to join together in the mind so as to gain understanding and wisdom. 2 Corinthians 10:12 says, "For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." Here the word is translated are not wise. Those who depend on human comparison cannot gain spiritual wisdom. That is why we must depend on the Holy Spirit to give us understanding. Ephesians 5:17 says, "Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is." We will gain that understanding as we look to the Holy Spirit to guide us. That night the disciples had their understanding opened by Jesus.

Luke 24:46-49 says, "Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." Here we see that Jesus opened the understanding of the disciples about several things that were taught in the Old Testament.

First, Jesus opened the understanding of the disciples about the things that the Old Testament taught concerning the fact that it was necessary for Him to suffer and to rise from the dead on

the third day. While talking to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, Luke 24:27 says, "And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." Jesus probably taught basically the same things from the Old Testament to all of the disciples that night that He had taught to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

Second, Jesus opened their understanding about the fact that the message of repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations. Once Jesus had finished opening the understanding of the disciples about His sufferings and resurrection, Jesus began to open the understanding of the disciples about the message that He had for them (that also includes all Christians living today) to take to all nations beginning at Jerusalem. The word translated "repentance" means a change of mind and purpose and is described in 1 Thessalonians 1:9 where we read, "For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God." Repentance is turning from sin and turning to God. The word translated "remission" is also translated forgiveness. It means forgiveness or pardon of sins and remission of the penalty. Ephesians 1:7 says, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." The blood of Jesus was the price that was paid in order for our sins to be forgiven.

Third, Jesus taught His disciples that they and we are to be witnesses of these things. This statement is expanded in Matthew 28:18-20 where we read, "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Amen." Jesus is the One who has all authority. He gave us the command to make disciples. We are to do that wherever we go. We are to baptize those who repent and believe. Then we are to teach them all that Jesus commanded so that they become reproducing Christians.

Fourth, Jesus taught that He would send the Promise of My Father (the Holy Spirit) upon all Christians. However for the disciples gathered that night Jesus made it clear that they were to wait in the city of Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. The word translated "endued" means to be clothed or to put on. Acts 2:1-3 says, "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them." The Lord placed the Holy Spirit in the lives of the believers that day and they witnessed with great boldness. Now each Christian receives the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation. It is as we depend on the power of the Holy Spirit instead of our own strength that we will be able to witness with boldness.

Luke concluded the book of Luke by talking about the return of Jesus to heaven forty days after the resurrection. Luke 24:50-53 says, "And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen." However, Luke then began the book of Acts by telling what Jesus did after His resurrection and before He returned to heaven. Acts 1:1-3 says, "The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Here we see that Jesus was seen by the disciples at various times for 40 days after the resurrection.

The word translated “infallible proofs” means evidence that cannot be disputed.

At the conclusion of those 40 days, we see that Jesus went with the disciples out to the town of Bethany. Bethany was the hometown of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. It was about two miles from the city of Jerusalem. When they were close to the town of Bethany, Jesus lifted up His hands and blessed the disciples. Then He spoke His final words before returning to heaven. Acts 1:8 says, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” In these final words Jesus reminded the disciples of the work that He gave to every Christian from that time until He returns to take us to heaven. We are to be witnesses to Jesus. Then Jesus was parted from the disciples and carried up into heaven.

We also see the response of the disciples when Jesus was taken to heaven. We see that the disciples worshiped Jesus. This refers to a formal act of worship. The disciples expressed their thanks and worship to God for sending His Son to pay the penalty for their sin. Jesus had spent enough time with the disciples over those 40 days that they had come to a full understanding of what the death and resurrection of Jesus meant to each one of them in their individual lives. All of the doubts that the disciples had when they heard that Jesus had risen from the dead had been taken away. 1 John 1:1-2 says, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us.” The disciples were filled with great joy and they were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. We also want to help our physical and spiritual children experience that same joy in their lives as we show them by our attitude that we really understand that Jesus is alive and that He is now in the presence of the Father interceding for us. May the Lord richly bless you as you rejoice in the reality of the resurrection of Jesus.