The Gospel according to LUKE

Dedicatory

1 [1]Given that many have undertaken to set in order a narrative concerning those things that really did take place among us,[1] [2]just as those who became eyewitnesses, from the beginning, and ministers of the Word delivered them to us,[2] [3]it seemed good to me also, most excellent Theophilus,[3] having taken careful note of everything from Above,[4] to write to you with precision and in sequence,[5] [4]so that you may know the certainty of the things in which you were instructed.[6]

The birth of John the Baptizer foretold—6 BC

[5]In the days of Herod, the king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zacharias, of the *priestly* division of Abijah.[7] His wife was of the daughters of Aaron and her name was Elizabeth. [6]They were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. [7]But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren; and they both were well advanced in years.

The setting

[8]Now it happened, as he was officiating as priest before God in the order of his division, [9]according to the custom of the priesthood, that his lot was to burn incense, upon entering the sanctuary of the Lord; [10]and the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. [11]Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense; [12]and upon seeing him Zacharias was shaken, and a fear fell upon him.

Gabriel delivers

[13]But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, because

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[1] Upon reflection it seems obvious that anyone who knew how to write would likely jot down salient points about Jesus, but Luke affirms that there were 'many' who attempted a serious account. Such records may well have furnished material, presumably factual, for spurious 'improvements' added to the four inspired accounts in the early decades of copying.

[2] Luke insists that his information comes from responsible eyewitnesses, who were there all the time.

[3] 'Theophilus' means 'God-lover'; although Luke is evidently addressing a specific person, I would like to think that the account is also addressed to all lovers of God.

[4] The normal meaning of the Greek word here, *ανωθεν*, is precisely 'from above', and I see no reason to reject that meaning (although the secondary meaning 'from the beginning' is possible). The more so since in the prior verse he already used the normal phrase, *απ αρχης*, that means 'from the beginning'. I take it that Luke is claiming divine inspiration, up front.

[5] In fact, with a few exceptions Luke's narrative is in chronological sequence, and as a physician he doubtless valued precision.

[6] Given Luke's stated purpose in writing, his account needs to be historically accurate. Note that Theophilus had already received some instruction.

[7] See 1 Chronicles 24:10. There were 24 divisions, so each division could only serve for two weeks in a year. The members of a division would take turns.

your prayer was heard,[1] and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. **14**And you will have joy and exultation, and many will rejoice over his birth. **15**For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; he must not drink either wine or strong drink;[2] indeed, he will be filled with Holy Spirit[3] already from his mother's womb. **16**And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God; **17**in fact he himself will go before Him[4] in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of fathers to children'[5] and the disobedient to the mind-set of the righteous,[6] to prepare a people made ready for the Lord."

Zacharias doubts

18But Zacharias said to the angel: "How can I be sure of this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years."[7] **19**So in answer the angel said to him: "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God;[8] I was sent to speak to you and bring you this good news. **20**Now look, you will be silent and not able to speak until the day in which these things happen, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time."

Zacharias punished

21Now the people were waiting for Zacharias and wondering at his delay in the sanctuary. **22**But when he came out he was unable to speak to them, and they understood that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary—he kept gesturing to them while remaining mute. **23**And so, when the days of his service were fulfilled, he took off for home.[9]

24Well after those days[10] his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and stayed in seclusion five months.[11] She kept saying, **25**"So that's what the

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[1] Given his expression of doubt this evidently was not a recent prayer. Zacharias had given up hope (since having a child was now a physical impossibility), and may well have been unhappy with God for not having answered. He was not even impressed with the tremendous things the angel said, but continued to doubt.

[2] This sounds like a Nazirite—Numbers 6:3.

[3] Since 'Holy Spirit' occurs without a definite article, I take the phrase as a proper name.

[4] The antecedent of "Him" is "the Lord their God"; in effect Gabriel is affirming that the Messiah, Jesus, is God—since he was speaking Hebrew, he may well have said 'Jehovah their God'.

[5] See Malachi 4:5-6.

[6] The righteous have one mind-set; the disobedient have a different one. To change someone's conduct you need to change his mind-set.

[7] Does it occur to you to wonder why God would choose such an old couple for a job like this? Perhaps because they would no longer be sidetracked by personal ambitions and would dedicate their energies to preparing John.

[8] Gabriel is no ordinary angel, possibly one of the cherubim; he is probably not far below Michael in rank. He imposes his authority on the priest.

[9] We know the time frame when it was the division of Abijah's turn to serve (for only two weeks). Assuming that Elizabeth became pregnant as soon as Zacharias got home, we may deduce that Jesus was born in September/October (six months after John).

[10] Which ones? Presumably "the days of his service" in verse 23.

[11] Her menopause was ancient history, so what was happening was 'impossible'; besides, even if she was pregnant the likelihood of a miscarriage would be high; so she kept

Lord has done for me in the days[1] when He concerned Himself to take away my reproach among the people!"[2]

The birth of Jesus foretold

26Now in the sixth month[3] the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town of Galilee named Natsareth,[4] **27**to a virgin betrothed[5] to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house[6] of David; the virgin's name was Mary. **28**So upon entering where she was the angel said, "Rejoice, recipient of grace, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"[7] **29**But upon seeing him she was perplexed at his word and was trying to figure out what sort of greeting it might be.[8]

Gabriel delivers

30The angel said to her: "Do not be afraid,[9] Mary, because you have found favor with God. **31**Now then, you will conceive in your womb and give birth to a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS.[10] **32**He will be great, and will be called 'Son of the Most-High'; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David,[11] **33**and He will reign over the house of Jacob[12] into the ages; indeed, of His kingdom there will be no end!"[13]

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quiet. But after five months she would begin to 'show', and the prospect of success was good.

1 A pregnancy involves a fair number of days, and divine intervention was necessary all the time to enable her to carry the baby to term.

2 At that time people looked down on a married woman who had no children.

3 Of Elizabeth's pregnancy.

4 For an explanation of this spelling, and its importance, please see the note at Matthew 2:23.

5 This involved a signed legal document, so much so that the couple were then called husband and wife, so 'engaged' (at least in contemporary society) is not an adequate rendering.

6 See Luke 2:4.

7 To be the mother of the Messiah was a blessing granted to only one woman in the whole history of this world (see Genesis 3:15). Less than 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit 'blessed are you among women' (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

8 In Zacharias the angel inspired fear, but Mary sensed immediately that the angel did not represent a menace or threat and concentrated on his astounding words. In typical female fashion, she was trying to figure out the hidden agenda.

9 He is not telling her not to be afraid of himself, because she wasn't; I take it that he is telling her not to fear the future and the implications of his message.

10 Although the angel presumably addressed Mary in Hebrew, when it came to pronouncing the name, he may well have used the Greek name as we know it. The precise sequence of sounds can be written and pronounced in Hebrew. I verily suspect that the correct transliteration of 'Jesus' into Hebrew will prove to be יֵסוּס (yesus) and not יֵשׁוּעַ (yeshua).

11 Through Mary, Jesus received some of David's genes; David was literally His ancestor (see Mary's genealogy in Luke 3:23-38).

12 The 'house of Jacob' is not the Church, but the unending Kingdom will include much more than just that 'house'.

13 This world will come to an end, but not Christ's Kingdom. What the angel said to Mary was even more tremendous than what he said to Zacharias.

Mary agrees

34So Mary said to the angel, "How shall this be, since I do not know a man?"[1] **35**In answer the angel said to her: "Holy Spirit[2] will come upon you and the power of the Most High will hover over you; precisely for this reason the holy One who is to be born will be called 'Son of God'![3] **36**Furthermore, your relative Elizabeth, she has actually conceived a son in her old age and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren; **37**because any word spoken by God will be possible." **38**So Mary said: "Yes, I am the Lord's slave! Let it happen to me according to your word."[4] And the angel departed from her.

Mary visits Elizabeth

39Then Mary quickly got ready and went into the hill country in those days, to a town of Judah, **40**and entered the house of Zacharias and saluted Elizabeth.[5] **41**Well it happened that as Elizabeth heard Mary's salutation the babe bounced up and down in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with Holy Spirit.

Elizabeth prophesies

42And she cried out with a great voice[6] and said:

"Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the Fruit of your womb! **43**Why am I so favored that the mother of my Lord[7] should come to me? **44**Yes indeed, because as the sound of your salutation came into my ears the babe bounced up and down in my womb for joy.[8] **45**Blessed is she who believed, because there will be a fulfillment of the things that have been spoken to her from the Lord."[9]

Mary worships

46So Mary said:

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[1] Zacharias expressed doubt, but Mary simply requests some necessary information. She has understood that God wants her to be the Messiah's mother—she was doubtless highly intelligent and perceptive. (In the Bible the verb 'to know' is used to refer to sexual intercourse.).

[2] The Text does not have a definite article with 'Holy Spirit'.

[3] Literally so—the Holy Spirit supplied the genes that normally are supplied by a human father.

[4] Mary had to understand the proposal and be in full agreement, or she would not have been a good mother.

[5] I take it that Mary understood that the angel's reference to Elizabeth was relevant to her.

[6] To cry or call out suggests unusual volume by itself, so why add 'with a great/loud voice'? Since she spoke under the Holy Spirit's control, there was probably an unusual quality to the voice, and the neighbors heard it.

[7] What Elizabeth is saying, inspired by the Holy Spirit, is that the Messiah is already in Mary's womb, as witnessed by baby John's reaction. There was no human way that Elizabeth could know of the angel's conversation with Mary. Her prophecy served as a tremendous confirmation and encouragement to Mary—I imagine that the Holy Spirit had fertilized her as soon as she said, "Yes".

[8] The clear implication is that baby John was aware, was already a person in the womb.

[9] She is stating that Mary had heard from God through the angel, although she had no human way of knowing anything about it.

"My soul magnifies the Lord, 47and my spirit has exulted over God
my Savior,[1] 48in that He paid attention to the humble station of His
slave (f). Yes indeed, because from now on all generations will
declare me to be highly favored,[2] 49in that the Mighty One did
sublime things for me, and Holy is His name. 50His mercy is for
generations of generations to those fearing Him. 51He has done
mighty deeds with His arm; He has dispersed the arrogant in the
reasoning of their hearts. 52He has dethroned rulers and exalted the
lowly. 53He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich
away empty.[3] 54He has taken the part of His servant Israel, in
remembrance of mercy, 55just as He spoke to our fathers, to
Abraham and to his seed while *there is* an age."[4]
56So Mary stayed with her about three months,[5] and returned to her house.

The birth of John

57Now the time for Elizabeth to give birth was completed and she bore a son. 58Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had used His great mercy with her, and they rejoiced with her.

John is named

59So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child,[6] and they started calling him by the name of his father, Zacharias. 60His mother reacted and said, "Absolutely not;[7] he shall be called John!" 61So they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name." 62So they started motioning to his father, as to what he would have him called. 63Asking for a writing tablet he wrote this: "His name is to be John!" They all marveled. 64Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue *freed* and he started to speak, blessing God. 65(Well a fear came on all who lived around them; and all these sayings

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[1] Mary declares her own need of a Savior.

[2] So it has been for 2000 years; in every generation there have been those who called her 'blessed'.

[3] This sounds like social justice, but the Text does not say that Mary was inspired, like Elizabeth was.

[4] I follow the best line of transmission, as I believe, albeit representing only 35% of the Greek manuscripts, in this case. I take the point to be that the things mentioned are pertinent to this world, not the next.

[5] Those three months in the home of a priest were doubtless filled with relevant instruction from the Scriptures (of course Zacharias was mute, so he would have to write everything), part of Mary's preparation for her role. Note that Mary evidently took off before John was born [I wonder why]. On the other hand, being three months pregnant it was high time that she go home and face the situation that awaited her. Although Joseph evidently took her to his house immediately, at God's direction, after only six months a full-sized baby would be born.

[6] 'The eighth day'—two different blood clotting agents, vitamin K and prothrombin, are at their highest level (110% of normal) on the eighth day of a person's life, so it is the best of all days for minor surgery. Who but the Creator knew that 4000 years ago, when He told Abraham to do it?

[7] She was emphatic!

kept being talked about throughout all the hill country of Judea. **66**All who heard kept them in their hearts saying, "What then will this child be?" And the hand of the Lord was with him.)[1]

Zacharias prophesies

67Now his father Zacharias was filled with Holy Spirit and prophesied saying:

68"Blessed be the LORD,[2] the God of Israel, because He has visited and provided redemption for His people; **69**and has raised up a horn of deliverance for us in the house of His servant David—**70**just as He spoke through the mouth of His holy prophets from antiquity—**71**deliverance from our enemies and out of the hand of all who hate us;[3] **72**to use mercy with our fathers, even to remember His Holy covenant, **73**the oath that He swore to our father Abraham; **74**to grant to us (having been rescued from the hand of our enemies) to serve Him without fear, **75**in holiness and righteousness[4] before Him all the days of our life.

76"And you, child, will be called Prophet of the Most-High, because you will go before the face of the Lord[5] to prepare His ways, **77**to give a knowledge of salvation to His people by the forgiveness of their sins,[6] **78**through the merciful compassions of our God, with which the divine Dawn has contemplated us,[7] **79**to give light to those who are sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

80So the child kept growing and being strengthened in spirit,[8] and he stayed in uninhabited areas until the day of his manifestation to Israel.[9]

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[1] The material within parentheses is an historical aside, after the fact. Presumably Zacharias started right in with his prophecy.

[2] They spoke Hebrew in Judea, and Zacharias probably said "Jehovah".

[3] Zacharias knew that the Messiah would soon be born, but was evidently expecting a physical, political kingdom that would deliver them from Roman domination. For that matter, Jesus' own disciples evidently shared the same expectation.

[4] 'To serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness'—that is what life is supposed to be about, but is only possible because the Messiah came.

[5] Zacharias is affirming that Jesus is 'the Lord' and 'the Most-High'!

[6] In this paragraph Zacharias emphasizes the spiritual benefits of Messiah's coming.

[7] Without doubt, the coming of the Messiah, with all that involved, represented the dawning of a new Day for this world. Instead of "has contemplated us", less than 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have "will contemplate us" (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). The difference may appear to be small, but I take the point to be that the Messiah was already in the virgin Mary's womb—the incarnation was irreversibly underway.

[8] The verb 'strengthen' is in the passive voice, so John had outside help—just like Gabriel said.

[9] Because of their advanced age, his parents may well have died by the time he was a teenager. Although as Zacharias' son he was in line to become a priest, he could not begin to serve until he was thirty, which was when he began his public ministry. He evidently spent the interval as a recluse.

The birth of Jesus—5 BC

2 [1]Now it happened in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole inhabited world should be enrolled.[1] [2]This first census took place while Quirinius was administering Syria.[2] [3]So everyone was traveling, each to his own town, to enroll himself.

At night, in Bethlehem, the Savior is born

[4]So Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of Natsareth town, into Judea to the city of David, that is called Bethlehem, because he was of David's 'house', that is, line of descent, [5]to enroll himself with Mary, the woman who had been betrothed to him,[3] who was pregnant. [6]So it happened that when they got there the days for her to give birth were completed; [7]and she gave birth to her firstborn[4] Son, wrapped Him in pieces of cloth and laid Him in the manger,[5] because there was no room for them in the lodging place.

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[1] Of course the Roman Empire did not control the whole world, but the decree was doubtless worded in grandiose terms.

[2] It has been alleged that Luke's reference to Quirinius in Luke 2:2 is an error. If that were the case, it would be the only error in the dozens of historical references that Luke made. It is clear that Luke interviewed Mary, Jesus' mother, because several times he wrote that she treasured things in her heart. Such an interview would have been an obvious thing for him to do. Mary had been personally inconvenienced, and to a considerable extent, by Caesar's decree, and she would have had a vivid memory of all relevant factors at that time. If she told Luke that Quirinius was officiating, that was the fact, and of course Luke had access to other witnesses and the whole episode was recent history in his day.

Joseph undertook a very inconvenient and expensive journey from Natsareth to Bethlehem. He would only have done so if he considered that he had no viable alternative. It follows that Caesar's decree was a fact, and in force at that time. How could Luke possibly have been mistaken on the subject of Quirinius?

Quirinius, 51 BC – 21 AD, was an able Roman military commander. During his life he was a senator, a consul, a duumvir and a legate. He is famous for his campaign against the Homonadensians, a nomadic people in Cilicia. Cilicia bordered Syria on the north. The campaign occupied roughly 12-2 BC, and Quirinius would have used Syria as his base of operations. He had the confidence of the emperor and may very well have been given a variety of jobs during that decade. In Luke 2:2 Luke did not use the noun 'governor'; he used the verb 'to govern/administer/ officiate'. In those days a census took a lot of time, and could be a fussy undertaking. Whom should the emperor choose to run the show in Syria? Of the people available, who was better qualified than Quirinius?

Conclusion: Luke informs us that Quirinius was administering the census in Syria at the time of Jesus' birth. I see no reason to doubt his statement. I see no reason whatsoever for alleging that Luke wrote an historical error.

[3] That is what the Text says. We know from Matthew 1:24-25 that Joseph had already received her as his wife, but still had not had sexual relations with her—obviously an atypical situation. He had taken responsibility for her as his wife, but as far as sex was concerned she was still 'pledged'—thus Luke's unusual turn of phrase.

[4] Luke's use of the term 'firstborn', writing after Mary had passed the age that she could bear children, clearly implies that she had other children after the first; other-wise Luke would have used 'only' rather than 'first'.

[5] Some 95% of the Greek manuscripts have the definite article with 'manger', so there was only one in the place, which implies that it was a stable. Since Bethlehem stands

Angels and shepherds

8Now there were shepherds in that same area, staying out in the field and keeping the nightly watches[1] over their flock. 9When wow, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10The angel said to them: "Do not be afraid because listen, I am announcing the most joyful news to you, which will be to all the people! 11You see, today,[2] in David's city, a Savior was born to you, who is Lord Christ! 12And this is the sign to you: you will find a Baby wrapped in pieces of cloth, lying in a manger."[3] 13Suddenly a multitude of the heavenly army was with the angel praising God and saying, 14"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward mankind!"[4]

Shepherds go and report

15So when the angels went away from them into the sky the men, the shepherds, said to one another, "Hey, let's go to Bethlehem and see this event that has taken place, that the Lord made known to us!" 16So they went in a hurry and located both Mary and Joseph, and the Baby lying in the manger. 17And having seen they spread an exact account of the saying that had been spoken to them concerning this Child. 18All who heard marveled at the things told them by the shepherds.[5] 19As for Mary, she treasured all these sayings, pondering them in her heart. 20The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God over all that they had heard and seen, just as it was told them.

Jesus is named

21When eight days were completed so as to circumcise Him, His name was indeed called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

Jesus is presented to God

22And when the days of their purification according to the law of

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on a limestone ridge, there were probably natural caves that would make excellent stables. Actually, mother and baby were probably better off there than in the crowded lodging.

1 They would take turns standing watch.

2 The shepherds were Jews, and their 'day' began at 6 p.m. The angel's use of 'today' indicates that Jesus was born at night, since the angel delivered his message at night.

3 This may not seem like much of a 'sign' to us, but doubtless there was only one newborn baby in the whole area who met those conditions.

4 "Good will toward mankind"—what greater proof of God's good will could there be than the whole plan of salvation, the center piece of which was the incarnation! "Good will toward mankind" reflects some 1700 Greek manuscripts; only six known Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, read "among those with whom He is pleased" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.; the New Living Translation favors us with a footnote: "Some manuscripts read… *goodwill among people*"—by 'some' they mean ± 1700 against six! [how could the editors be so perverse?]).

5 Since the shepherds lived in that town, presumably, they would certainly tell their families and friends; in short order the whole town had heard the news. In all probability, the very next day someone offered Joseph a house to use.

Moses were completed,[1] they took Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord **23**(just as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male who opens a womb shall be called holy to the LORD"[2]), **24**and to offer a sacrifice according to what was specified in the Lord's Law, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons".[3]

Simeon

25Well now, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, expectantly waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and Holy Spirit was upon him. **26**(It had been revealed to him repeatedly by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death until he saw the Lord's Messiah.[4]) **27**So by the Spirit he came into the temple; and when the parents brought the Child Jesus in, to do concerning Him according to the custom of the law, **28**Simeon took Him into his arms and blessed God and said: **29**"Sovereign,[5] now You can release your slave in peace, according to Your word, **30**because my eyes have seen Your salvation, **31**which You have prepared before the face of all peoples: **32**a light for revelation to Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel." **33**And Joseph[6] and His mother were marveling at the things[7] being spoken concerning Him.

34Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother: "Listen, this One is appointed to bring about the fall and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that is spoken against, **35**so that the reasonings of many hearts may be revealed (furthermore, a sword will pass through your own soul also)."[8]

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[1] The Text has 'their', not 'her'; since a woman was not to have intercourse for forty days after giving birth to a boy (80 for a girl), Leviticus 12:2-5, her purification obviously affected her husband as well.

[2] See Exodus 13:2, 12-15.

[3] See Leviticus 12:8. The prescribed sacrifice was a lamb; only if the couple was too poor to bring a lamb could they substitute the birds (since they could be caught in the wild, the poorest of the poor could meet this requirement). Evidently Joseph and Mary could not afford a lamb, which indicates that they had not yet received the gifts from the magi.

[4] The Greek Text has 'Christ', but the Holy Spirit presumably used Hebrew to communicate with Simeon. The man evidently lived in communion with God, and thus the Holy Spirit could guide him at any time—here He sends him into the temple at just the right moment.

[5] Simon actually used the term from which we get 'despot', but in English this term has a negative flavor, unless one adds 'benevolent'; but 'benevolent despot' does not work very well in direct address—so I render 'Sovereign'. [When I myself address God, I habitually follow Simeon's example—I also am His slave.]

[6] Instead of 'Joseph', about 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have 'his father' (to be followed by NIV, NASB, TEV, etc.).

[7] Simeon may have actually said more than is here recorded; in fact, I rather imagine that he did.

[8] Watching her Son suffer on the cross, Mary would also suffer. Jesus obliged the people, especially the leaders, to take sides, and so the reasonings of their hearts were exposed.

Anna

36 Also there was a prophetess Anna, a daughter of Phanuel, of the
tribe of Asher—she was of a great age, having lived with a husband
seven years from her virginity 37 and having been a widow for about eigh-
ty-four years[1]—who did not depart from the temple, serving *God* with
fastings and petitions night and day. 38 Well she, having come up at that
very moment, started praising the Lord,[2] and kept on speaking of Him
to all those in Jerusalem who were looking for redemption.[3]

Back to Natsareth

39 When they had completed everything, according to the law of the
Lord, they went back to Galilee, to their own town, Natsareth.[4] 40 And
the Child kept growing and being strengthened in spirit,[5] being filled[6]
with wisdom; yes, the grace of God was upon Him.

A twelve-year-old Boy

41 Now every year His parents would go to Jerusalem to the feast of
the Passover; 42 so when He was twelve years old they went up to Jeru-
salem according to the custom of the feast. 43 When they had fulfilled the
days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem,
but Joseph and His mother[7] did not know it. 44 Supposing Him to be in
the caravan, they went a day's journey and *then* started looking for Him
among their relatives and acquaintances. 45 Not finding Him, they
returned to Jerusalem seeking Him. 46 So it happened that after three
days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers,
both listening to them and asking them questions. 47 (All who heard Him
were astonished at His understanding and answers.[8])

48 So upon seeing Him they were amazed, and His mother said to
Him: "Son, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I
have been searching for you in distress."[9] 49 So He said to them: "Why
were you seeking me? Didn't you know that I must be about my Father's

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1 If she married at 15 she would have been about 105 at the time. Instead of "for about eighty-four", perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, read 'until eighty-four' (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, etc.).

2 Instead of 'the Lord', less than 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have 'God' (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

3 She must have known who they were.

4 We know from Matthew that there was a detour through Egypt, that began from Bethlehem, so from Jerusalem they went back to Bethlehem.

5 Less than half a percent of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit 'in spirit' (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

6 Both 'strengthened' and 'filled' are in the passive voice; like John, only more so, Jesus had outside help.

7 Instead of 'Joseph and His mother', perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts, have 'his parents' (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

8 Really and truly—how many of us could discuss theology intelligently for one hour, let alone three days!

9 They evidently thought that Jesus had met with foul play; they were afraid for His life. In contrast, Jesus never worried about suffering harm (see next note).

concerns?"[1] **50**But they did not understand the statement that He made to them.[2]

51Then He went down with them and came to Natsareth, and continued subordinating Himself to them; His mother kept all these sayings[3] in her heart.[4] **52**And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Enter John the Baptizer—26 AD

3 **1**Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, while his brother Philip[5] was tetrarch of the region of Iturea and Trachonitis and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, **2**during the high priesthood of Annas (also Caiaphas),[6] the word of God came upon[7] John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. **3**So he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins;[8] **4**as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying: "A voice calling out: 'Prepare the way of the Lord in the wilderness, make His paths straight.[9] **5**Every ravine will be filled up, and every mountain

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[1] At twelve Jesus knew precisely who He was—"my father" cannot refer to Joseph because Jesus was not discussing carpentry with the doctors of the Law—He was consciously about God's business. Notice that Jesus does not even come close to apologizing; in fact He rebukes them for worrying—after all, they also knew just who He was. (Jesus was no doubt unusually mature for His age, and may have just had His *bar mitzvah*.) The only time Jesus feared for His life was in Gethsemane—Matthew 26:38, Mark 14:34, Luke 22:44, Hebrews 5:7-8 (compare by contrast Luke 4:28-30, Mark 4:35-41, John 8:59, 10:39, 18:6). He left us an example to be followed—Luke 10:19.

[2] Perhaps they should have, knowing who He really was, but by now they probably had at least four children and each day was filled with very ordinary concerns—do the concerns of life not cause us also to forget spiritual realities?

[3] "All these sayings"—Luke's account is rather abridged. The teachers of the Law certainly offered comments, and Jesus Himself doubtless said much more than is recorded here.

[4] This is the second time Luke records this. No doubt Mary was one of the eyewitnesses that Luke interviewed; I imagine it was a long and detailed interview, and maybe several.

[5] Philip was Herod's brother.

[6] Annas was the real high priest, which office was for life. But in an effort to diminish the political influence of the high priest (presumably) the Roman government obliged the Jews to name a different high priest each year, and the governor dealt with him—so that particular year it was Caiaphas. Notice how Luke emphasizes historicity.

[7] That is what the Text says, 'upon' not 'to'; I take it that that Word compelled him to action.

[8] There are those who squirm at the plain meaning of the Text—John was offering forgiveness of sins. Well, throughout the Old Testament, if you brought an animal offering you were confessing to being a sinner, and expecting to be forgiven. As forerunner to the Lamb of God, who would provide the ultimate payment for sin, John represented a transition, from the old to the new.

[9] The Hebrew text of Isa. 40:3 has "in the desert" here, making it overtly parallel to "in the wilderness", so both are part of what the 'voice' is saying. Please see "Valley or ravine—Luke 3:5" on my website: www.prunch.org.

and hill will be leveled;[1] the crooked parts of the roads will be straightened out, and the rough parts will be smoothed out; **6**and all flesh[2] will see the salvation of God.'"[3]

"Brood of vipers!"

7Then he said to the crowds that were coming out to be baptized by him: "You sons of poisonous snakes![4] Who tipped you off to flee from the coming wrath? **8**Well then, produce fruits befitting repentance, and don't *even* begin to say among yourselves, 'We have Abraham as father,' because I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones![5] **9**But even now the axe is being laid to the root of the trees;[6] so then, every tree not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

"What shall we do?"

10So the people[7] started asking him, "What then must we do?" **11**In answer he said to them, "He who has two coats,[8] let him share with him who has none; and he who has food should do likewise."[9] **12**Well even tax collectors came to be baptized by him and said to him, "Teacher, what must we do?" **13**So he said to them, "Don't charge more than what was determined to you."[10] **14**So the soldiers started asking him too: "What about us? What must we do?" He said to them, "Don't extort or harass anyone, and be content with your wages."[11]

"A greater One is coming"

15Now as the people were expectant and all were reasoning in their hearts concerning John, whether he just might be the Messiah, **16**John

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[1] That is, where the highway passes, not all over the place; just like modern superhighways.

[2] That is what the Text says. I resist the temptation to limit the reference to people, because the animals will also see it (Isaiah 11:6-9). In Genesis 6:17 "all flesh" clearly includes the animals.

[3] See Isaiah 40:3-5.

[4] We do not know the precise type of snake, except that it was presumably poisonous. The Text has 'offsprings', plural, which doesn't make very good English, so I put 'sons'. From Matthew 3:7 we may conclude that he was mainly referring to Pharisees and Sadducees (who had come to evaluate what was happening, but did not themselves submit to the baptism; they would not want to admit that they had sin to confess).

[5] To be born into a Christian family is certainly an advantage, but does not guarantee your eternal destiny. God has no 'grandchildren'; you must believe into the Lord Jesus Christ to become God's child.

[6] The Messiah was about to be introduced and to begin His public ministry; among other things He would condemn the Pharisees and other 'snakes'—'thrown into the fire' refers to their eternal destiny.

[7] The Text has 'crowds'.

[8] Literally, 'tunics'.

[9] The verb 'share' is an aorist imperative, implying a one-time event—you give the extra coat, but get to keep one. The verb 'do' is a present imperative, implying a continuing action—food is to be shared all the time.

[10] Right on. The tax collectors were hated, among other things, because they usually added a percentage for themselves.

[11] Right on again. Soldiers would frequently try to 'supplement' their wages.

anticipated them all saying: "I indeed am baptizing you with water, but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal straps I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with Holy Spirit and fire;[1] **17**whose winnowing shovel is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor and gather the wheat into His barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."[2]

John is imprisoned—an historical aside

18(Indeed, with many other exhortations as well he kept on preaching to the people; **19**but Herod the tetrarch—being reproved by him concerning Herodias, his brother's wife, as also about all the wicked things that Herod perpetrated[3]—**20**added this also to them all: he actually locked John up in his prison.)

Jesus is baptized

21Now when all the people were baptized,[4] Jesus, having been baptized also, was praying, when the heaven was opened **22**and the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove *and rested* upon Him, and a **Voice** came out of heaven saying, "You are my beloved Son; in you I am always well pleased."[5]

Mary's genealogy[6]

23(Beginning *His ministry* at about thirty years of age, being (so it was supposed) a son of Joseph, Jesus Himself[7]

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[1] John the Baptizer said that Jesus would baptize "with Holy Spirit and fire". There has been no lack of interpretations for that statement, but I would say that the next verse gives the correct answer. "Whose winnowing shovel is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor and gather the wheat into His barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." See also Matthew 3:11-12. Well now, the unquenchable fire can only refer to the Lake of fire and brimstone, the second death, and in that case the "chaff" refers to people who are lost—it is the lost who will be baptized with fire. It follows that the "wheat" refers to people who are saved—it is the genuinely saved who will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. But how and when does Jesus baptize us with the Holy Spirit? He does it from His position at the Father's right hand, when we believe into Him. At that point the Holy Spirit begins to dwell in us, and has a great deal to do with our 'new man' or 'new nature'. I understand that Acts 1:5 refers to this baptism, and Acts 11:16 as well, and that it began at Pentecost. Acts 10:47 teaches us that they were baptized with water after they were baptized with the Holy Spirit—first Holy spirit, then water. For a fuller discussion, please see "Baptisms in the Bible" on my website: www.prunch.org.

[2] "Unquenchable fire" is a clear reference to the Lake; recall that there is always more chaff than grain, but the chaff is also part of the wheat plant. I suspect that most churches have more chaff than grain.

[3] A coward John was not!

[4] That is, all the candidates present at that moment, since Jesus would want to be taken care of separately.

[5] The Trinity is manifested here, which would be an important confirmation for Jesus.

[6] The genealogy interrupts the chronological sequence of the narrative, which resumes at 4:1.

[7] There are several unusual grammatical features in the Greek text of this verse, which has been badly translated by every version I have seen; resulting in contradictions and errors of fact. Here is the Greek, for those who can read it: *Και αυτος ην̂ ὁ Ιησους, ὡσει*

was of Eli,[1]

ετων τριακοντα αρχομενος, ων ὡς ενομιζετο υίος Ιωσηφ, του Ηλει, του Ματθαν, του Λευι, του Μελχι,… There are four words here that invite special attention: *και*, *αυτος*, *ἦν* and *ὡς*. Since verse 22 ends with a statement from the Father at Jesus' baptism, it is clear that verse 23 begins another section. But the conjunction that signals the transition is *και* and not *δε*, as one would expect—this means that 'Jesus' continues as the topic. But in that event, how does one explain the personal pronoun *αυτος*, the more so in such an emphatic position? If the author's purpose was simply to register Jesus as a son of Joseph, as many suppose, why did he not just write *και ὁ Ιησους ἦν υιος Ιωσηφ*, etc.?

But then, why write *ὡς ενομιζετο*? It seems to me that the normal meaning of "as was supposed" is to affirm that Jesus was in fact Joseph's son; but that is precisely what Jesus **was <u>not</u>**. Luke has already made clear that Jesus' real Father was the Holy Spirit—1:34-35, 43, 45; 2:49. So what Luke is really saying is that although the people supposed Jesus to be Joseph's son, He actually had a different lineage—we should translate "so it was supposed". (Recall that a faithful and loyal translation seeks to transmit correctly the meaning intended by the <u>author</u>.)

The verb *ἦν* is the only independent one in the whole paragraph, verses 23-38. Is it working with the participle *αρχομενος* in a periphrastic construction? That appears to be the tendency of the eclectic text that places the participle right after 'Jesus' (following about 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality), which makes Jesus out to be in fact Joseph's son. It seems to me to be far more natural to take the participial clauses as being circumstantial: "beginning at about thirty years of age" and "being (so it was supposed) a son of Joseph". Setting those two clauses aside, the independent clause that remains is *ἦν ὁ Ιησους του Ηλει*, "Jesus was of Eli".

The participle 'beginning' requires an object, that the Text leaves implicit; from the context it seems clear that we may supply 'His ministry', or some such thing, which is why most versions do so. I suggest the following rendering: "Beginning *His ministry* at about thirty years of age, being (so it was supposed) a son of Joseph, Jesus was actually of Eli, of Mathan, of Levi…" I take it that the emphatic pronoun *αυτος* heightens the contrast between what the people imagined and the reality. Jesus was a grandson of Eli, Mary's father—Luke gives the genealogy of Jesus through His mother, while Matthew gives it through His stepfather.

The eclectic text gives our verse a different wording: *και αυτος ἦν Ιησους αρχομενος ὡσει ετων τριακοντα, ων υίος, ὡς ενομιζετο, Ιωσηφ του Ηλι του Μαθθατ του Λευι του Μελκι, …* The RSV translates it like this: "Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat, …" Is not the normal meaning of this rendering that Jesus was in fact the son of Joseph? However, every version that I recall seeing has "Joseph, the son of Heli", which directly contradicts Matthew, "Jacob begot Joseph". The word 'son' (without the article) occurs only with Joseph, although most versions supply it on down the genealogy. But Luke is precisely correct in not using it, because it would not hold for the first and last names in the list—Eli did not beget Jesus (nor Joseph) and God did not beget Adam.

So then, properly understood Luke does not contradict Matthew (with reference to Joseph's father), nor does he affirm an error of fact (with reference to Jesus' father).

[1] All published Bibles that I have seen add 'son' or 'the son' to each prepositional phrase in the genealogy, but Luke did not write that—from 'Eli' to 'God' there is no 'son'. Why not? I do not know, I was not there, but with both Eli and God the word would have a different meaning than with the rest of the names in the list. Adam could be called a 'son' of God by creation, but not procreation. I take it that Eli was Mary's father, and thus the maternal grandfather of Jesus, so here also 'son' would have a different meaning. For all that, through Mary and Eli Jesus received some of David's genes, so He was literally a descendent of David, through his son Nathan.

[24]of Matthan,[1] of Levi, of Melchi, of Janna, of Joseph, [25]of Mattathiah, of Amos, of Nahum, of Esli, of Naggai, [26]of Maath, of Mattathiah, of Semei, of Joseph, of Judah, [27]of Joannan, of Rhesa, of Zerubbabel,[2] of Shealtiel,[3] of Neri, [28]of Melchi, of Addi, of Cosam, of Elmodam, of Er, [29]of Jose, of Eliezer, of Jorim, of Matthat, of Levi, [30]of Simeon, of Judah, of Joseph, of Jonam, of Eliakim, [31]of Melea, of Menan, of Mattatha, of Nathan, of David, [32]of Jesse, of Obed, of Boaz, of Salmon, of Nahshon, [33]of Amminadab, of Aram,[4] of Joram,[5] of Hezron, of Perez, of Judah, [34]of

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[1] There is considerable confusion among the Greek manuscripts as to the spelling of all these names. I have generally just followed the spelling we are used to (since the meaning is not affected), but not always.

[2] For more on this man see the whole book of Haggai and Zechariah 4:6.

[3] The Greek form is actually '*Salathiel*'.

[4] Rather than "of Aram", a variety of modern versions have 'the son of Admin, the son of Arni", and they do so following the eclectic text that has been in vogue for several generations (UBS/N-A). As is their habit, the editors of that text follow the so-called 'Alexandrian' witnesses, but at this point those witnesses are scattered all over the back side of the desert—almost no two agree. One would have thought that this would give the UBS editors pause, but not at all. They were so intent on doing despite to Christ's genealogy that they actually concocted a 'patchwork quilt' and intruded the fictitious Admin and Arni into that genealogy. UBS has presented the evidence in their apparatus in such a way as to obscure the fact that no Greek MS has the precise text they have printed (the same holds for N-A). In Bruce Metzger's presentation of the UBS Committee's reasoning in this case he wrote, "the Committee adopted what seems to be the least unsatisfactory form of text". Is this not a good candidate for 'chutzpah' of the year? The UBS editors concoct their own reading and proclaim it "the least unsatisfactory"! And just what might be "unsatisfactory" about the reading of 95% of the Greek manuscripts except that it does not introduce any difficulties?

There is complete confusion in the Egyptian camp. That confusion may have commenced in the second century, resulting from several easy transcriptional errors, simple copying mistakes. The total confusion in Egypt does not surprise us, but how shall we account for the text and apparatus of UBS[3]/N-A[26] in this instance? And whatever possessed the editors of NASB, NRSV, TEV, LB, Berkeley, etc. to embrace such an egregious error? 'Admin' and 'Arni' have no more place in Christ's genealogy than does Idi Amin, although he at least is not a fiction.

[5] 'Joram'—Luke 3:33 X Matthew 1:3, Ruth 4:19, 1 Chronicles 2:9. I follow 80% of the Greek manuscripts, including the best line of transmission, in placing Joram between Aram and Hezron. However, since both the Textus Receptus and the eclectic text currently in vogue follow the 20%, mine is the first version that I have seen that includes Joram. The obvious difficulty with this proceeding is that it goes against Matthew 1:3, Ruth 4:19 and 1 Chronicles 2:9, that have no 'Joram'. The apparent disagreement with Matthew, Ruth and Chronicles would be an obvious inducement to omit 'Joram'. But what possible motivation would there be to invent and insert an unknown name? And if someone did, how could it come to dominate the stream of transmission, to the tune of 80%? But wherever could Luke have come up with 'Joram'?

I understand that Luke obtained the information about Joram from records existing in his day, and being correct information was led by the Holy Spirit to include it in his Gospel. Just like Jude, who quoted Enoch—Enoch's prophecy must have been in existence in Jude's day, but we have no copy in Hebrew today (though Jews are reported to have used one so recently as the 13th century A.D.); similarly we have no copy of Luke's source. Recall Luke's stated purpose in writing: "It seemed good to me also, most excellent Theophilus, having taken careful note of everything from Above, to

Jacob, of Isaac, of Abraham, of Terah,[1] of Nahor, **35**of Serug, of Reu,[2] of Peleg, of Eber, of Shela, **36**of Cainan,[3] of Arphaxad, of Shem, of Noah, of Lamech, **37**of Methuselah, of Enoch, of Jared, of Mahalaleel, of Cainan,

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write to you with precision and in sequence, so that you may **know** the certainty of the things in which you were instructed" (Luke 1:3-4). Given his stated purpose in writing, Luke's account needs to be historically accurate (cf. 2:2 and 3:1). So then, I take it that the Holy Spirit guided Luke to include Joram. So then, Aram (Ram) was actually a grandson of Hezron; Hezron fathered Joram, who fathered Aram. While I am on this tack, my solution to the 'Jeremiah' problem in Matthew 27:9-10 is similar. Daniel (9:2) refers to "the books" (plural) in connection with Jeremiah the prophet. So I assume that Matthew had access to other writings of Jeremiah, of which no copy survives.

[1] The Greek form is actually 'Tharra'.

[2] The Greek form is actually 'Ragav'.

[3] Cainan[2]—Luke 3:36 X Genesis 11:12. There are several spelling variations that together are attested by almost 1% of the Greek manuscripts; 99% have *Kaivav*. Apparently only two omit, P^{75v} and D, but no printed text follows their lead. So there is no reasonable doubt that Luke in fact wrote that Shelah was fathered by Cainan, not Arphaxad. This Cainan has been widely used to justify treating the genealogies in Genesis like accordions—if one name was demonstrably left out in the Genesis account, then who knows how many others were also left out. This Cainan is also used to deny the validity of constructing a strict chronology based on the time spans given in the genealogies.

But where did Luke get this information? The LXX contains Cainan in Genesis 11:12, but is so different from the Massoretic text here that it looks like fiction. Recall that the LXX we know is based on codices Vaticanus, Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus, produced centuries after Luke. It is more likely that our LXX is based on Luke than vice versa. Where then did Luke get it? I understand that Luke obtained the information about this Cainan from records existing in his day, and being correct information was led by the Holy Spirit to include it in his Gospel (see my discussion of 'Joram' above).

This brief note was inspired by the discussion of the subject given by Dr. Floyd N. Jones in *Chronology of the Old Testament* (which book comes close to solving all the alleged numerical discrepancies in the OT, at least as I see it). However, the explanation that follows is original with me (if anyone else has proposed it, I am unaware). Consider the exact wording of Genesis 11:12-13. "Arphaxad lived thirty-five years and begot Salah; after he begot Salah, Arphaxad lived four hundred and three years, and begot sons and daughters." The verb 'begot' requires that Salah be a blood descendent of Arphaxad, not adopted. He could be a grandson, the son of a son of Arphaxad, or even a great-grandson, etc., except that in this case the time frame only has room for one intervening generation. The plain meaning of the formula in the Text, 'W lived X years and begot Y; after W begot Y he lived Z years,' is that W was X years old when Y was born, is it not (and Y was Z years old when W died)? It follows that this formula destroys the 'accordion' gambit. There were precisely 130 years between Adam and Seth, 105 between Seth and Enosh, 90 between Enosh and Cainan[1], etc., etc. (To argue that the years were based on lunar months will not save the gambit.) I take the clear meaning of the Hebrew Text to be that Arphaxad was 35 years old when Salah was born, whatever we may decide to do about 'Cainan'.

Let us try to imagine the situation in the years immediately following the Flood. After the Flood the 'name of the game' was to replenish the earth. Indeed, the divine command was: "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 9:1). So, whom could Noah's grandsons marry? Obviously their cousins, Noah's granddaughters. There would be an urgency to reproduce—thus, the girls would be married off at puberty, and the boys would not be wasting around either. The women would be giving birth as often as they possibly could. Really, the absolute top priority would be to increase the number of people.

38of Enosh, of Seth, of Adam, of God.)

Jesus tested by Satan

4 1Then Jesus, full of Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, 2where He was tested for forty days by the devil.[1] He ate nothing at all during those days, so after they were completed He was hungry.[2] 3So the devil said to Him, "Since you are Son of God,[3] tell this stone to become bread!"[4] 4Jesus answered him saying, "It is written: 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'"[5]

5And taking Him up on a high mountain,[6] the devil showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.[7] 6The devil said to Him: "To **you** I will give all this authority, and their glory, because it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I want to. 7So you, if you

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Arphaxad was born two years after the flood, but his wife could have been born a year or two earlier. (The Sacred Text is clear to the effect that only eight souls entered the ark, but some of the women could have conceived during the Flood, since they were in the ark for a full year.) Thus, Arphaxad could have fathered "Cainan" when he was 17/18. Similarly, Cainan could have fathered Salah when he was 17/18. In this way Arphaxad could be said to have "begotten" Salah when he was 35. Cainan could have died early or been passed over in Genesis because the time span did not constitute a 'generation', or both. Or, as things got back to normal, culturally speaking, the haste with which Arphaxad and Cainan procreated might have been viewed as unseemly. The expedient of omitting Cainan would make the account more 'normal' while preserving precision as to the elapsed time. But Luke would be correct in saying that Salah was "of" Cainan who was "of" Arphaxad. Salah was Arphaxad's grandson. In any case, the Messianic line was passed on by Salah. Without Luke's record I, for one, would never have stopped to consider what must have happened immediately following the Flood—the absolute priority must have been to increase the number of people.

1 We are not told just how Satan did this.

2 This episode was ordained by the Holy Spirit. Jesus had to confront Satan when He was physically the weakest He would ever be (40 days without food!). When Satan failed to defeat this weakened Jesus, he was probably filled with despair—he now knew that he could never defeat Him (but he would still try to kill Him). Hebrews 2:18 and 4:15-16 give at least part of the reason why Jesus had to undergo this experience.

3 There are several kinds of conditional clause in Greek, among them 'of doubt', 'of fact' and 'contrary to fact'—Satan was not so crude as to express doubt about Christ's identity, 'if', he was more subtle; he granted the fact, 'since', and appealed to His pride.

4 Matthew 4:3 has "these stones", instead of "this stone". I gather that Satan said both: he started with 'these stones' and then picked out a specific one.

5 See Deuteronomy 8:3. Less than half a percent of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "but by every word of God" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). If we are to live by 'every' word, then every word must be kept available. Since Deuteronomy 8:3 says, "every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD", the translation into Greek uses *ρημα* instead of *λογος*.

6 Just three known Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality (against over 1,700), omit "up on a high mountain the devil" (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc., except that some keep 'the devil', but not the rest).

7 This is obviously supernatural. Even from a satellite you cannot see the whole world at once, because it is a sphere.

would worship before me, all will be yours."[1] [8]In answer Jesus said to him: "Get behind me, Satan![2] It is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only shall you serve!'"[3]

[9]He also took Him to Jerusalem and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple,[4] and said to Him: "Since you are Son of God, throw yourself down from here; [10]because it is written, 'He will give His angels orders concerning you, to protect you,' [11]and, 'They will carry you along on their hands, so you do not stub your foot on a stone.'"[5] [12]In answer Jesus said to him: "The statement stands, 'You shall not test the LORD your God!'"[6] [13]Having finished every test,[7] the devil departed from Him until an opportune time.[8]

Jesus begins His public ministry, in Galilee[9]

[14]Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and news about Him spread throughout the whole surrounding area; [15]yes, He started teaching in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

His hometown rejects Him

[16]So He came to Natsareth, where He had been brought up; as was His custom He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. [17]The book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him, so unrolling the scroll He found the place where it was written: [18]"The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, because He has anointed me to evangelize poor people. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted,[10] to proclaim release to captives and recovery of sight to blind people, to send those who are oppressed out in freedom, [19]to proclaim the Lord's favorable

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[1] This was a master-stroke. Jehovah the Son entered this world as the second/last Adam precisely to recover what the first Adam had lost, and Satan was evidently well aware of what was going on. So he offers it to Jesus on a 'silver platter', with just one small condition… Note that Jesus does not deny Satan's right to make the offer.

[2] Some 3.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit "Get behind me, Satan" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[3] See Deuteronomy 6:13.

[4] Matthew's report has the temple before the mountain; since he employs adverbs of time (sequence) while Luke does not, I take it that Matthew gives the correct sequence (which is also the logical progression). Luke handles the temple event almost as an afterthought. For further discussion, please see "Harmonizing the accounts of the Temptation" on my website: www.prunch.org.

[5] See Psalm 91:11-12.

[6] See Deuteronomy 6:16. To do something irresponsible to try to oblige God to perform a miracle to save you from the consequences is forbidden. It would be a kind of 'blackmail'.

[7] Jesus was tested in the three areas: "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). Hebrews 2:18 and 4:15-16 give at least part of the reason why Jesus had to go through this experience.

[8] "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7), but he is in the business of returning and renewing the attack—constant vigilance is required.

[9] A number of months elapsed between verses 13 and 14; John 1:15-4:42 records some of what transpired during that interval.

[10] Perhaps 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "to heal the brokenhearted" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

year."[1]

"Today this Scripture is fulfilled"

20Then, having rolled up the scroll and returned it to the attendant, He sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on Him, **21**and He began by saying to them, "Today, this Scripture in your ears has been fulfilled." **22**(All were bearing witness to Him and were marveling at the gracious words that were coming out of His mouth;[2] and they started saying, "Isn't this the son of Joseph?") **23**He said to them: "Doubtless you will quote this parable to me: 'Physician, heal yourself!'—do here in your hometown the things we have heard were done in Capernaum."

Jesus treads on their toes

24Then He said: "Assuredly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his hometown. **25**Further, I can assure you that there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut for three years and six months and a severe famine came over all the land; **26**yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow woman in Sarepta, near Sidon. **27**And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, yet not one of them was cleansed—just Naaman the Syrian."[3]

28Well, upon hearing these things everyone in the synagogue was filled with fury,[4] **29**and rising up they drove Him out of the town and took Him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built,[5] in order to throw Him off the cliff. **30**But He, passing through the middle of them, went on His way.[6]

Capernaum becomes His base of operations—27 AD[7]

31Then He went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee; He started

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[1] Jesus interrupted the reading of Isaiah 61:2 at a comma—'the great parenthesis'. The part that He read pertained to His first coming, but "the day of vengeance of our God" pertains to His second coming—the 'parenthesis' is closing in on 2,000 years.

[2] He doubtless spoke for a reasonable length of time and was producing a favorable impression, but at the end He got offensive; verses 23-27 presumably contain the conclusion of His discourse.

[3] It appears that Jesus antagonized them on purpose. Why? I see two possible answers: to remove any claim to special privilege that they might harbor because of being His home town; to be personally free from possible pressure arising from such a claim. In fact He moved out, choosing Capernaum as His base of operations.

[4] The violent reaction was out of all proportion to the 'provocation'. Presumably Satan took this opportunity to try to kill Him.

[5] The city is located at the base of a mountain, and on the other side there is a precipice —to this day.

[6] "Passing through the middle of them, He went on His way"—now how did that happen? To throw Him down, someone would have to be holding Him, probably a man on each arm, and they had gotten Him there by force, and He was surrounded. Obviously the Lord made use of supernatural power to free Himself from that situation—He had come to this world to die, all right, but not then and not in that way.

[7] After an episode like that, Jesus would not want to keep on living there. I take it that He moved all His effects to Capernaum; its locale was far more strategic for His ongoing ministry. James would take over as head of the household in Natsareth.

teaching them on the Sabbaths. 32They kept on being amazed at His teaching, because His word was with authority.

A demonized man

33Now in the synagogue was a man having a spirit of an unclean demon; he cried out with a loud voice 34saying: "Ugh! What do you want with us, Jesus of Natsareth? Did you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God!"[1] 35So Jesus rebuked him saying, "Be muzzled, and get out of him!" When the demon had thrown him down in the midst, it came out of him without harming him. 36Everyone was taken with amazement and they started conversing together, saying: "What is this word! For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!" 37And the news about Him started going out to every place of the surrounding region.

Peter's mother-in-law

38Then He left the synagogue and entered Simon's house. But Simon's mother-in-law was suffering with a high fever, and they requested Him on her behalf. 39So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. Immediately she got up and began to serve them.[2]

Healings at sunset

40Now when the sun was setting,[3] all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on each one of them and healed them.[4] 41Moreover, demons came out of many, crying out and saying, "You are the Christ,[5] the Son of God!" But rebuking them He would not allow them to continue speaking, because they knew that He was the Messiah.[6]

42Now at daybreak He departed and went to a deserted place; so the crowds started looking for Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them. 43But He said to them, "I must proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God to the other towns also, because for this purpose I have been sent." 44So He went preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.[7]

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[1] Evidently the Lord's mere presence was enough to make the demons feel threatened. Based on John 14:12, I wonder if the same thing should not be true of us.

[2] Normally a high fever leaves one weak, so the Lord reversed the consequences of the fever as well. I take it that Matthew 8:14-15 records a different occasion (see "Peter's mother-in-law", in my website: www.prunch.org). Just because God heals you once does not mean you will not get sick again.

[3] They waited until the Sabbath ended.

[4] On this occasion Jesus placed a hand on each one, but that would not always be the case. It would appear that He deliberately used a variety of procedures to heal.

[5] Perhaps 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "the Christ" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[6] I find this to be curious: the demons kept telling the truth about Jesus, but He evidently did not want testimony from that quarter. But it seems that the demons felt compelled to identify Him—I wonder why.

[7] Around 4% of the Greek manuscripts read Judea rather than Galilee, possibly influenced by Lectionaries. There is confusion among the 4% such that the prepositional phrase as given in UBS is read by less than 1%. However, Jesus was in Galilee (and

By the sea

5 [1]Now it happened, as He had come along the Lake of Genesaret, that the multitude crowded Him to hear the Word of God; [2]He saw two boats standing by the lake (the fishermen were out of them, washing their nets). [3]So He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land.[1] Sitting down He began to teach the crowds from the boat.

A miraculous catch

[4]When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." [5]And in answer Simon said to Him, "Master, we have worked hard the whole night and caught nothing, but based on your word I will let down the net."[2] [6]When they had done this, they caught such a large number of fish that their net began to tear. [7]So they signaled to their partners who were in the other boat to come help them; they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. [8]Upon experiencing this Simon Peter fell at Jesus' knees,[3] saying, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!"[4] [9]Because astonishment gripped him and all who were with him at the haul of fish which they had caught; [10]yes, this included James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." [11]Pulling the boats up on the shore, they left it all[5] and followed Him.

The hinge: proof, evaluation, rejection

A leper—the proof

[12]Now it happened, while He was in one of the towns—a man full of leprosy! Upon seeing Jesus he fell on his face and begged Him, saying, "Lord, if you want to, you can cleanse me!" [13]So He extended His hand

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continued there), not in Judea, as the context makes clear. In the parallel passage, Mark 1:35-39, all texts agree that Jesus was in Galilee. Thus UBS[3] contradicts itself by reading Judea in Luke 4:44. Bruce Metzger makes clear that the UBS editors did this on purpose when he explains that their reading "is obviously the more difficult, and copyists have corrected it…in accord with the parallels in Mt 4.23 and Mk 1.39." Thus the UBS editors introduce a contradiction into their text which is also an error of fact. This error in the eclectic text is reproduced by LB, NIV, NASB, NEB, RSV, etc. NRSV adds insult to injury: "So he continued proclaiming the message in the synagogues of Judea."

[1] Peter had already spent time with Jesus, so this was natural.

[2] Peter was the professional here, and figured he knew better than Jesus, but he does obey. However, Jesus had said to let down 'nets' (pl), but Peter let down only one. 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, read 'nets', to be followed by most modern versions. (Actually, Jesus put 'let down' in the plural, so there was at least one other in the boat, unless it was really His intention that both boats should go out.)

[3] Jesus was still sitting in the boat, only now surrounded by fish, probably up to His knees. The Greek Text plainly says "knees", but many versions put 'feet'—pitiful!

[4] Do you find Peter's reaction to be curious? No doubt he felt pretty 'small' at that point.

[5] The hired men took care of the fish, etc. No doubt most of the crowd had stayed to watch, so getting rid of the fish probably was not a problem.

and touched him, saying, "I want to; be cleansed!"[1] Immediately the leprosy left him. 14Then He ordered him to tell no one, "But go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing just as Moses prescribed, as a testimony to them."[2]

15However the news about Him spread all the more, and large crowds kept gathering to hear and to be healed by Him of their sicknesses. 16So He Himself would withdraw into deserted places and pray.[3]

An examining council—the evaluation

17Now it happened on a certain day that He was teaching, and there were Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee, and from Judea and Jerusalem, sitting there—and the power of the Lord was there to heal them.[4]

"Your sins are forgiven"

18And then, some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a cot, and tried to take him in and place him before Him. 19When they could not find how to do it, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him with the cot through the tiling into the center, in front of Jesus. 20Seeing their faith He said to him, "Man, your sins are forgiven you!"[5]

A 'discussion' ensues

21So the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying: "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"[6] 22But Jesus perceived their reasonings and reacted by saying to them: "Why are you reasoning in your hearts? 23Which is easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you', or to say, 'Get up and walk!'?[7] 24But that you may know that the Son of the Man[8] has authority on earth to forgive sins"—

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[1] "I want to"—beautiful! To actually touch a leper was unheard of, but of course Jesus had no fear of contamination.

[2] As a testimony about what? This would be the first time in the life of the priest that anyone had done this, because lepers did not get better. Who but the Messiah could heal leprosy? That they got the point is indicated by the examining council that is described in verse 17 below.

[3] He made sure that He kept in touch with the Father.

[4] The eclectic text currently in vogue makes a mess of this statement by changing 'them' to 'him', following about 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality. 'Him' is in the accusative case, as is 'them', and is thus the direct object of the verb 'to heal'. The modern versions that follow the 1% render 'present with Him to heal', or some such thing, which the text does <u>not</u> say.

[5] Those men were really determined, but they wanted healing, not forgiveness of sins; however, Jesus had His own agenda.

[6] Their theology was not all that bad; they just did not recognize Jesus as God.

[7] "Your sins are forgiven" is easier to <u>say</u>, because no one can see if it happened or not. If you say, "Get up and walk!" and he does not, it makes you look stupid.

[8] That is what the Text says, "the Son of the Man", which appears to be a phrase coined by the Lord Jesus to refer to Himself; the phrase does not make very good sense in English, at first glance, but if "<u>the</u> man" refers to pristine Adam and "<u>the</u> son" to an only pristine descendent, it makes great sense. It seems to indicate a perfect human prototype, like Adam was before the fall—the human side of the God-man.

He said to the paralyzed man: "I say to <u>you</u>, get up! Take your cot and go to your house."

God is glorified

25Immediately he stood up in front of them, took up what he had been lying on, and set out to his own house glorifying God. **26**Amazement gripped them all and they kept glorifying God; they were also filled with fear, saying, "We have seen strange things today!"[1]

Enter Levi (Matthew)

27After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax office; and He said to him, "Follow me!" **28**So leaving everything he got up and followed Him.[2] **29**Then Levi made a great banquet for Him at his house; and there was a large crowd of tax collectors and others who were reclining with them.

The Pharisees have a problem

30Well the scribes and Pharisees complained about them to His disciples, saying, "How can you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?!" **31**So Jesus reacted and said to them: "Those who are healthy have no need of a physician, just those who are sick. **32**I have not come to call righteous people to repentance, just sinners."

33Then they said to Him, "Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but yours keep eating and drinking?" **34**So He said to them: "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? **35**But days are coming when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; <u>then</u>, in those days, they will fast."

New wine X old wineskins

36Then He also told them a parable: "No one puts a patch from a new garment on an old one; otherwise, both the new makes a tear and that from the new does not match the old. **37**And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst those skins and will itself be spilled and the skins wasted. **38**Rather, new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved.[3] **39**Further, no one having drunk old *wine* immediately desires new, for he says, 'The old is better.'"

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[1] Their initial reaction was favorable, but then Jesus went and ate with tax collectors, and that was too much for them.

[2] Wow! Evidently he really did, turning his responsibilities over to his colleagues. Because tax collectors were ostracized by the people, they probably wanted to join the crowds following Jesus, but felt excluded. So a direct invitation to Matthew was all he wanted.

[3] I take it that the Lord is saying that a church that has become an 'old wineskin' cannot be renewed—any attempt to introduce 'new wine' will only result in division and bitterness. Bearers of 'new wine' should just start a new congregation. The truth stated in verse 39 is one of the factors. Less than 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "and both are preserved" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath

6 [1]Now it happened on a second-first[1] Sabbath that He was passing through the grain fields, and His disciples began to pick and eat the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands. [2]But some of the Pharisees said to them,[2] "Why are you doing that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?" [3]So in answer to them Jesus said: "Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: [4]how he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and even gave it to those with him—that which only the priests are allowed to eat?" [5]Then He said to them, "The Son of the Man is Lord even of the Sabbath!"[3]

He heals on the Sabbath

[6]Now it happened on a different Sabbath that He entered the synagogue and began to teach. Well there was a man there whose right hand was shriveled; [7]so the scribes and the Pharisees started watching, to see if He would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might find an accusation against Him. [8]But He knew their thoughts and said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Get up and stand in the center." So he got up and stood. [9]Then Jesus said to them: "I will ask you something: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?"[4] [10]And when He had looked around at them all, He said to him, "Stretch out your hand!" So he did that, and his hand was restored, as sound as the other.[5]

The rejection

[11]But they were filled with rage,[6] and began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus.

Choosing the Twelve

[12]Now it happened in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and He continued all night in prayer to God.[7] [13]When it was day He called His disciples, and from them He chose twelve, whom He also

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[1] That is what the Text says. No doubt everyone at that time knew just what was intended, but in the meantime we have lost the necessary cultural information. Less than 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "second-first", to be followed by most modern versions.

[2] By now the Pharisees had 'spies' following Jesus wherever He went.

[3] Now that was something that they were not prepared to assimilate. They used the Sabbath as an instrument to dominate the people, and Jesus was threatening to deprive them of that instrument. Mark 2:27 preserves an added comment: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath". Man needs one day of rest in seven, but it is not intended as a 'straitjacket'. See Romans 14:5.

[4] Instead of "to kill", perhaps 10% of the Greek manuscripts have 'to destroy', as in almost all versions, since both the TR and the eclectic text follow the 10%.

[5] Perhaps 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "as sound as the other" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[6] Filled by whom, or what? Only someone controlled by Satan could become furious over a good deed like that.

[7] Presumably He was making sure that He made the correct selection of twelve, taken from a larger group of followers. He certainly knew why He was including the Iscariot.

named apostles:[1] 14Simon (whom He also named Peter) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, 15Matthew and Thomas, James (the son of Alphaeus) and Simon (the one called 'Zealot'), 16Judas of James and Judas Iscariot (who also became 'traitor').[2]

A sermon on a level place[3]

17Then He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, also from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases, 18as well as those who were being harassed by unclean spirits—and they were being healed! 19So the whole crowd kept trying to touch Him, because power was going out from Him and was healing all.[4]

Blessings

20Then He raised His eyes toward His disciples and said: "Blessed are you poor, because the Kingdom of God is yours.[5] 21Blessed are you who hunger now, because you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, because you will laugh. 22Blessed are you whenever men hate you, and whenever they exclude you and heap insults on you and trash your name as 'malignant',[6] for the Son of the Man's sake. 23Rejoice in that day and skip about![7] Because your reward really is great in Heaven; for that is how their fathers treated the prophets.

Woes

24"But woe to you who are rich! because you have already received your comfort. 25Woe to you who are full! because you will go hungry. Woe to you who are presently laughing! because you will mourn and weep. 26Woe, when all men speak well of you; for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets!

Instructions

27"Further, to you who are listening[8] I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you; 28bless those who curse you, pray for those

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1 The basic meaning of the term was 'messenger', or 'envoy'.

2 Note the 'became'—Judas was doubtless just as sincere as the others when he joined up, and won everyone's confidence to the extent that he was made treasurer. It was only toward the end that he 'became' a traitor.

3 Although similar to the 'sermon on the mount' recorded by Matthew, this is clearly a different time and place. During His ministry the Lord doubtless repeated His basic concepts over and over.

4 The crowd would be constantly shifting, because those who were healed would back off to make room for others.

5 Note that Jesus said this to His disciples, so these blessings may not be claimed by anyone else.

6 As someone has said, 'A man is known by his enemies'. Well, how can a true follower of Jesus, surrounded by a culture dominated by Satan, remain without enemies?

7 Well, you know, I can almost manage to 'rejoice' in theory, but to 'skip about' is physical—that is harder to pretend.

8 Are you 'listening'? Really? To follow the 'narrow way' successfully, we need to listen to the Holy Spirit.

who mistreat you.[1] 29To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer also the other;[2] and from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold the tunic as well. 30Give to everyone who asks of you;[3] and from him who takes away your things, do not demand them back. 31Yes, like you want people to treat you, that is just how you must treat them.[4] 32Also, if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. 33And if you do good to those doing good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do the same. 34And if you lend to those from whom you expect to get it back, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners', to receive an equal value back.

Be compassionate

35"So, love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing back; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High;[5] because He is kind toward the ungrateful and wicked. 36So be compassionate, even as your Father is compassionate.[6]

We get what we give

37"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. 38Give and it will be given to you: a good measure—pressed down and shaken together and running over—will they deposit in your lap.[7] Because with the same measure that you use it will be measured back to you."

39Then He told them a parable: "Can a blind man guide a blind man? Will they not both fall into a ditch? 40A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.[8] 41Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank that is in your own eye?[9] 42Or how can you say to your brother,

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[1] People who do these things are being used by Satan; they need to be delivered, and this is done in the spiritual realm.

[2] Do not use physical violence to respond to physical violence—but we can use our spiritual authority. Animals must resort to force, but Adam was given dominion over the animals, which presumably was not exercised with physical force—we should not lower ourselves to the animal level; but Satan tries to trick us into doing so. If someone lashes out in anger, turning the other cheek should shame him.

[3] Presumably this does not refer to professional beggars (2 Thessalonians 3:10), but to someone overtaken by adversity who needs temporary help, someone you know who is part of the community.

[4] This is the so-called 'golden rule'—if everyone did this the world would be a better place.

[5] I take the point to be that the behavior described indicates that the person already is a 'son' of the Most-High. As it says in Ephesians 2:8-10, we do good works because we are saved, not in order to become so.

[6] Only if you have the Holy Spirit can you even come close to following the Father's example. See Matthew 5:48.

[7] 'They' refers to human beings, not to God.

[8] This is an important point; it takes time to become 'fully trained'. No one becomes like Jesus in a hurry.

[9] Even a speck in the eye is very uncomfortable, making it hard to use that eye. An eye with a 'plank' would be useless, totally blind, so in effect Jesus is repeating the question, "Can a blind man guide?" On the other hand, a 'plank' is so large that one

'Brother, let me remove the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the plank that is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother's eye.

A tree is known by its fruit

43"Now no good tree produces rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree produce good fruit—44each tree is known by its own fruit: people do not gather figs from thorn bushes, nor do they pick a bunch of grapes from a bramble. 45The good man produces the good out of the good treasure in his heart, and the malignant man produces the malignant out of the malignant treasure in his heart; because his mouth speaks out of the abundance of the heart.[1]

Two foundations

46"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord', and not do what I say?[2] 47Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them—I will show you who he is like: 48he is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on the bedrock. When a flood occurred, the torrent burst upon that house but could not shake it, because it was founded on the bedrock.[3] 49But he who heard and did nothing[4] is like a man who built his house on the ground without a foundation, against which the torrent burst, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."

The faith of a centurion

7 1Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum. 2Well a certain centurion's slave, who was valuable to him, was sick and about to die. 3So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, asking Him to come and rescue his slave. 4And when they came to Jesus, they started pleading earnestly with Him, saying that the one for whom He would do this was worthy, 5"Because he loves our nation, and he himself built our synagogue."[5] 6So Jesus went with them.

But when He was no longer far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him: "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am

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can grab it and remove it without sight. Unfortunately there are a lot of 'blind' teachers who don't think they are, and they do untold damage to their students.

1 This whole paragraph is really about people, not plants, thus the term 'rotten'.

2 This is presumably one of the questions that will be on the Final Test.

3 Perhaps 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, read "because it was built well", instead of "because it was founded on the bedrock" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). If the bedrock refers to the Lord Jesus and His teaching, then this alteration is bad.

4 Notice the change in tense: 'hears and does' changes to 'heard and did nothing'. The second person heard the Truth, but rejected it, and so is without excuse.

5 There must have been a Roman military unit stationed in Capernaum. That particular centurion must have been there for a considerable time to have been able to finance the construction of a synagogue. It is surprising that he would even want to do something like that.

not worthy that you should come under my roof. 7In fact I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you.[1] Just say a word and my servant will be healed; 8because I also am a man placed under authority,[2] having soldiers under me. I say to one, 'Go!' and he goes; and to another, 'Come!' and he comes; and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does."

9Well upon hearing these things Jesus marveled at him, and turning to the crowd following Him, He said, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith!"[3] 10When those who were sent returned to the house they found that the slave who had been sick was well.

A widow's son raised

11Now it happened on the next day that He went to a town called Nain, and many of His disciples went with Him, also a large crowd. 12But as He approached the town gate, mercy, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; a large crowd from the town was with her. 13When the Lord saw her He had compassion on her[4] and said to her, "Don't cry!" 14And advancing He took hold of the bier[5] and the bearers stood still. Then He said, "Young man, to you I say, get up!"[6] 15So the dead man sat up and began to talk! Yes, He gave him back to his mother.

16Fear took hold of all, and they began glorifying God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and, "God has visited His people!" 17And this report about Him went throughout Judea, as well as all the surrounding region.[7]

Messengers from John

18Then the disciples of John informed him about all these things. 19And summoning a certain two of his disciples, John sent them to Jesus, saying, "Are you the Coming One, or should we look for another?"[8] 20When the men had come to Him, they said: "John the Baptizer has sent us to you, saying, 'Are you the Coming One, or should we look for another?'" 21Well in that very hour He healed many from diseases and

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1 This event is not the same as that recorded in Matthew 8:5-13. For a discussion please see: "Did the centurion leave his house?" on my website: www.prunch.org.

2 He was part of a chain of command, with people both above and beneath him. Whereas he had military authority, he understood that Jesus had spiritual authority—all He had to do was speak. So how about us?

3 If Jesus were physically present here today, He could say the same thing about almost all churches.

4 She needed compassion; her situation was desperate, with no means of support.

5 The "bier" was not a casket, it was a type of platform, with the body lying on top. When Jesus commanded him to get up, he did so without difficulty.

6 Jesus was always specific when He brought someone back from the dead, so as not to empty the graveyard.

7 Nain is in Galilee, but besides the surrounding region the report of this particular miracle made it to Judea as well.

8 John was puzzled and disillusioned. If Jesus was the Messiah, why was he, John, in prison? Why didn't Jesus set up His Kingdom and deliver John? Everyone was looking for the Messianic Kingdom to be set up forthwith (see 19:11).

torments and malignant spirits, and to many blind He granted sight.
22So in answer Jesus said to them: "Go and report to John the things you
have seen and heard: that the blind regain sight, the lame walk, lepers
are cleansed, the deaf hear, dead are raised, the poor are evangelized.[1]
23And, blessed is he who does not take offense at me!"[2]

Jesus praises John

24Now when John's messengers had departed, He began to speak to
the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to
observe, a reed being shaken by the wind? 25But what did you go out to
see, a man clothed in soft garments? Really, those with gorgeous apparel
and living in luxury are in palaces. 26But what did you go out to see, a
prophet? Yes, I say to you, and much more than a prophet. 27This is he
about whom it is written: 'Take note, I am sending my messenger before
your face, who will prepare your way before you.'[3] 28Further, I tell you
that among those born of women there is no greater prophet[4] than John
the Baptizer; yet he who is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than
he."[5]

29(When all the people, including the tax collectors, heard this, they
declared God to be just, having been baptized with John's baptism. 30But
the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the counsel of God for them
selves, not having been baptized by him.)[6]

Inconsistency of the Pharisees

31"To what then shall I compare the men of this generation, and to
what are they similar? 32They are like children sitting in the market-
place and calling to one another, saying, 'We played the flute for you,
and you did not dance; we mourned to you, and you did not cry.'
33Because John the Baptizer came neither eating bread nor drinking
wine, and you say, 'He has a demon!' 34The Son of the Man has come
eating and drinking, and you say, 'Just look, a glutton and a drunkard,

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[1] "The poor are evangelized"—what the poor (and everyone else) need most is salvation and a new life, not a free distribution of wealth.

[2] Jesus was not meeting John's expectations, and the same thing happens to us, from time to time, but we had better keep the proper perspective.

[3] See Malachi 3:1.

[4] Perhaps 14% of the Greek manuscripts omit "prophet", to be followed by most modern versions; this is probably an assimilation to Matthew. But the difference in meaning is significant; Jesus did not say, 'no greater person'.

[5] Evidently, as forerunner of the Kingdom John was not part of it—the Kingdom was rejected at that time; both forerunner and King were killed—those who participate in the actual future Kingdom will be more privileged. "Born of women" excludes Adam. Men like Noah, Abraham, Moses, Daniel would be of equal standing, just not "greater". But those who live during the Messianic Kingdom (Millennium) will be more privileged than all except Adam, because the earth will return to conditions similar to Eden.

[6] John's baptism was based on repentance, but self-righteous people would consider that they did not need it.

a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' [35]Still, by all her children wisdom is justified."[1]

A lesson in forgiveness

[36]Then one of the Pharisees invited Him to eat with him,[2] so He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined. [37]But then, a woman in the town who was a sinner, when she found out that He was reclining in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster flask of perfume, [38]and as she stood behind Him at His feet weeping,[3] she began to wet His feet with her tears and kept wiping them with the hair of her head; and she kept kissing His feet[4] and anointing them with the perfume.[5]

[39]Now as the Pharisee who had invited Him observed this, he was saying to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him, including what sort of woman she is—because she is a sinner!"[6] [40]So Jesus reacted by saying to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he said, "Teacher, say on." [41]"A certain creditor had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. [42]And when they had no way to repay, he freely forgave them both. Now tell me, which of them will love him more?" [43]So Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one to whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have judged correctly."

[44]Then He turned toward the woman and said to Simon: "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. [45]You gave me no kiss, but she has not stopped kissing my feet since the time I came in. [46]You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with perfume. [47]For this reason, I say to you, her many sins have been forgiven, because she loved much;[7] but to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little."

[48]Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." [49]The other reclin-ers began to say within themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" [50]Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go into peace."[8]

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1 In other words, the Pharisees were not children of 'wisdom'.

2 This was not a friendly invitation.

3 He was reclining on a 'couch' with His head in toward the table, so His feet were 'available'.

4 To do all of this she would have to be kneeling. She started by standing, and probably waited a minute to see if anyone would object.

5 This is a moving picture. She was ashamed and distressed, because of what she was, but she desperately wanted to change, and she saw in Jesus the way out.

6 Evidently the woman was well known to the locals. To the Pharisee's mind, Jesus was being contaminated by that touch, and He should not have allowed it.

7 She demonstrated her repentance and desire for a new life by the extent to which she went to ask for forgiveness.

8 That is what the Text says, 'into' not 'in'—from then on her life would be different, one characterized by peace. She got what she so desperately wanted.

Jesus takes the offensive

Women provide for Jesus

8 [1]Now it happened after this that He started going around town by town, village by village, preaching and proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God, and the twelve were with Him; [2]also certain women who had been healed of malignant spirits and infirmities: Mary (the one called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had gone out; [3]and Joanna the wife of Chuza, an official of Herod; and Susanna, and many others—these were providing for Him[1] from their substance.

Parable of the soils

[4]Now when a large crowd had gathered, with people coming to Him from town after town, He spoke by a parable: [5]"A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed some fell along the road, and it got trampled, and the birds of the air devoured it. [6]And some fell on the rock ledge, and upon sprouting it withered, because it had no moisture. [7]And some fell among thorns, and springing up together the thorns choked it. [8]The rest fell into the good ground, and growing up it produced fruit a hundredfold." Upon saying these things He called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

The purpose of parables

[9]Then His disciples asked Him saying, "What does this parable mean?" [10]So He said: "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, but to the rest *only* in parables, so that 'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'[2]

The parable of the soils explained

[11]"Now here is the parable: The seed is the Word of God. [12]Those along the road are those who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, in order that they not be saved, having believed.[3] [13]Those on the rock ledge are the ones who, whenever they hear, receive the word with joy; yet these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of testing fall away.[4] [14]Now that which fell into the thorns: these are the ones who heard, yet as they go they are choked by cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. [15]But that on the good ground: these are the ones who having heard the word with a noble and good heart, hold on to it and produce fruit with perseverance."

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[1] The Greek manuscripts are divided between 'him' and 'them' (I follow the best line of transmission), which in practice would amount to the same thing—since He would not eat alone, any providing would have to include the twelve.

[2] See Isaiah 6:9. The Lord plainly states that He used parables so that people would <u>not</u> understand. It follows that doctrine should never be based on a parable—however, if the parable is explained, the explanation may be used.

[3] The Lord here states a terrible truth: Satan has access to the human mind. See also 2 Corinthians 4:3-4.

[4] Note that with the exception of those along the road all the seeds germinate—there is life.

All will be exposed

16Upon saying these things He called out: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear![1] No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but he sets it on a lamp stand, so that those who come in may see the light. 17Further, there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, nor anything concealed that will not be made known and come into the open. 18So be careful how you hear:[2] Because whoever has, to him *more* will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken away from him."

Relationships redefined

19Then His mother and brothers came to Him, and they could not get near Him because of the crowd. 20And it was told Him by some saying, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you." 21But in answer He said to them, "My mother and my brothers are these, the ones who hear the word of God and do it!"[3]

Jesus stills a storm

22Now it happened on one of those days that He got into a boat with His disciples; and He said to them, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." So they launched out. 23But as they sailed, He fell asleep. A windstorm descended on the lake, and they were being swamped and were in jeopardy. 24So they came and awakened Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" Then He got up and rebuked the wind and the waves of water—and they stopped, and there was a calm![4] 25So He said to them, "Where is your faith?"[5] But being terrified they marveled, saying to each other: "Who can this be?[6] Because He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him!"

Jesus handles demon infestation

26Then they sailed to the district of the Gadarenes,[7] which is opposite Galilee. 27Well when He stepped out on the land, a certain man of

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1 Most (if not all) versions omit "Upon saying these things He called out: He who has ears to hear let him hear!" following 45% of the Greek manuscripts. I follow the best line of transmission, which is part of the 55% here. Jesus was calling attention to what He was about to say.

2 Spiritual growth is like going up an incline on a bicycle with no brakes; if you stop pedaling, you start going backwards. Either we grow, or we start losing what we have. There is no standing still. So be careful **how** you hear!

3 Our primary commitment should be to Christ and His Kingdom, not to our physical family. There are times when the Kingdom 'trumps' family.

4 Agitated water does not calm down immediately, even if the cause stops, so there was a double miracle here—Jesus undid the consequences of the wind (1 John 3:8).

5 In other words, He is telling them that they could, and should, have done something about it themselves. Had we been there, would we have done any better?

6 This puzzles me; after all the miracles they had seen, they still wonder who Jesus is! Well, maybe controlling nature is in a 'higher league' than controlling sickness and demons. Still, what were the options: human, angel (good or bad), or God.

7 The eclectic text currently in vogue, following just 4 Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, against 1,700, reads 'Gerasenes' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, etc.). For a full

that town met Him, who had had demons for a long time—he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house, but among the tombs. **28**When he saw Jesus he gave a yell, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice he said: "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?[1] I beg you, don't torment me!" **29**because He had commanded the unclean spirit to get out of the man (it had seized him many times—he would be bound with chains and shackles, being kept under guard; then bursting the bonds he would be driven by the demon into deserted places). **30**Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"[2] And he said, "Legion" (because many demons had gone into him). **31**And he[3] kept imploring Him that He would not order them to go away into the Abyss.[4]

32Now a herd of <u>many</u> pigs was feeding there on the hillside; and they started begging Him that He would allow them to go into those; so He gave them permission. **33**Then the demons exited the man and entered the pigs—and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned![5]

34Well when the herders saw what had happened they ran away and reported it in the town and in the countryside. **35**So they went out to see what had happened and came to Jesus; they found the man from whom the demons had gone out sitting at Jesus' feet, clothed and in his right mind; and they were afraid.[6] **36**Also, the eyewitnesses reported to them how the demonized man was healed. **37**Then the whole multitude from the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, because they were overcome by fear.[7] So He got into the boat and returned.[8]

38Now the man from whom the demons had gone out had started begging Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, **39**"Return to your house and recount how much God has done for you." So he went his way and proclaimed all over town how much Jesus

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discussion of this question please see: "The 'Legion' and the pigs; where was it?" on my website: www.prunch.org.

[1] The disciples may not have known who Jesus was, but the demons did!

[2] I assume that Jesus knew the demon's name without asking, so why did He ask? I would say that He wanted it to be part of the Record, to teach us that demon infestation can and does occur.

[3] The boss demon does most of the talking, representing his cohort.

[4] The Text has '<u>the</u> Abyss', presumably the same one mentioned in Revelation 20:3. The demons knew something that most of us do not.

[5] I very much doubt that the demons engineered that reaction; it would have been counterproductive, leaving them without a 'home'. Animals often show more good sense than do humans, and they may have preferred death to demons. (And I suppose it is possible that Jesus Himself commanded the action, since pork was proscribed for God's people.) Moreover, pigs can swim, so it is strange that all of them died.

[6] With good reason; a supernatural power was at work, obviously.

[7] The loss of all those pigs was a severe economic blow.

[8] And apparently He never went back; they had had their chance.

had done for him.[1]

A desperate father

40Now it happened, when Jesus returned, that the crowd welcomed Him, because they were all waiting for Him.[2] 41And then, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue; he fell down at Jesus' feet and started begging Him to come to his house, 42because he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying.

A desperate woman

Now as He was going, the crowds were pressing against Him. 43And a woman—suffering with a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent her whole livelihood on physicians, but could not be healed by any— 44approaching from behind touched the border of His garment; and immediately the flow of her blood stopped! 45So Jesus said, "Who touched me?"[3] When all denied it, Peter and those with him said: "Master, the people are pressing against you and crowding in, and you say, 'Who touched me?'"[4] 46But Jesus said, "Someone did touch me, because I noticed power going out from me." 47Now when the woman saw that she could not hide, she came trembling, and falling down before Him she told Him in the presence of all the people[5] the reason why she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately. 48So He said: "Courage, daughter, your faith has healed you. Go into peace."[6]

Jesus raises a dead girl

49While He was still speaking, here came someone from the synagogue ruler's house, saying to him: "Your daughter has died. Don't bother the teacher."[7] 50But upon hearing it Jesus reacted by saying to him, "Don't be afraid; just believe and she will be healed." 51When He arrived at the house, He allowed no one to go in except Peter, John, James, the father of the child, and her mother. 52Now all were weeping and mourning for her; but He said, "Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping." 53They started ridiculing Him, knowing that she had died. 54So He put

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1 'How much God' becomes 'how much Jesus', which amounts to the same thing. The man witnessed to such good effect that many in that area believed.

2 If you go around doing what Jesus did, you become public property. Apparently Jairus believed that Jesus had to be physically present in order to heal.

3 He was referring to a purposeful touch.

4 Perhaps 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "and you say, 'Who touched me?'" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

5 That was not easy, but she was desperate. There was more involved than meets the eye. For a fuller discussion, please see `A desperate woman` on my website: www.prunch.org.

6 Again, 'into' not 'in'. Her life was now going to be different. For more detail, please see "A desperate woman", in my website: www.prunch.org. Perhaps 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "courage" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

7 They did not expect Jesus to raise a dead person, evidently considering that it was not possible.

them all outside, and[1] grasping her hand He called, saying, "Child, arise!" **55**Then her spirit returned, and she got right up! And He directed that she be given something to eat.[2] **56**Her parents were astonished, but He charged them to tell no one what had happened.[3]

Jesus sends out the Twelve

9 **1**Then He called the Twelve together and gave them power and authority over all the demons,[4] and to cure diseases; **2**and He sent them to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick. **3**And He said to them: "Take nothing for the journey—neither staffs[5] nor knapsack nor bread nor money, neither have two tunics apiece. **4**Whatever house you enter, stay there, and depart from there. **5**But as many as do not receive you, when you depart from that town, shake off even the dust from your feet as a testimony against them."[6] **6**So they set out and went around, village by village, evangelizing and healing everywhere.

Herod is troubled

7Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all the things being done by Him; and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead, **8**and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the ancient prophets had arisen. **9**But Herod said, "John I beheaded; so who is this about whom I hear such things?" And he started trying to see Him.[7]

Jesus feeds about 5,000 men

10When the Apostles returned they reported to Him all that they had done. Then He took them and withdrew privately to a deserted place belonging to a town called Bethsaida.[8] **11**But the crowds, being aware,

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[1] Perhaps 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "put them all outside, and" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[2] Nothing like being practical!

[3] Of course that would be difficult, because all the people who knew the girl had died would see her going about normally, and would want an explanation.

[4] "Over all the demons"—evidently, during their tour no demon resisted them, which contrasts with Luke 9:40.

[5] Perhaps 15% of the Greek manuscripts have 'staffs' as singular, to be followed by most modern versions. In Matthew 10:10 it is 5%. But to put the singular here and in Matthew contradicts Mark 6:8, where all texts have "only a staff". In Luke and Matthew the vast majority of the Greek manuscripts read "neither staffs", which does not contradict Mark—the case of the staffs is analogous to that of the tunics; they were to take only one, not several.

[6] We can do it too; I have. See Matthew 10:14-15, Mark 6:11 and Acts 13:51. In Matthew 11:23-24 Jesus Himself gives the example.

[7] But apparently he never succeeded until the very end, and even then only thanks to Pilate (Luke 23:6-12).

[8] Instead of "a deserted place belonging to a town called Bethsaida", 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have "a town called Bethsaida" (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). Problem: the eclectic text currently in vogue, along with the modern versions that follow it, has Jesus and company going into the town of Bethsaida, but in verse 12 the disciples say they are in a deserted area; thus a contradiction is introduced. The eclectic text here is also at variance with itself in the

followed Him. So He received them and started speaking to them about the Kingdom of God, and He cured those who needed healing.

12Now when the day began to decline, the Twelve approached and said to Him, "Dismiss the crowd, so that they may go to the surrounding villages and their farms, lodge and find food; because we are in a deserted place here." **13**But He said to them, "You feed them!"[1] So they said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we go and buy food for all this crowd" **14**(there were about five thousand men).[2] But He said to His disciples, "Make them recline in groups of fifty!" **15**They did so, making them all recline. **16**Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven He blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the multitude. **17**So they all ate and were filled, and twelve baskets of the pieces they left were taken up.[3]

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parallel passages. In Matthew 14:13 all texts have Jesus going to a deserted place, and in verse 15 the disciples say, "the place is deserted… send the crowd away to the towns." In Mark 6:31-32 all texts have Him going to a deserted place, and in verse 35 the disciples say it is a deserted place, etc. So the eclectic text not only makes Luke contradict himself, but sets him against Matthew and Mark—and this on the basis of only half a percent of the manuscripts!

But there is more to the story. From the parallel accounts it appears that He embarked at Capernaum. From John 6:23 we learn that the destination was near Tiberias. Capernaum and Tiberias are both on the western side of the Sea of Galilee, but there is a large bay between them; so they went over several miles of water. The crowd was not about to let Jesus get away. Mark makes clear that they ran along the shore—the faster runners stayed even with the boat and were waiting on the shore when the boat put in. The others were spread out behind for several miles (like in a marathon) and kept arriving. Any late starters would see the stragglers and could easily follow the action. Apparently He immediately started to heal the sick and went on to teach (Matthew 14:14, Mark 6:34).

But just where was it? John says it was near Tiberias, but Luke 9:10 says it was "a deserted place belonging to a town called Bethsaida". I assume that the place was indeed near Tiberias but did indeed belong to Bethsaida—either it had been deeded to the town somehow or the family that owned it was based in Bethsaida. Any near neighbors could not use it, so it was basically untouched—a great place for a picnic. After the feeding, Mark 6:45 says that "He made His disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, to Bethsaida". So why did Jesus send the disciples to Bethsaida? Perhaps it was to give an accounting to the owner of the place where the multitude was fed—15,000 people can make quite a mess. (I suspect that Jesus had permission to use the place when He wanted to get away, but no one had foreseen such a crowd as that.) From Matthew and Mark I gather that from Bethsaida Jesus went directly to Genesaret, spending the minimum time necessary in Bethsaida.

[1] Please, with what?! The only way the disciples could have obeyed this command would be by a miracle similar to what Jesus proceeded to perform. But they were not up to it. Are we?

[2] The word 'men' here is limited to males; it is not generic.

[3] The collecting was probably done by others, and in any case that leftover bread was used by others. (There was an interval of several months between verses 17 and 18 here. Matthew 15:1 - 16:12, Mark 7:1 – 8:26 and John 6:16-71 record some of what happened during that interval.)

Jesus ministers on the basis of His impending death

"You are the Christ!"

18Now it happened, as He was alone praying, that the disciples joined Him, and He questioned them, saying, "Who do the crowds say I am?" 19In answer they said, "John the Baptizer, but others say 'Elijah,' while others that one of the ancient prophets has arisen." 20Then He said to them, "But you, who do you say that I am?" In answer Peter said, "The Christ[1] of God!" 21But He strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one, 22saying, "The Son of the Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up."

To gain is to lose, to lose is to gain

23Then He said to everyone: "If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross,[2] and follow me. 24Because whoever desires to 'save' his life will waste it, but whoever 'wastes' his life for my sake, he will save it.[3] 25Further, what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, yet wastes or forfeits his very self? 26Yes, whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, the Son of the Man will be ashamed of Him, whenever He comes in the glory—His, and the Father's, and of the holy angels.[4] 27However, I tell you truly: there are some standing here who will certainly not taste death until they see the Kingdom of God!"

Peter, John and James see the 'Kingdom'

28Now about eight days after these words, it happened that He took along Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. 29And as He prayed, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing dazzling white. 30And then, two men started talking with Him, who were Moses and Elijah; 31they appeared in glory and were explaining His 'departure', that He was about to bring to fruition in Jerusalem.[5]

32Now Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; but becoming fully awake, they saw His glory, and the two men who stood with Him. 33Then it happened: as they were parting from Him, Peter said to Jesus: "Master, it is good for us to be here" and "Should we make three shelters: one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah?"[6]—not

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[1] Since they were speaking Hebrew, he said 'Messiah'.

[2] Some 13% of the Greek manuscripts add 'daily', as in most versions, but if you take it up, you have it. It sounds like being without a cross is not an option for those who follow Jesus.

[3] What the Lord is talking about is the potential one's life represents. The only way not to throw away or waste your life is to live for the Kingdom. See 1 Corinthians 3:11-15.

[4] Revelation 21:8 says that a coward does not enter the Kingdom. In Matthew 10:33 Jesus said that He will deny before the Father whoever denies Him before men. To cave in under pressure is definitely not to be recommended. But notice that here Jesus adds "and of my words". We have to believe what He did, and does.

[5] Evidently they communicated the details of the game plan.

[6] So how did Peter know who they were?

knowing what he was saying. 34But as he was saying this a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they became afraid as they entered the cloud. 35And a **Voice**[1] came out of the cloud, saying: "This is my beloved[2] Son. Listen to Him!" 36When the Voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. (They kept quiet and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen.)[3]

A violent demon

37Now it happened on the next day, when they came down from the mountain,[4] that a large crowd met Him. 38And then, a man from the crowd called out, saying: "Teacher, I beg you, look upon my son, for he is my only begotten. 39And oh, a spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams, and it convulses him with foaming, and it hardly departs from him, destroying him! 40And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." 41Then in answer Jesus said: "O unbelieving and perverse[5] generation, how long shall I be with you and put up with you (pl)? Bring your (sg) son here!" 42But while he was still coming the demon threw him down and convulsed him. Then Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the child, and gave him back to his father. 43Everyone was amazed at the majesty[6] of God.

Jesus foretells His death, again

But while all were marveling at all the things which Jesus did, He said to His disciples, 44"Let these words sink into your ears, because the Son of the Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men."[7] 45But they did not understand this saying; indeed it was concealed from them,[8] in order that they should not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about it.

He who is least will be great

46Then an argument started among them as to which of them would be the greatest. 47So Jesus, perceiving the reasoning of their heart, took a little child and had him stand beside Him, 48and said to them: "Whoever receives this little child in my name receives me; and whoever

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1 Peter never forgot that VOICE (2 Peter 1:16). In effect, the Father was rebuking Peter for speaking out of turn. The **Voice** was not happy!

2 Instead of 'beloved', perhaps 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have 'chosen' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

3 Jesus commanded them not to mention anything until after the resurrection (Mark 9:9).

4 They spent a night up there.

5 Why "perverse"? To reject the truth and the evidence is to be perverse. This word was presumably directed to the disciples, who should have known better by now. So how about us—are we living on the basis of the truth and the evidence? Really?

6 Why 'the majesty'? I don't know.

7 Moses and Elijah had delivered the game plan, and Jesus immediately starts warning the disciples.

8 Concealed by whom? Presumably not by God, as attested by the immediately following argument.

receives me receives Him who sent me. Further, he who is least among all of you, he will be great."

John changes the subject

49Then John reacted by saying, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us." **50**So Jesus said to him, "Do not forbid, because he who is not against us is for us."[1]

A Samaritan village

51Now it happened, as the days before His Ascension were being fulfilled,[2] that He set His face to go to Jerusalem, **52**and He sent messengers ahead of Him. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, so as to prepare for Him. **53**But they did not receive Him, because He was heading for Jerusalem. **54**Well, when His disciples, James and John, saw this, they said, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven and consume them, just like Elijah did?"[3] **55**But He turned and rebuked them saying: "You do not know of what sort of spirit you are. **56**Further, the Son of the Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save."[4] And they went to another village.

The cost of discipleship

57Now as they journeyed on the road, it happened that someone said to Him, "Lord,[5] I will follow you wherever you go." **58**So Jesus said to him, "The foxes have dens and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of the Man has no place to lay His head."[6]

59Then He said to another, "Follow me!" But he said, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." **60**Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the Kingdom of God."[7]

61And another also said, "I will follow you, Lord, but first allow me

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[1] Instead of 'us is for us', perhaps 20% of the Greek manuscripts have 'you is for you'.

[2] Why did Luke put "ascension" rather than 'death' or 'resurrection'? I don't know, but I find it interesting. Hebrews 12:2 says that He endured the cross because of the joy that was set before Him. The ascension represented the culmination of the program that the Son had to complete in order to get that joy.

[3] About 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "just like Elijah did" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). No wonder Jesus called them 'sons of thunder' (Mark 3:17).

[4] Some 27% of the Greek manuscripts omit "saying: 'You do not know of what sort of spirit you are. Further, the Son of the Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save'", to be followed by most modern versions. The 73% includes the best line of transmission, which I follow.

[5] Perhaps 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "Lord" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[6] Jesus does not offer comfort and a 'good time'.

[7] Dear me, how unfeeling! Those who are not committed to Christ and His Kingdom are as good as dead, and a true disciple of Jesus must not allow himself to be held back by such. Of course such an attitude will not be understood by the 'dead', but the disciple needs to side with the Kingdom. What if that father had lived for another ten years? If you put off doing God's will for things like that, you may wind up never doing it.

to bid farewell to those who are at my house."[1] 62But Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to 'the plow' and looks back is suitable for the Kingdom of God."[2]

Jesus sends out the Seventy[3]

10 1Now after these things, the Lord appointed seventy[4] others also, and sent them two by two ahead of Him to every town and place where He Himself was about to go. 2Then He said to them: "The harvest is indeed great, but the workers are few; therefore pray to the Lord of the harvest that He may send out workers into His harvest.

3"Go! Yes, I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. 4Do not carry a purse, nor a knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road.[5] 5Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' 6If a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him; but if not, it will return to you. 7Remain in that same house, eating and drinking what they offer, because the worker is worthy of his wages. Do not move around from house to house.[6]

8"And into whatever town you enter, and they receive you, eat the things that are set before you. 9Heal the sick therein and say to them, 'The Kingdom of God has come near to you.' 10But into whatever town you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say: 11'Even the dust of your town that clings to us we wipe off against you. Nonetheless know this, that the Kingdom of God has come near to you.' 12I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that town.

Jesus gives the example

13"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! Because if the mighty works that were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14Nevertheless it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the Judgment than for you. 15And you, Capernaum, who are 'exalted to heaven', will be brought down to Hades.[7]

16"He who listens to you listens to me, and he who rejects you rejects

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1 If you go back to say goodbye, they will cry and carry on and do all they can to make you change your mind.

2 Again, the Lord is calling for total commitment.

3 Whereas the Twelve had been sent two by two to Galilee, the Seventy were sent to Judea.

4 Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, add "two" (as in NIV, LB, TEV, etc.), (also in verse 17).

5 I assume that the Lord assigned a specific town to each pair, and they were instructed to get there as fast as they could.

6 Now why would anyone think of moving around? Presumably they would be thinking of better food or more comfort. Such an attitude would certainly detract from the Message.

7 Hades is not Hell. See the article with that title on my website: www.prunch.org.

me;[1] but he who rejects me rejects Him who sent me!"

The Seventy return and report

17Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" **18**So He said to them: "I watched Satan fall like lightning out of heaven.[2] **19**Take note, I am giving[3] you the authority to trample on snakes and scorpions,[4] and over all the power of the enemy,[5] and nothing at all may harm you. **20**However, do

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[1] To represent Christ is a great privilege, but also a great responsibility. To reject Jesus is to be eternally lost. How can someone`s rejecting us have the same consequence? Presumably only to the extent that we correctly represent Jesus, and with reference to that correct representation. I am reminded of James 3:1: "My brothers, not many of you should become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment". It is not wise to forget the Accounting!

[2] A most interesting comment! Clearly Jesus is referring to a time before His incarnation—He knew He was Jehovah the Son.

[3] Instead of 'am giving', perhaps 2.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have 'have given' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.)—a serious error. Jesus said this perhaps five months before His death and resurrection, addressing the seventy (not just the twelve). The Lord is talking about the future, not the past; a future that includes us!

[4] The Lord gives us the authority to "trample snakes and scorpions". Well now, to smash the literal insect, a scorpion, you don't need power from on High, just a slipper (if you're fast you can do it barefoot). To trample a snake I prefer a boot, but we can kill literal snakes without supernatural help. It becomes obvious that Jesus was referring to something other than reptiles and insects. I understand Mark 16:18 to be referring to the same reality—Jesus declares that certain signs will accompany the believers (the turn of phrase virtually has the effect of commands): they will expel demons, they will speak strange languages, they will remove 'snakes', they will place hands on the sick. ("If they drink…" is not a command; it refers to an eventuality.) But what did the Lord Jesus mean by 'snakes'?

In a list of distinct activities Jesus has already referred to demons, so the 'snakes' must be something else. In Matthew 12:34 Jesus called the Pharisees a 'brood of vipers', and in 23:33, 'snakes, brood of vipers'. In John 8:44, after they claimed God as their father, Jesus said, "You are of your father the devil". And 1 John 3:10 makes clear that Satan has many other 'sons'. In Revelation 20:2 we read: "He seized the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is a slanderer, even Satan, who deceives the whole inhabited earth, and bound him for a thousand years." If Satan is a snake, then his children are also snakes. So then, I take it that our 'snakes' are human beings who chose to serve Satan, who sold themselves to evil. I conclude that the 'snakes' in Luke 10:19 are the same as those in Mark 16:18, but what of the 'scorpions'? Since they also are of the enemy, they may be demons, in which case the term may well include their offspring, the humanoids [see my paper, "In the Days of Noah" , available from prunch.org]. I am still working on the question of just how the removal is done.

[5] In Matthew 28:18 Sovereign Jesus affirms that He holds "all authority in heaven and on earth", so He is clearly competent to delegate some of that authority to us. Now then, just how does "authority over all the power of the enemy" work, in practice? Authority controls power, but since we have access to God's limitless power (Ephesians 3:20), we should not give Satan the satisfaction of our using his (and he could easily deceive us into doing things we shouldn't). We should use our authority to forbid the use of Satan's power, with reference to specific situations—in my experience, we must be specific. (I have tried binding Satan once for all until the end of the world, but it does not work; presumably because God's plan calls for the enemy's continued activity

not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."[1]

Jesus worships His Father

21In that same hour Jesus exulted in His spirit[2] and said: "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and have revealed them to 'infants'. Yes, Father, because it pleased you to do so."

22And turning to the disciples He said:[3] "All things have been entrusted to me by my Father; also, no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and to whomever the Son may choose to reveal Him." **23**Then turning to His disciples[4] privately He said: "Blessed are the eyes that are seeing the things that you see; **24**for I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you are seeing but did not, and to hear what you are hearing but did not."[5]

How to inherit eternal life

25And then, a certain lawyer stood up to test Him, saying, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" **26**So He said to him: "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" **27**In answer he said: "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and, your neighbor as

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in this world. We can limit what the enemy does, but not put him completely out of business, or so I deem.) But just how should we go about it?

In the armor described in Ephesians 6 we find "the sword of the Spirit" (verse 17). A sword is a weapon for offense, although it is also used for defense. The Text tells us that this sword is "the *ρημα* of God"— *ρημα*, not *λογος*. It is God's Word spoken, or applied. Really, what good is a sword left in its sheath? However marvelous our Sword may be (Hebrews 4:12), to produce effect it must come out of the scabbard. The Word needs to be spoken, or written—applied in a specific way.

In the Bible we have many examples where people brought the power of God into action by speaking. Our world began with a creative word from God—spoken (Genesis, 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26; and see Hebrews 11:3). Moses did a lot of speaking. Elijah spoke (1 Kings 17:1, 18:36, 2 Kings 1:10). Elisha spoke (2 Kings 2:14, 21, 24; 4:16, 43; 6:19). Jesus did a great deal of speaking. Ananias spoke (Acts 9:17). Peter spoke (Acts 9:34, 40). Paul spoke (Acts 13:11; 14:3, 10; 16:18; 20:10; 28:8). In short, we need to speak!

[1] Yes indeed, nothing compares to having your name written in heaven!

[2] Most versions capitalize 'Spirit' and just over 3% of the Greek manuscripts state overtly, 'the Holy Spirit', but I take it that Jesus exulted in His own spirit.

[3] Some 10% of the Greek manuscripts omit "And turning to the disciples He said" (as in most versions), which confuses the quote. Jesus changes from addressing His Father to addressing the disciples. The clause is repeated at the beginning of verse 23, but 'privately' is added.

[4] Should we understand this as referring to the Twelve, or does it include the Seventy? I don't know, but there were probably others as well who were following along.

[5] Yes indeed, the Twelve had a privilege not shared by anyone before or since, although 'disciples' may include more than the twelve.

yourself."[1] 28So He said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live!" 29But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"[2]

The good Samaritan

30By way of reply Jesus said: "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he ran into robbers, who after having stripped and wounded him, departed, leaving him half dead. 31Now by coincidence a certain priest was going down that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32So too, a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked,[3] and passed by on the other side. 33But a certain Samaritan,[4] as he traveled, came by there, and upon seeing him was moved with compassion; 34and going to him he bound up his wounds, applying oil and wine. Then he placed him on his own mount, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and should you spend more, I will repay you when I return.' 36So which of these three, would you say, was 'neighbor' to him who ran into the robbers?" 37He said, "The one who showed mercy on him." So Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise!"[5]

Martha and Mary

38Now it happened as they traveled that He entered a certain village;[6] and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house.[7] 39And she had a sister called Mary, who actually sat at Jesus' feet listening to His words. 40Well Martha was distracted with much serving; so coming up she said: "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Do please tell her to help me!" 41But in answer Jesus said to her: "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and agitated about many things, 42but only one is needed.[8] However, Mary has chosen the good part, which will not be taken away from her."

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[1] See Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18—to include the 'neighbor' he had to quote from a different book. Notice that Jesus agreed with him. If you check Deuteronomy 6:5, it mentions only three components of the person, while here in Luke 10:27 there are four. The explanation I give is that the third Hebrew word has such a broad semantic area that in Greek it was considered necessary to use two words to cover that semantic area.

[2] Notice that the man skipped the most important part of his answer, about loving the Lord.

[3] The priest maintained his distance, but the Levite at least went close to the man for a better look, but then did nothing about it.

[4] The Lord's choice of a 'Samaritan' was doubtless deliberate, since the Jews looked down on them.

[5] Anyone who has been hit with a calamity is a candidate for needing a 'neighbor'. What with floods, tornados, earthquakes, etc. there are plenty of candidates.

[6] Bethany.

[7] Martha was presumably older than Mary.

[8] Apparently Martha was preparing a major meal, and the Lord told her that something simple would be fine. Although we may sympathize with Martha, Jesus defended Mary.

A model prayer

11 [1]Then it happened, when He finished praying in a certain place, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John also taught his disciples." [2]So He said to them: "Whenever you pray, say:

> Our Father who is in the heavens, your name must be reverenced.[1] Your Kingdom must come. Your will must be done on earth as it is in heaven.[2] [3]Give us day by day our daily bread. [4]Also, forgive us our sins, because we also forgive everyone indebted to us. And, do not lead us into testing,[3] but deliver us from the malignant one."[4]

A request at midnight

[5]Then He said to them: "Who among you will have a friend and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, [6]because a friend has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; [7]and he will answer from within and say, 'Don't bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give to you?' [8]I say to you, even if he will not get up and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as many as he needs.

[9]"So I say to you: ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. [10]Because everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.[5] [11]And which father among you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if[6] a fish, will he give him a snake instead of a fish? [12]Or if he asks for an egg, will he give him a scorpion? [13]If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give a holy spirit to those who ask Him!"[7]

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[1] The verbs are Imperative, not Subjunctive, which is why I render 'must' rather than 'may'.

[2] Why 'must'? I take the point to be that we are not trying to overcome any reluctance on God's part; we are declaring our personal commitment to these things. When I declare that God's Kingdom must come, I am agreeing to whatever part I am supposed to have in bringing it about.

[3] The correct rendering is "testing", not 'temptation'—see James 1:13.

[4] Most modern versions, following a mere 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, seriously truncate this prayer by omitting: "Our … who is in the heavens … Your will must be done on earth as it is in heaven … but deliver us from the malignant one." Some versions, like NIV and NASB, have a footnote saying that "some manuscripts" add this material. How can any honest person use 'some' to refer to 99% (1,600 X 16)? 'The malignant one' refers to Satan.

[5] I take it that the Lord is speaking generically here; He is not promising a 100% success rate.

[6] Just four known Greek manuscripts (0.2%), of objectively inferior quality, demonstrably so, omit "bread will give him a stone? Or if" (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[7] Instead of "a holy spirit", all versions that I have seen have 'the Holy Spirit'. But the Greek Text does not have the definite article, so my translation is grammatically

A divided house

14Then He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. As a result,
when the demon had gone out the mute spoke! And the crowds marveled.
15But some of them said, "It's by Beelzebul,[1] the ruler of the demons,
that he casts out demons." 16While others kept asking Him for a sign
from heaven, testing.

17But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them: "Every kingdom
divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided
against itself falls. 18So if Satan also is divided against himself, how will
his kingdom stand?—since you say I cast out demons by Beelzebul!
19Further, if I am casting out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your
sons cast them out?[2] Therefore they will be your judges. 20But if I cast
out demons by the finger of God, surely the Kingdom of God has come
upon you.

21"When the strong man,[3] fully armed, guards his own dwelling, his
possessions are safe. 22But when the one stronger than he attacks, he
overcomes him, takes away all his armor in which he trusted, and
distributes his spoils.

23"He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather
with me scatters.[4]

An empty house

24"Whenever an unclean spirit goes out from a man,[5] it passes
through waterless places seeking rest; and not finding any it says, 'I will
return to my house from which I came out.' 25And coming it finds it swept

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possible. I suppose that 'a holy spirit' expresses itself as a desire to be holy, something that the Father will be happy to give. In Luke 9:54-55 James and John manifested a spirit of punishment; they wanted to punish the Samaritans. In Matthew 5:3 to be 'poor in spirit' is to have an attitude of humility. In 2 Timothy 1:7 Paul refers to spirits of fear, power, love and self-control. A spirit of self-control wants to practice self-control; a spirit of love wants to show love; a spirit of power wants to manifest power; the fear comes from the enemy. In the immediate context, as well as the larger context of the Bible, my translation seems to me to be the more probable. Do you know anyone who received the third Person of the Trinity just because he asked? In John 1:33 the Father affirms that it is the Son who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. Jesus does that when you believe into Him.

[1] The familiar spelling 'Beelzebub' was presumably brought over from the Latin, since all the Greek manuscripts have 'Beelzebul' (with variations).

[2] I find this question to be intriguing. Jesus is evidently saying that their sons do indeed cast out demons. If the sons are using God's power, they will censure their fathers for accusing Jesus falsely. If they are using Satan's power, they will censure their fathers for the same reason.

[3] There is the definite article with 'strong man', and in the context it may be a veiled reference to Satan. In that event, Jesus is the 'stronger' one.

[4] Notice that the Sovereign does not allow for neutrality; either you are for Him, or against Him. Even what we do is not neutral; if we are not gathering, we are scattering. There is no third option.

[5] The Lord does not say why the spirit left. If it had been expelled by someone who knew how to send it to the Abyss, it could not come back.

and put in order. 26Then it goes and picks up seven other spirits, more malignant than itself, and they go in and live there; so the last state of that man becomes worse than the first."[1]

True blessedness

27And then, as He was saying these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!" 28But He said, "More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and obey it!"[2]

Jonah is a sign

29Now as the crowds were increasing, He began to say: "This is a malignant generation. It keeps wanting a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 30Just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of the Man be to this generation. 31The queen of the South will be raised up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and she will condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and indeed a greater than Solomon is here. 32The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation, and they will condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.[3]

Light inside the body

33"No one, having lit a lamp, puts it in hiding or under a basket, but on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light. 34The lamp of the body is the eye.[4] Therefore, whenever your 'eye' is good, your whole body is illuminated. But when it is malignant, your body also is darkened. 35So see to it that the 'light' in you not be darkness. 36If then your whole body is full of light, not having any part dark, the whole will be illuminated, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light."

Jesus derides scribes and Pharisees

37Now as He paused, a certain Pharisee invited Him to eat with him. So He went in and reclined. 38But the Pharisee, noticing that He

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[1] Although we certainly have the authority to expel demons from people, if the person we help does not then commit himself to Jesus, he remains an empty house, vulnerable to something worse. We need to deal fairly with people, explaining what is involved.

[2] Since the Text declares the Virgin Mary to be blessed, Jesus was not denying that blessedness. To hear and obey God's Word is even more blessed. The basic meaning of the verb I translated 'obey' is to guard or protect. I wonder if there is a special blessing for those who defend God's Word.

[3] Notice that Jesus declares Himself to be greater than Solomon and Jonah (a king and a prophet). Notice also that He declares the historicity of the book of Jonah.

[4] Of course we have two eyes, but the Text has "eye" in the singular. I take it that the reference is to the way we interpret what we see (which is our real 'eye')—two people, one pure and one vile, observing the same scene will give very different interpretations to it. 'Malignant' means aggressively evil. Someone with a malignant mind will give an evil interpretation to <u>everything</u> he sees, and in consequence his being will be filled with unrelenting darkness. See Titus 1:15.

did not first wash before the meal, was critical.[1] 39So the Lord said to him: "Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but your inside is full of greed and malignancy. 40Fools! Did not He who made the outside also make the inside? 41Nevertheless, give what is possible as alms; then indeed all things are clean to you.[2]

42"But woe to you Pharisees! You tithe the mint and rue and every herb, but you ignore justice and the love of God. These it was necessary to do, without leaving those undone. 43Woe to you Pharisees! You love the best seat in the synagogues, and greetings in the marketplaces. 44Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites![3] You are like unperceived graves, that people walk on without knowing it."[4]

Jesus derides lawyers

45Then one of the lawyers reacted and said to him, "Teacher, by saying these things you insult us also!" 46So He said: "Woe to you lawyers also![5] You load men down with burdens hard to carry, but you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. 47Woe to you! You restore the tombs of the prophets, it being your fathers who killed them. 48Thereby you witness to and approve of the deeds of your fathers;[6] because they indeed killed them, while you restore their tombs.[7] 49Also, because of this 'the wisdom of God'[8] said: 'I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute,' 50so that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, 51from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah,[9] who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation![10] 52Woe to you

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[1] The leaders had already rejected Jesus and were planning to kill Him, so He knew this was not a friendly invitation. He accepted the invitation with the clear purpose to provoke a confrontation.

[2] At first glance this statement seems difficult, but because they were filled with greed, for them to give away as much as possible would represent a major change in their values. Zacchaeus offers a case in point: the Lord Himself declared that he was saved (Luke 19:8-9).

[3] Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.)

[4] That would contaminate them for ceremonial purposes.

[5] Notice that Jesus makes no effort to conciliate them.

[6] I take the idea to be that they picked out the tombs to be restored, thereby celebrating the death of the prophets.

[7] The context suggests 'restore' rather than 'build', since those prophets had been dead for centuries; if a grave had not been adequately marked, there would be no way of knowing where to build.

[8] In 1 Corinthians 1:24 Paul refers to Christ as 'the wisdom of God'. In Matthew 23:34 Jesus said, "I send you prophets," so here Jesus may be referring to Himself as 'the wisdom of God'.

[9] If the reference is to Zechariah the prophet, his death is not recorded in Scripture, but the temple was rebuilt in his day, so he could have died there. From Abel to Zechariah would be 3,500 years, the entire period covered by the OT.

[10] Guilt accumulates. Often a subsequent generation pays.

lawyers! You have taken away the key of knowledge;[1] you yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering!"[2]

53Well when He had said these things to them,[3] the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge Him on vehemently and to cross-examine Him about many things, **54**lying in wait for Him, trying to catch Him in something He might say, so that they might accuse Him.[4]

Beware of hypocrisy

12 **1**Meanwhile, when a crowd of thousands[5] had converged, so that they were stepping on each other, He began to speak first to His disciples: "Guard yourselves from the 'yeast' of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. **2**There is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. **3**Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the ear behind closed doors will be proclaimed from the housetops.[6]

Don't fear assassins

4"Further, I say to you, my friends: do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have nothing more that they can do. **5**Rather, I will advise you whom you should fear—fear Him who after He kills has authority to cast into Gehenna;[7] yes indeed, fear Him! **6**Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins?[8] Yet not one of them is forgotten before God. **7**Even the hairs of your head are all numbered! So do not be afraid; you are more valuable than many sparrows![9]

You confess Christ, He'll confess you

8"Also I say to you, whoever claims me before men, the Son of the Man will also claim him before the angels of God. **9**But whoever disclaims me before men will be disclaimed before the angels of God.[10]

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[1] Hosea 4:6 reads, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge … Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children." Notice the awful price paid by the children! Are today's 'doctors of the law' not guilty of the same thing?

[2] They were really perverse. If they did not want to go in themselves, that was their choice; but to try to stop others was really perverse!

[3] Instead of "Well when He had said these things to them", perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, read "and when He left there" (as in NIV, NASB, TEV, etc.), which is nonsense. How could they "urge Him on" if He wasn't there?

[4] Perhaps 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "so that they might accuse Him" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.)

[5] That is what the Text says, 'thousands'.

[6] When you think about that does it make you feel uncomfortable?

[7] 'Gehenna' was a euphemism for Hell, or the Lake of Fire. One's eternal destiny is far more important than a 'premature' physical death. It follows that we should not rebel against God, no matter what our circumstances may be.

[8] The Greek term here is *assaria*.

[9] Maybe that is why "the righteous are bold as a lion" (Proverbs 28:1). [How many 'lions' do you know?]

[10] Revelation 21:8 includes the 'cowardly' among those destined for the Lake of Fire. When persecution comes for being a Christian, the cowardly will cave in and disclaim the Lord.

10 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of the Man, it can be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit it will not be forgiven. 11 Now whenever they bring you before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how or what you will answer, or what you should say. 12 Because the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you need to say."[1]

Beware of materialism

13 Then someone from the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." 14 But He said to him, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter over you?" 15 Then He said to them, "Keep alert and guard against covetousness, because one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."[2]

Parable of a rich fool

16 Then He told them a parable, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man produced well. 17 And he reasoned within himself saying, 'What shall I do, because I have no place to store my crops?' 18 Then he said: 'This is what I will do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my produce and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul: Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and enjoy yourself!' 20 But God said to him: 'Stupid! This very night your life is being taken back from you;[3] then who will get the things you have prepared?' 21 Just like that[4] is he who accumulates treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

The mentality of the Kingdom

22 Then He said to His disciples: "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will wear. 23 Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. 24 Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storeroom nor barn, and God feeds them. You are far more valuable than the birds! 25 And who among you can add one cubit to his height by worrying? 26 So, since you cannot do even such a little thing, why worry about the rest?

27 "Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; I say to you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of these. 28 So, since God so clothes the grass that today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into an oven, how much more you, O little-faiths! 29 Do not concentrate on what you may eat or what you may drink; do not be anxious. 30 All these things really occupy the nations of the world, and your Father knows that you need them. 31 Rather, concentrate on the

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1 This advice is presumably for martyrs, not preachers, but don't you wish that more preachers would listen to the Holy Spirit?

2 Christians who live in materialistic societies tend to forget this important truth.

3 'Taken back'—we have our life on loan, like a trust, and an accounting will be required.

4 "Just like that" = "Stupid!" To be rich toward God is to invest in His Kingdom.

Kingdom of God, and all these things will be provided for you.[1]

32"Do not fear, little flock, because it pleased the Father to give you the Kingdom. **33**Sell your possessions and give to charity. Make for yourselves 'purses' that will not wear out, an unfailing treasure in the heavens, where a thief cannot approach, nor a moth destroy. **34**Because where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.[2]

Watchfulness enjoined

35"Let your waists be belted and your lamps burning, **36**and you yourselves like men waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding celebration, so that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. **37**Blessed are those slaves whom the master will find watching when he comes. Assuredly I say to you that he will gird himself and have them recline, and will come and serve them.[3] **38**And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those slaves. **39**But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what hour the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and not allowed his house to be broken into. **40**Therefore you also be ready, because the Son of the Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."[4]

41Then Peter said to Him, "Lord, are you directing this parable to us, or to everyone?"[5] **42**So the Lord said: "Who then is the faithful and prudent steward whom his master will place over his household to give them the food allowance at the right time? **43**Blessed is that slave whom his master will find so doing when he comes. **44**I tell you truly that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.[6] **45**But if that servant should say in his heart, 'My master won't come for a while,' and should begin to hit the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, **46**the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him, and at an hour that he does not know, and will cut him in two and appoint his portion with the unbelievers.[7]

47"That servant who knew his master's will, but neither got ready nor did according to that will, will be beaten with many blows. **48**But he

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[1] Note that what is promised is just the basics—food, drink, covering. Everything that we invest in the Kingdom will be on deposit in heaven. The bottom line is to 'concentrate on the Kingdom'; nowadays there are probably better ways of investing in the Kingdom than 'giving to the poor'.

[2] There is the crucial question: Where is your treasure?

[3] He is doubtless in a very good mood, and for his servants to have stayed awake for hours when they wanted to be in bed, just so they could receive him when he came—he probably figures they need some refreshment.

[4] Everyone who has predicted a date so far has had to eat humble pie. But being ready all the time is a different matter. The trouble is, it's hard to stay 'ready' all the time.

[5] The Lord's answer is indirect, but it includes everyone.

[6] He was director of food services; if he proved faithful and competent there, he would be made general director.

[7] What is involved here is two deaths: physical (cut in two) and spiritual—the 'portion' of unbelievers is the Lake of Fire.

who did not know, yet did things worthy of blows, will be beaten with few.[1] Everyone to whom much has been given, from him much will be required; and to whom much was entrusted, of him much more will be asked.

Christ causes division

49"I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! **50**But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed! **51**Do you imagine that I came to provide peace on the earth? Not at all, I tell you, but rather division.[2] **52**Because from now on there will be five in one house divided: three against two and two against three. **53**Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."[3]

Discern the time

54Then He also said to the crowds: "Whenever you see a cloud rising from the west, immediately you say, 'A rainstorm is coming,' and so it does. **55**And whenever a south wind blows, you say, 'It will be hot,' and it happens. **56**Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky and of the earth, so how can you not discern this time?[4] **57**Also why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right?[5]

Pay your debts on time

58"When you are going with your adversary to the magistrate, make every effort along the way to settle with him,[6] lest he drag you to the judge, the judge deliver you to the bailiff, and the bailiff throw you into prison. **59**I tell you, you will by no means get out of there until you have paid the last penny."

Repent or perish

13 **1**Now at that time there were some present who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. **2**So in answer Jesus said to them: "Do you suppose that those Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered such things? **3**Not at all, I tell you, but unless you repent you will all likewise perish! **4**Or those eighteen on whom the tower of Siloam fell and killed them; do you suppose they were worse offenders than all others living in

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[1] Note that even sins done in ignorance are punished. However, the more one knows, the more severe the punishment.

[2] So why is He called the 'Prince of Peace'? On several occasions, after healing someone, He said, "Go into peace" (**not** 'in peace'). Jesus offers peace with God, but you must believe into Him in order to receive it.

[3] This is precisely true.

[4] To be able to discern what God is doing requires intimate relationship with Him.

[5] Good question!

[6] The point seems to be that the 'adversary' has exhausted all other means of getting his money back; which would indicate a serious flaw in the character of the 'debtor'.

Jerusalem? 5Not at all, I tell you, but unless you repent you will all likewise perish!"[1]

Parable of a barren fig tree

6Then He told this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. 7So he said to the gardener: 'Look, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree and have not found any. Cut it down; just why must it waste the soil?' 8But in answer he said to him, 'Sir, let it be this year also, until I dig around it and apply fertilizer, 9in case it produces fruit—but if not, then cut it down.'"[2]

Jesus heals a woman bound by Satan

10Now as Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath, 11He saw a woman there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years—she was bent over and could not straighten up. 12So He called her over[3] and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity!" 13He placed His hands on her and immediately she was made straight and started glorifying God.

14But the ruler of the synagogue reacted with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, and he said to the crowd, "There are six days in which one should work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath."[4] 15So the Lord answered him and said: "Hypocrites! Does not each one of you[5] on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it away to water? 16So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan[6] kept bound during eighteen long years, be freed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" 17When He said these things all His adversaries were put to shame, while all the crowd was rejoicing over all the glorious things that were being done by Him.

Two parables

18Then He said: "What is the Kingdom of God like, and to what shall I compare it? 19It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted

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[1] We never know when a tornado or earthquake may come our way; the best thing is to walk with God, and thus not have to fear a sudden exit.

[2] The Lord's use of 'three years' is doubtless deliberate; He may well have been referring to His own ministry in Israel. In that event the owner would be the Father, and He Himself would be the gardener. The three years of public ministry He had already spent had not produced the desired fruit. I would say that our 'gardener', Jesus, often does the same thing for us—He gives us another chance.

[3] In a synagogue the women were separated from the men, so He called her over to the men's side.

[4] Of course the woman had not come to be healed; she came to worship God. It was the Lord's initiative, so the ruler's complaint was really directed at Him, which is why He reacted so emphatically.

[5] The pronoun being plural, the ruler was expressing the opinion of his colleagues as well, something that Jesus recognized in His answer.

[6] By using the enemy's proper name, Jesus is declaring that it was actually Satan who was behind the problem.

in his garden; and it grew and became a sizable tree, and the birds of the air perched on its branches."

20Again He said: "To what shall I compare the Kingdom of God? 21It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into three measures of flour, until it was all leavened."

The narrow gate

22He was traveling through various towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. 23Then someone said to Him, "Lord, are the ones being saved few?" So He said to them: 24"Exert yourselves to enter through the narrow gate, because many, I say to you, will try to enter and not manage it. 25When once the master of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' and in answer he will say to you, 'I do not know you; where are you from?' 26then you will begin by saying, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.' 27But he will say: 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from. Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity.'[1]

28"There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God, but you yourselves being thrown out. 29They will even come from the east, the west, the north and the south, and recline in the Kingdom of God. 30Yes indeed, there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last."

A word for Herod

31On that same day some Pharisees approached saying to Him, "Get out of here and go away, because Herod wants to kill you."[2] 32He said to them: "Go tell that 'fox', 'Take note, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third I will have finished.' 33Nevertheless I must keep going today and tomorrow and the day following, because it is not credible that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem!

Jesus laments over Jerusalem

34"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, she who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, like a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing! 35So then, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you that you will definitely not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is

[1] The Lord is stating plainly that there are many who think they are in the Kingdom, but actually are not.

[2] Those Pharisees may just have been trying to scare Jesus. The metaphor 'fox' was doubtless understood by His hearers, but we have since lost the relevant cultural information.

He who comes in the name of the Lord!'"[1]

Jesus heals a man with dropsy

14 [1]Then it happened, when He entered the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath, that they were watching Him closely. [2]And then, there in front of Him was a man who had dropsy![2] [3]And Jesus reacted by saying to the lawyers and Pharisees, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" [4]But they kept silent. So He took hold of him, healed him, and let him go. [5]Then He addressed them saying, "Which of you, if a son[3] or an ox falls into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?" [6]And they could not answer Him regarding these things.

A lesson about humility

[7]Then He told a parable to those who were invited, having observed how they kept trying for the best places, saying to them: [8]"Whenever you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not recline in the place of honor, in case someone more honorable than you has been invited by him; [9]then he who invited you both will come and say, 'You, give this man place!' and then, with shame, you start to take the lowest place.[4] [10]Rather, whenever you are invited, go and recline in the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then you will have honor in the presence of your fellow guests. [11]Because everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."[5]

[12]Then He said directly to His host: "Whenever you give a dinner or a supper, do not invite your friends, nor your brothers, nor your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. [13]But whenever you make a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; [14]and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you—you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."[6]

An unusual banquet

[15]Well when one of the fellow-recliners heard these things, he said to Him, "Blessed is he who will eat dinner[7] in the Kingdom of God!"[8] [16]So

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[1] See Psalm 118:26. John 10:22-39 probably happened between verses 33 and 34 here. That 'Feast of Dedication' would have fallen on a Monday, December 17, 29. Here Jesus leaves Jerusalem, to return only at the 'triumphal entry'.

[2] It seems scarcely credible that such a person could have gotten in there by accident. The Pharisees were desperately looking for some way to accuse Him.

[3] Instead of 'son', some 26% of the Greek manuscripts have 'donkey' (as in TR, AV, NKJV). The 74% includes the best line of transmission, which I follow.

[4] Of course; everyone else has been trying for the best place he can get, so by that time the only one left is the lowest!

[5] This truth is repeated several times in Scripture.

[6] You cannot take it with you, but you can send it on ahead.

[7] Instead of 'dinner', perhaps 20% of the Greek manuscripts have 'bread' (as in most versions).

[8] Now there you have a nice, safe, pious-sounding statement! I suppose he was trying to change the subject.

He said to him: "A certain man prepared a great banquet and invited many. 17And at meal time he sent his slave to say to those who were invited, 'Come, because everything is now ready.' 18But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him: 'I bought a field, and I need to go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' 19Another said: 'I bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' 20Yet another said, 'I have married a wife, and so I cannot come.' 21So that slave came and reported these things to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.' 22And the slave said, 'Master, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.' 23Then the master said to the slave: 'Go out to the roads and hedges[1] and make people come in, so that my house may be filled. 24For I tell you that none of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet!'"[2]

Jesus ministers (mainly) in Perea

Jesus defines discipleship

25Now large crowds were traveling with Him, and turning He said to them: 26"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. 27And whoever does not carry his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

28"Further, which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and calculate the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? 29This so he does not lay a foundation without being able to finish, and all who see it begin to ridicule him, 30saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish!'

31"Or what king, going to engage another king in battle, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet the one coming against him with twenty thousand? 32And if not, while the other is still far away he sends a delegation and asks for terms for peace.

33"So likewise, any of you who does not renounce all his own possessions cannot be my disciple.[3] 34Salt is good; but should the salt become insipid, with what can it be seasoned? 35It is fit for neither soil nor fertilizer; it is thrown out.[4] He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

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[1] Hedges were used to delimit fields, and there would often be a path along the outside of the hedge. First the slave was sent into the city, then out to the countryside.

[2] Perhaps 45% of the Greek manuscripts add, "for many are called, but few chosen".

[3] Notice that three times Sovereign Jesus says, "cannot be my disciple", and the 'cannot' is a strong negative. Jesus demands first place in our lives and hearts—above family, material things, our very selves. In verse 26, above, the verb 'to hate' is not an active hate; it is more like 'to disregard'.

[4] We followers of Christ are supposed to be 'salt' and 'light' in this world. To abdicate these functions is to become useless, and to be thrown out. 'Neutrality' is not a valid option.

Parable of a lost sheep

15 [1]Then all the tax collectors and 'sinners' were getting close to Him
to hear Him. [2]Well the Pharisees and the scribes started complaining, saying, "This man welcomes 'sinners' and eats with them." [3]So He told them this parable, saying: [4]"What man among you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not abandon the ninety-nine in the wild[1] and go after the lost one until he finds it? [5]And upon finding it he joyfully puts it on his shoulders. [6]And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost!' [7]I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous ones who have no need of repentance.[2]

Parable of a lost coin

[8]"Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? [9]And when she finds it, she calls together her friends and neighbors saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I lost!' [10]Just so, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."[3]

Parable of a lost son

[11]Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. [12]And the younger one said to the father, 'Father, give me the appropriate share of the estate.' So he divided the property between them. [13]Not many days later the younger son, having converted it all,[4] journeyed to a distant country; and there he squandered his wealth living dissolutely. [14]But when he had spent it all, there was a severe famine throughout that country, and he began to be in need. [15]Then he went and attached himself to a citizen of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs.[5] [16]He would gladly have filled his stomach with the carob pods[6] that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.[7] [17]But when he came to himself he said: 'How many of my father's hired servants have an abundance of bread, while I am dying of hunger! [18]I will get up and go to my father

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[1] Notice that the 99 are left in the wild, not a sheepfold. So what happens if a wolf comes upon the 99 while the shepherd is off looking for the stray? I confess that I never liked this parable, for that reason.

[2] If God prefers sinners, what is the point of being righteous? I suppose the point to be that no one is so righteous that they need no repentance. Since we are all sinners, we all need to repent—and when we do so, God is happy.

[3] God rejoices in the presence of the angels.

[4] Evidently, he could not take buildings with him, or even herds. He probably sold everything for valuables he could carry. It may have been his father who bought it.

[5] For a Jew, that would be about as low as one could get.

[6] I suppose those pods were not edible for a human being, or he could doubtless have managed a few.

[7] Besides the economic crisis, he was a foreigner, and a stupid one at that. Why throw good money after bad?

and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, 19and I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired servants.'

20"So he got up and went to his own father. But while he was still a good ways off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion—he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him! 21Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22But the father said to his slaves: 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. 23And bring in and kill the fatted calf, and let us eat and celebrate; 24because this son of mine was dead and came to life; he was lost and is found!' So they began to celebrate.

25"Now his older son was in the field; and as he came approaching the house he heard music and dancing. 26So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. 27He said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' 28So he became angry and refused to go in. Then his father came out and began to plead with him.[1] 29But in answer he said to the father: 'Just look at how many years I have been serving you without ever transgressing your commandment; yet you never gave me even a young goat that I might celebrate with my friends. 30But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!'[2] 31So he said to him: 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. 32But it was right that we celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and came to life; he was lost and is found.'"

The illusory riches of the world VS the genuine riches of God[3]

Parable of a stupid steward

16 1Then He said further to His disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a manager, who was accused to him of wasting his goods. 2So he called him in and said to him: 'What is this I hear about you? Render an account of your stewardship, because you can no longer be manager.' 3Then the manager said within himself: 'What shall I do?

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[1] Doubtless the servant had informed the father.

[2] The older brother's attitude really wasn't all that unreasonable. Why should the younger son be rewarded for his irresponsible conduct? The father was celebrating the recovery, not the irresponsibility. When the father said, "all that I have is yours", it follows that the next day the younger brother had to go work like a hired servant. Actually, judging by the terms of the 'party', the father treated the younger son like an illustrious visitor—thus the best robe, a ring and the fatted calf. But 'visitor' could not be a permanent condition; the next day he went to work.

[3] I take it that all of chapter 16 is about contrasting the illusory riches of the world and the genuine riches of God. Thus, the chapter begins with a stupid steward, that illustrates the mentality of the world—it is good to be 'smart' and take advantage of others. Note that in the first verse Jesus addresses His disciples directly; they need to understand the difference between the two riches.

My master is taking the management away from me. I do not have strength to dig; I am ashamed to beg—4I know what I will do, so that whenever I am removed from the management they may receive me into their houses.'[1] 5Summoning each one of his master's debtors, he said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' 6And he said, 'A hundred baths of olive oil.' So he said to him, 'Take your bill and sit down quickly and write fifty.' 7Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' So he said to him, 'Take your bill and write eighty.' 8The master even 'commended' the dishonest manager, because he had acted shrewdly. The sons of this age are shrewder in their own generation than the sons of the Light.[2]

A bit of irony

9"I even say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous mammon, so that whenever you die, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings![3] 10He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much, and he who is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much.[4] 11If therefore you have not been faithful with the illusory riches, who will commit to your trust the genuine?[5] 12And if you have not been faithful in what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? 13No servant can serve two masters; either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon!"[6]

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[1] Is this not stupid reasoning? Once he has lost his position, the others will have no reason to pay attention to him.

[2] According to the value system of the world it is 'smart' to take advantage of other people, but those who follow the Light must be different. Of course the master's 'commendation' was sarcastic, since the dishonest manager still lost his job.

[3] The use of sarcasm is not rare in the Bible, and here the Lord is clearly being sarcastic: getting into the eternal dwellings does not depend on 'buying' friends down here; it depends on pleasing the Owner up there. And of course, the dishonest friends will not even be there!

[4] To be faithful and honest is a question of character, and does not depend on the size of the temptation. The 'very little' would be the monetary value and the 'much' would be the spiritual value.

[5] This verse was difficult to translate. How should we understand 'the unjust riches' (or 'unrighteous mammon'), that would be the 'normal' rendering of the phrase? It is contrasted with true or genuine riches. Verse 13 ends by saying that it is impossible to serve God and mammon (that evidently refers to the values of this world, that are dominated by riches). So then, the illusory, or unjust, riches refer to the riches of this world. It happens that 'the sons of the Light' are obliged to live and make a living in a world dominated by Satan. Everything that Satan touches he dirties. We can and should work honestly in this world, but the money we receive is contaminated by sin (that of others, if not our own). The genuine riches are spiritual and have to do with God's Kingdom. But to receive those riches we need to be 'sons of the Light', and we prove that we are such sons by living honestly in this world, even though it is dominated by Satan.

[6] Verse 13 declares a terribly important truth. To embrace the world's value system (humanism, relativism, materialism) is to reject God. Materialistic 'Christians' are

The Law will not fail

14 Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were also listening
to all these things, and they were ridiculing Him. 15 So He said to them:
"You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your
hearts. That which is exalted among men is an abomination before God.[1]
16 The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the Kingdom of
God is being proclaimed, and everyone is trying to force his way into it.[2]
17 But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle
of the Law to fail.

18 "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits
adultery, and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband
commits adultery.[3]

A rich man and beggar Lazarus[4]

19 "Now there was a certain rich man who was dressed in purple and
fine linen, living in luxury every day. 20 And there was a certain beggar
named Lazarus, covered with sores, who had been placed at his gate,
21 just wanting to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's
table—why even the dogs would come and lick his sores![5] 22 In due time
the beggar died and was carried away to Abraham's bosom by the angels.

"The rich man also died and was buried.[6] 23 And in Hades he looked
up and saw Abraham at a distance, and Lazarus very close to him. And
being in torment, 24 he called out, saying, 'Father Abraham, have mercy
on me and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water
and cool my tongue; because I am tormented by this flame!' 25 But Abra-
ham said: 'Child, remember that in your lifetime you received your good
things, while Lazarus had bad things; but now he[7] is being comforted,
and you tormented. 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great
chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you

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really serving mammon ('mammon' includes more than just money). They are deceiving themselves, since they do not belong to God.

1 There will not be any abomination in heaven—'abomination' is a strong term; do pause and ponder!

2 Jesus continues to contrast the two riches. No one gets into the Kingdom on his own terms; God dictates the terms. That is what verse 17 means: the Law does not change.

3 Verse 18 seems to be out of place, having nothing to do with the context, at least at first glance. But it is an item of the Law that does not change, and Jesus cited it as an example of what does not change. The statement is clear and plain, and it contradicts the relativism of our day.

4 The Text does not state that this is a parable, so most probably it is not. Parables do not have named participants.

5 In fact the dogs were doing him a favor, since canine saliva is good for sores.

6 Note the contrast. Of course the beggar's body had been buried, but the person was taken to Paradise. Here we have an explicit statement of angelic activity, which, however, is absent from the rich man.

7 The best line of transmission (30% of the Greek manuscripts here) has the emphatic pronoun 'he', rather than 'here'.

cannot, nor can anyone from there cross over to us.'[1] 27Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, 28because I have five brothers, so that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.'[2] 29Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' 30So he said to him, 'Oh no, father Abraham—if someone from the dead should go to them, they will repent!' 31He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone should rise from the dead.'"[3]

Don't offend, forgive

17 1Then He said to the disciples: "Things that cause people to fall are bound to come, but woe to him through whom they do come! 2It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to fall.[4] 3Watch out for yourselves: if your brother sins against you,[5] rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. 4Even if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in that day returns, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."[6]

Faith like a mustard seed has

5The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." 6So the Lord

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[1] Several things in this account invite comment. *Hades* (Greek), or *Sheol* (Hebrew), is the 'halfway house' where departed spirits await the final judgment, but the results of that judgment are already known, since the saved are already separated from the lost. There is a chasm separating the two sides that cannot be crossed, but evidently one side can see and hear the other (the 'dead' are conscious and have feeling). People in prison who are waiting for their trial are already suffering. Strangely, the rich man still thinks he is more important than the beggar, since he wants the beggar to serve him—he still holds to the values that condemned him.

[2] I find it interesting that he was concerned for his brothers; we can't say, "Better late than never", since it made no difference.

[3] Abraham states a disquieting reality: people who reject God's written revelation are self-condemned. Note also that Abraham did not say it would be impossible to send Lazarus, only that it would do no good. Recall that God sent Samuel back to deliver the death sentence to Saul (1 Samuel 28:12-19). But it is clear that the lost cannot return, or the rich man could have gone himself. The contrasting of the two riches ends here, with the eternal destiny of those who embrace them: whoever embraces the illusory riches of the world winds up in the Lake of fire; whoever embraces God's genuine riches winds up in Heaven.

[4] What is worse than a horrible, premature physical death? Spiritual death. Whoever destroys the faith of a 'little one' is self-condemned. What about all the professors who make it their business to destroy the faith of their students? When Jesus said "these little ones", we may understand that they were physically present. We do not know if there were children there at that moment; it seems to me more likely that the reference is to people 'little' in faith, beginners (of whatever age).

[5] Perhaps 4.5% of the Greek manuscripts omit "against you" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.), which changes the meaning of the verse.

[6] Dear me, that could get 'old'! But the Lord is emphatic; we must forgive!

said: "If you had[1] faith like a mustard seed *has*,[2] you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted, and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.

The thanks a slave gets

7"And which of you, having a slave plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he comes in from the field, 'Come at once and recline to eat'? **8**Will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat, and gird yourself and serve me until I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink'? **9**Does he thank that slave because he did the things commanded? I guess not![3] **10**So likewise you, whenever you have done everything you were told to do, say, 'We are unworthy slaves, because we have only done what we were supposed to.'"[4]

Jesus cleanses ten lepers

11Now as He was traveling toward Jerusalem, He went along between Samaria and Galilee. **12**And as He entered a certain village, ten men met Him—being lepers they stood at a distance. **13**They called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" **14**And paying attention He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." It happened that as they went they were cleansed! **15**Well one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, glorifying God with a loud voice; **16**then he fell on his face at His feet, thanking Him—and he was a Samaritan! **17**So Jesus reacted by saying: "Were not all ten cleansed? So where are the nine? **18**None were found to return and give glory to God except this foreigner!" **19**Then He said to him, "Get up and go; your faith has made you well."[5]

The coming of the Kingdom

20Now 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 by watching for it; **21**nor will they say, 'Look, here!' or 'Look, there!' because indeed the Kingdom of God is to be within you."[6]

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[1] The manuscripts are evenly divided between 'had' and 'have'; I follow the best line of transmission.

[2] What kind of 'faith' might a mustard seed have? Albeit so small, it reacts without question to the climactic circumstances, and grows to remarkable proportions. Also, a seed must have the faith to 'die' (John 12:24). If we reacted similarly, without question, to the Holy Spirit's promptings, our spiritual 'climactic circumstances', we should indeed move mountains, literally.

[3] About 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "I guess not!" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[4] If we were really committed to the master's project, we would do more.

[5] In all probability the priests would not have wanted to deal with a Samaritan, in any case, so the Lord just sends him on his way, relieving him of that duty.

[6] They were probably thinking of the Messianic Kingdom, that will indeed have a concrete starting point, but the Lord does not give them that information. He does go on to say to the disciples that the onset will be sudden. In the meantime, the King's true subjects have the Kingdom in their hearts, which presumably did not include those Pharisees.

22Then He said to the disciples: "Days are coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of the Man, and you will not see it.[1] 23And they will say to you, 'Look, here!' or 'Look, there!' Do not go along or follow. 24Because just like the lightning that lights the whole sky when it flashes, so also will the Son of the Man be in His day. 25But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. 26Also, just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it also be in the days of the Son of the Man. 27They were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building— 29but on the day Lot went out from Sodom, fire and brimstone rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. 30Even so will it be in the day when the Son of the Man is revealed.

31"In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods in the house, let him not go down to get them; and likewise he who is in the field, let him not turn back for them. 32Remember Lot's wife![2] 33Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever 'wastes' it will preserve it. 34I tell you: on that night there will be two men in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. 35Two women will be grinding together; one will be taken and the other left."[3]

37They reacted by saying to Him, "Where, Lord?" He said to them, "Where there is a carcass, there will the vultures also be gathered."[4]

Parable of a persistent widow

18 1And then He told them a parable, the point being that one needs to always pray and not lose heart, 2saying: "There was a judge in a certain town who did not fear God nor regard man. 3But there was a widow in that town, and she kept coming to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' 4And for a while he refused; but afterward he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God nor regard man, 5yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will defend her, so that her endless coming doesn't wear me out!'"

6Then the Lord said: "Hear what the unjust judge said. 7And will not God get justice for His elect who are crying out to Him day and night,

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[1] I suppose He is referring to His physical presence among them. When He returned to Heaven, they would certainly miss Him.

[2] The Lord affirms the historicity of the pillar of salt (Genesis 19:26).

[3] Perhaps 20% of the Greek manuscripts have verse 36 (see Matthew 24:40): "Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left". I would say that this paragraph deals with the Rapture. In that event, Jesus is addressing those who are left behind, but who had expected to go. I believe that immediately after the Rapture the forces of evil will be unleashed to take complete control. Anyone who is going to refuse the 'mark' had better head for the hills. For further discussion, please see 'Before, or after?' on my website: www.prunch.org.

[4] A spiral of vultures in the air can be seen at quite a distance, and indicates a carcass on the ground.

indeed being patient with them?[1] 8I tell you that He will get justice for them quickly.[2] However, when the Son of the Man comes, will He actually find the faith on the earth?"[3]

Parable of a Pharisee and a publican

9Then He told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised the rest: 10"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11The Pharisee stood and started praying to himself like this: 'God, I thank you that I am not like all the rest—robbers, unjust, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. 12I fast twice a week; I tithe all that I get.'[4] 13The tax collector, staying a good way off, did not even venture to look up to heaven, but started beating on his chest, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' 14I say to you that this one went back home justified rather than that one; because everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

You enter the Kingdom like a child does

15Then they even started bringing their babies to Him, that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. 16But Jesus summoned them and said: "Allow the little children to come to me, and do not hinder them; because the Kingdom of God is of such. 17I tell you assuredly, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God the way a little child does[5] will by no means enter it."

An upright, rich ruler

18A certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 19So Jesus said to him: "Why do you call me good? No one is good except one—God.[6] 20You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and your mother.'" 21And he said, "All these I have kept from my youth." 22Well upon hearing these things[7] Jesus said

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1 Why is God being patient with us when we keep asking but He is not answering, apparently? The Text says 'day and night', which suggests a level of insistence that does not take into account God's reasons for not answering. We should not pray thinking that we have to overcome God's reluctance. We may ask for what we would like to have, while trusting in His wisdom and goodness.

2 God's 'quickly' doesn't always seem that 'quick' to us.

3 The Text clearly has 'the faith', referring to the sum of Truth that makes up the biblical Faith. The Lord's question is precisely to the point. Aside from the generalized apostasy that characterizes 'Christian' churches today, how many 'conservative' pastors are genuinely committed to the objective authority of the biblical Text?

4 This is the sort of 'prayer' that does not get past the ceiling, so he was just talking to himself.

5 To render 'as a little child' misses the point; obviously an adult can be saved. A little child believes literally and completely.

6 Jesus is not denying that He is good, but the man is not addressing Him as God. Had the man done so, there would have been no objection.

7 From the parallel account in Matthew 19:16-22 we learn that the man actually said more than is recorded here.

to him, "You still lack one thing: sell all you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." 23But when he heard this he became very sad, because he was extremely rich.[1]

Riches tend to keep people out of the Kingdom

24When Jesus saw that he became sad, He said: "How difficult it is for those who have riches to enter the Kingdom of God![2] 25It is actually easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle[3] than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God!" 26So the hearers said, "Who then can be saved?" 27And He said, "The things that are impossible with men are possible with God."

28Then Peter said, "Notice that we have left all and followed you!" 29So He said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the Kingdom of God, 30who will not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life."

Jesus declares His coming death and resurrection—third time

31Then He took the Twelve aside and said to them: "Take note, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all the things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of the Man will be fulfilled: 32He will be betrayed to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon, 33and they will scourge and kill Him. And on the third day[4] He will rise again!" 34But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them,[5] and they did not know what was being said.

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[1] The Lord had put His finger on the one he was not keeping; he was not loving his neighbor as himself.

[2] The parallel passage in Mark (10:24) clarifies that it is those who trust in riches. How many rich people do you know who do not trust in their riches? (That clarification is omitted by less than half a percent of the extant Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, as in the eclectic text currently in vogue.)

[3] Jesus refers to a literal camel and a literal needle, which of course is "impossible with men", as He goes on to say in verse 27.

[4] Referring to the time between Jesus' death and resurrection, Luke (and Matthew and Mark) has '(on) the third day' (this occurs eleven times); but Mark also has 'after three days' (this occurs two times), while Matthew also has 'three days and three nights' (this occurs only once); John has 'in three days'. Due to these seeming differences, there are those who insist that Jesus died on Thursday, not Friday, or even on Wednesday. There is general agreement that the resurrection happened on Sunday. Both '(on) the third day' and 'in three days' allow for a Friday crucifixion, as the Church has generally understood. In John 20:26 we read, "after eight days" Jesus appeared to the disciples again, with Thomas present; this was the next Sunday, so only seven days had elapsed—Jews (and Brazilians) include the day at both ends. So 'after three days' also allows for a Friday crucifixion. I take it that 'three days and three nights' was an idiomatic expression synonymous with 'after three days'. So Jesus died on a Friday. See "How long was Jesus' body in the tomb?" on my website: www.prunch.org.

[5] 'Hidden' by whom?

A blind man near Jericho

35Then it happened, as He approached Jericho,[1] that a certain blind
man was sitting alongside the road begging. 36Hearing a crowd going by,
he asked what it was. 37So they told him that Jesus the Natsorean[2] was
passing by. 38Well he shouted, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy
on me!" 39Those who led the way started reproving him, to shut him up;
but he kept calling out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"
40So Jesus stopped and ordered that he be brought to Him. When he got
close He asked him, saying, 41"What do you want me to do for you?" So
he said, "Lord, that I may see again!"[3] 42Then Jesus said to him: "See
again! Your faith has made you well." 43And immediately he did! and he
followed Him, glorifying God. And all who witnessed it gave praise to
God.

Zacchaeus

19 1He entered and started passing through Jericho.[4] 2A man named
Zacchaeus was there—he was a chief tax collector, and he was
wealthy! 3He was trying to see who Jesus was, but could not because of
the crowd, because he was short. 4And running on ahead he climbed up
into a sycamore tree,[5] in order to see Him, since He was about to pass
by there. 5And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him,
and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down quickly, because today I must
stay at your house."[6] 6So he came down quickly, and received Him joy-
fully. 7But when they saw it, they all started com-plaining, saying, "He
has entered to lodge with a sinful man!"

8Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Indeed, Lord, I here-
with give half of my goods to the poor, and if I have extorted anything
from anyone, I restore fourfold."[7] 9So Jesus said about him, "Today sal-
vation has happened in this house,[8] in that he also is a son of Abraham;

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[1] Luke has Jesus approaching Jericho, while Matthew and Mark have Him leaving it. In Jesus' day there were two Jerichos, the old one that had been rebuilt, and a new one, about a kilometer away. What better place to beg than between the two towns? Jesus had left the old Jericho and was going toward the new one. For further discussion, please see: "Entering or leaving Jericho?" on my website: www.prunch.org.

[2] That is correct, 'Natsorean', not Nazarene. The reference is to Isaiah 11:1—Jesus was the 'Branch-man', the Messiah, as the blind man clearly understood, since he addressed Him as 'Son of David'. For further discussion, please see: "'Prophets' in Matthew 2:23" and "The Natsorean" on my website: www.prunch.org.

[3] The man had not been born blind. Do you find it to be curious that Jesus asked him what he wanted? Was it not obvious? God knows what we need before we ask, but we must ask! So why does God do that? I would say that it is to oblige us to recognize our dependency.

[4] This would be the new Jericho.

[5] A sycamore has an edible fruit that looks like a small fig. It has branches that are good for climbing, which is not true of a domestic fig-tree.

[6] Jesus called him by name. How did He know that? Might that have contributed to the man's conversion?

[7] The man knew his Bible; see Exodus 22:1.

[8] Yes indeed, that was a complete change of direction!

10because the Son of the Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Parable of a despised king

11Now as they heard these things, He continued with a parable, because He was near Jerusalem and they were supposing that the Kingdom of God was on the verge of being revealed.[1] 12So He said: "A certain nobleman went to a distant country to receive for himself a kingdom and return. 13He called ten of his slaves, gave them ten 'minas',[2] and said to them, 'Conduct business until I come.' 14But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.'

15"It happened that he did receive the kingdom, and upon returning he ordered that those slaves to whom he had given the money be called to him, to know who had gained what by trading. 16So the first one came and said, 'Master, your mina has become ten minas!'[3] 17He said to him: 'Super, you good slave! Because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities!' 18And the second one came and said, 'Master, your mina made five minas.' 19Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.' 20Then a different one came, saying: 'Master, here is your mina, that I kept laid away in a piece of cloth 21—I feared you because you are a hard man, removing what you did not place, and reaping what you did not sow.' 22So he said to him: 'I will judge you out of your own mouth, you wicked slave! You knew that I am a hard man, removing what I did not place, and reaping what I did not sow. 23Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, and upon coming I would have collected it with interest?' 24And to those standing by he said, 'Take the mina from him and give it to him who has the ten minas.' 25(They even said to him, 'Master, he *already* has ten minas!') 26'Indeed I tell you, to everyone who has, more will be given;[4] but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. 27But as for those enemies of mine who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them in front of me!'"[5]

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1 This seems to have been a fixation in their minds that kept them from understanding the Lord's repeated warnings that He was about to be killed.

2 A mina was worth 100 denaria.

3 How long would it take to multiply an investment ten times? Probably quite a while! That the man had to go to a distant country strikes me as unusual, and after he got there he may not have received the kingdom right away. The parable clearly relates to our Lord's absence and Return. We need to do the best we can with what He has given us.

4 There is a sense in which blessing is earned; the more you do, the more you get. In John 12:26 Sovereign Jesus said, "If anyone serves me, my Father will honor him." See 2 Chronicles 16:9.

5 The man had accepted the description given by the third slave, and here he demonstrates that he really is a 'hard' man, but don't forget that he rewarded the faithful slaves. And don't forget Revelation 19:15!

The last week

The 'Triumphal Entry'

28Having said these things, He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29When He drew near to Bethsphage[1] and Bethany, at the mountain called 'of Olives', it happened like this: He sent two of His disciples, 30saying: "Go to the village opposite you, where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no man ever yet sat. Untie and bring it. 31And if anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say this to him: 'The Lord needs it.'"

A steed for the King

32So those who were sent went and found it just like He told them. 33As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" 34So they said, "The Lord needs it."[2] 35Then they brought it to Jesus; and throwing their own clothes on the colt, they placed Jesus on it. 36And as He went along people were spreading their clothes on the road.

Rejoicing and praising

37Then, as He was approaching 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, 38saying: "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD![3] Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

A sour note

39Some of the Pharisees said to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" 40In answer He said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the very stones would cry out!"

Jesus weeps over Jerusalem

41Now as He approached, observing the city He wept over it, 42saying: "If you, yes you, especially in this your day, had known the things pertaining to your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43Yes, the days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you; indeed they will surround you and hem you in on every side. 44And they will raze you, and your children within you, to the ground—they will not leave in you one stone upon another—all because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."[4]

Jesus cleanses the temple—second time

45And upon entering the temple He began to drive out those who

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[1] Some 44% of the Greek manuscripts have 'Bethphage' (as in most versions), but the 56% includes the best line of transmission, which I follow. In any case, it is a mere matter of spelling.

[2] It seems to me obvious that this had been pre-arranged.

[3] See Psalm 118:26.

[4] The implication would appear to be that if they had recognized it, their history would have been different.

were selling and buying in it,[1] 46saying to them, "It is written: 'My house is a house of prayer,'[2] but you have made it a 'den of robbers'!"[3]

47And He was teaching daily in the temple; but the chief priests and the scribes, as also the leaders of the people, were trying to destroy Him, 48but could not figure out how to do it, because all the people were hanging on His words.

Jesus' authority questioned

20 1Now it happened on one of those days, as He was teaching and evangelizing the people in the temple, that the priests[4] and scribes came to Him with the elders 2and addressed Him, saying, "Tell us by what authority you are doing these things; or who is he who gave you this authority?" 3But in answer He said to them: "I also will ask you one thing; yes, tell me: 4the baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men?" 5So they reasoned among themselves, saying: "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why did you not believe him?' 6But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet." 7So they answered that they did not know where it was from. 8And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."[5]

Parable of some perverse tenants

9Then He began to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard, leased it to farmers, and went away on a long journey. 10At the proper time he sent a slave to the farmers, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the farmers flogged him and sent him away empty-handed. 11Again he sent a different slave; so they flogged him also, treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. 12And again he sent a third; but they wounded him also and threw him out. 13Then the owner of the vineyard said: 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; hopefully they will respect him when they see him.'[6] 14But when the farmers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying: 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, so that the inheritance may become ours.' 15So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What therefore will the owner of the vineyard do to them? 16He will come and destroy those farmers and give the vineyard to others." Having heard it they said, "May it never be!"

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[1] Comparing the parallel accounts, this happened the next day. Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "and buying in it" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[2] See Isaiah 56:7.

[3] See Jeremiah 7:11.

[4] Some 16% of the Greek manuscripts have 'high priests' (as in most versions).

[5] Well, of course, they knew that both John and Jesus were of God—they just did not want to repent and change their way of life.

[6] Presumably this would never occur in real life, but the Lord was aiming this directly at them, knowing what they would do to Him and what the Owner would do to them.

17Then He looked directly at them[1] and said: "What then is this that
is written: 'A stone that the builders rejected, the same became the
cornerstone'?[2] 18Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to
pieces, but on whomever it should fall—it will crush him!"[3]

19The chief priests and the scribes wanted to lay hands on Him right
then, and they were afraid[4]—they knew He had spoken this parable
against them.

To Caesar, Caesar's; to God, God's

20Keeping a close watch on Him, they sent spies, who pretended to
be innocent, so that they might latch on to something He said, so as to
hand Him over to the power and the authority of the governor. 21So they
questioned Him, saying: "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach
what is right, and you do not show favoritism but teach the way of God
in truth.[5] 22Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"

23But He perceived their craftiness and said to them: "Why are you
testing me?[6] 24Show me a denarius—whose image and inscription does
it have?" In answer they said, "Caesar's." 25So He said to them, "Then
render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that
are God's." 26They were unable to latch on to His word in front of the
people; and marveling at His answer they kept silent.

Sadducees deny resurrection

27Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrec-
tion, approached and questioned Him, 28saying: "Teacher, Moses wrote
to us that if a man's married brother dies childless, then his brother
should take the widow and produce offspring for his brother. 29Now
there were seven brothers: the first took a wife and died childless; 30then
the second took the widow and he died childless;[7] 31then the third took
her, in fact all seven in sequence—they all died childless. 32Finally, last
of all, the woman died also. 33Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife
will she be, since all seven had her?"[8]

34So in answer Jesus said to them: "The people of this age marry

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1 The Text does not say at whom He looked, but from what follows it was probably the leaders who were questioning Him.

2 See Psalm 118:22.

3 Those are our two options: fall on Jesus and be broken (and remade), or be crushed in judgment.

4 For 'they were afraid', some 35% of the Greek manuscripts have 'they feared the people' (as in most versions).

5 They were really almost too obvious.

6 Perhaps 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "Why are you testing me?" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

7 Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "the widow and he died childless" (as in NIV, NASB, TEV, etc.).

8 Whenever someone comes up with a hypothetical situation, be careful; there is probably a hidden agenda.

and are given in marriage; 35but those who are considered worthy[1] to attain to that age, to the resurrection from among the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage. 36Because they cannot die anymore,[2] being like angels—they are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. 37But that the dead are raised, Moses indeed revealed about the Bush when he recorded: 'The LORD, the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.'[3] 38So He is not the God of the dead, but of the living—to Him all are alive." 39Then some of the scribes answered and said, "Teacher, you spoke well." 40And they no longer dared to question Him further.

Is the Christ David's Son?

41Then He said to them: "How is it that they say that the Messiah[4] is David's Son? 42Why David himself affirms in the book of Psalms, 'The LORD said to my Lord: sit at my right hand 43until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.'[5] 44Since David calls Him 'Lord', how then is He his Son?"

Jesus denounces the scribes

45Then, in the hearing of the people, He said to His disciples: 46"Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces, and the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts; 47who 'devour' widows' houses,[6] and for a show make long prayers. These will receive more severe judgment."

A lesson in giving

21 1Looking up He saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasure chest. 2But He also saw a certain poor widow putting in two mites. 3So He said: "I tell you truly that this poor widow put in more than all of them; 4because all these others put in gifts for God out of their abundance, but she, out of her destitution, put in all she had to live on."[7]

The temple will be destroyed

5Then, as some were admiring the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, 6"These things that you see—the days will come in which not one stone will be left upon another that

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[1] "Those who are considered worthy"—an interesting concept! So how does one get there?

[2] If no one dies, there is no need to produce new generations.

[3] See Exodus 3:6.

[4] The Greek Text has 'Christ', but since they were speaking Hebrew, the Lord certainly said 'Messiah'.

[5] See Psalm 110:1.

[6] Presumably, when the man died the widow no longer had the means to clear any debt; so they would just take over the house and put the widow out in the street.

[7] It is a fact of life; people who are poor are often more generous, more willing to share, than those who are rich. But in this case the widow was probably calling out to God for help. Perhaps 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "for God" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

will not be thrown down."[1]

The Olivet Discourse

7So they asked Him, saying: "Teacher, so when will these things be?" and "What will be the sign when these things are about to happen?"[2] 8So He said: "Be careful, so as not to be deceived, because many will come in my name saying: 'I am' and 'The time is at hand.' Therefore do not go after them. 9But whenever you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; because these things must happen first, but the end will not come right away."

Things will get bad, really bad

10Then He said to them: "Nation will be raised up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. 11And there will be severe earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful events and great signs from heaven. 12But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors on account of my name. 13But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. 14So settle it in your hearts not to practice giving a defense beforehand; 15because I will give you[3] a mouth and wisdom such that all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or withstand.[4] 16You will be betrayed even by parents and relatives, friends and 'brothers'; and they will put some of you to death. 17And you will be hated by all because of my name.[5] 18(Not even one hair of your head will be wasted[6]—19you must secure your souls by your endurance.)[7]

Jerusalem will be destroyed

20"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that her desolation is at hand. 21Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let those who are in the city get out, and let those who are in the country not enter her. 22Because these are days of vengeance, that all the written things may be fulfilled. 23But woe to those who are pregnant and to those nursing babies in those days! There will be great distress in the land, and wrath to this people. 24Yes, they will fall by the

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1 This was fulfilled in 70 A.D.

2 There are two questions: "When these things?" and "What the sign?" The answer to the first is given in Luke 21:20-24. The answer to the second begins here in verse 8.

3 To do this He has to be alive!

4 This was true of Stephen; they couldn't answer him, so they killed him.

5 This is already happening around the world. Those who defend biblical values are hated.

6 I have to take this by faith. We have to work and war by faith, since we are often not allowed to see the results. I take it that the Lord is assuring us that nothing we do for Him will be wasted. But we must 'hang in there'.

7 The verb 'to secure' is in the Imperative. Although some versions put 'life', rather than "soul", that rendering does not fit, since verse 16 says that they will be killed. What is at stake is the eternal destiny of the soul. Whoever gives in, abandons the Faith because of the persecution, loses eternal life for the soul (Revelation 21:8).

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.[1]

Christ will return to the earth

25"There will be signs in sun, moon, and stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, at the roaring and tossing of the sea;[2] **26**men fainting from fear and expectation of the things coming on the inhabited earth—because the powers of the heavens will be shaken.[3] **27**Then they will see the Son of the Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. **28**Now when these things begin to happen, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

Parable of the fig tree

29Then He told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees. **30**Whenever they are already budding, you see and know by yourselves that summer is now near. **31**So you also, whenever you see these things happening, know that the Kingdom of God is near. **32**I tell you assuredly, this generation[4] will certainly not pass away until all has happened. **33**Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away.[5]

Watch and pray

34"But keep a watch on yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness, and cares of life, and that Day come upon you suddenly. **35**Because it will come like a trap upon all those who dwell on the surface of the whole earth. **36**So be watchful all the time, praying that you may be counted worthy[6] to escape all these things[7] that are about to happen and to stand before the Son of the Man."

His daily routine

37In the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called 'of Olives.' **38**Then early in the morning all the people would come to Him in the temple to hear Him.

Judas joins the plot against Jesus

22 **1**Now the feast of unleavened bread, which is called 'Passover', drew near. **2**And the chief priests and the scribes were looking for

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[1] Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D. and was 'trampled by Gentiles' until 1967, when it returned to the control of Israel. So now the things mentioned in verse 25 and following can happen at any time.

[2] 'The sea' is sometimes used as a metaphor for the human population.

[3] See Revelation 12:7-12.

[4] 'This generation' has received various interpretations. Personally I suppose it refers to the generation that was alive in 1967 (by now everyone in that 'generation' is at least 56 years old).

[5] Sovereign Jesus declares that His words have eternal validity, and are therefore on a par with God's written revelation (see Psalm 119:89).

[6] Instead of 'counted worthy', less than 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have 'be able' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[7] If 'to escape all these things' refers to the Rapture, then only those who are 'counted worthy' will go up. See the parallel in Matthew 25:1-13.

a way to kill Him, because they feared the people.[1] 3Then Satan entered Judas[2] (the one surnamed Iscariot), who was numbered among the Twelve.[3] 4So he went off and conferred with the chief priests and officers about how he might betray Him to them. 5They were glad and agreed to give him silver coins. 6So he promised and started looking for an opportunity to betray Him to them, without a crowd.

The last night

Preparation for the last Passover

7Then came the day of unleavened bread, in which it was necessary to kill the Passover lamb. 8And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat." 9So they said to Him, "Where do you want us to prepare?" 10He said to them: "Note, upon entering the city a man carrying a jar of water[4] will meet you; follow him into the house which he enters. 11Then you must say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you: Where is the guest room[5] where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' 12He himself will show you a large upper room,[6] all furnished; make preparations there." 13So off they went and found things just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover.

They eat the Passover

14When the hour had come, He reclined, and the twelve[7] apostles with Him. 15Then He said to them: "I have fervently desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16I tell you further that I will not eat of it again until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God." 17And taking a cup He gave thanks and said: "Take this and share it among yourselves.[8] 18I tell you further that I will not drink again[9] of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God comes."

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1 The trouble was that the people were being so impressed by Jesus that they felt threatened.

2 Note that Judas acted under satanic inspiration.

3 Luke wrote "numbered among the Twelve", not 'of the Twelve', because Judas lost his place (see Acts 1:20).

4 This would presumably be rather unusual, since fetching water was normally done by women.

5 The term here has the basic meaning of a room used for visitors, but a large hall in an upper story requires a different explanation. A room for visitors would be empty when there were no visitors; I take it that this hall was reserved for special occasions and was therefore available.

6 Obviously this had all been arranged ahead of time. The owner was doubtless a believer, and the large upper room was presumably chosen with a view to the use that would be made of it later, as well.

7 A mere handful (0.5%) of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "twelve" (as in NIV, NASB, TEV, etc.).

8 This 'cup' was not part of the 'Lord's Supper'; I do not know what the purpose may have been.

9 To suck a swallow or two from a sponge would not qualify as 'drinking'.

Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper

19Then, after the meal,[1] He took bread, gave thanks, broke and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me." 20He also took the cup, saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you.

The betrayer is present

21"But alas, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table! 22To be sure, the Son of the Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!"[2] 23(They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who was about to do this.)

Wanting to be 'the greatest' is not a valid option

24Now there had actually been a discussion among them as to which of them seemed to be greater. 25So He said to them: "The kings of the nations lord it over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors'. 26But not so with you—rather let the greater among you become as the younger, and he who leads as he who serves. 27Who is greater, the one reclining or the one serving? Is it not the one reclining? Yet I am among you as the one who serves. 28However, you are those who have continued with me in my trials.[3] 29And I bestow on you a kingdom, just as my Father bestowed one on me, 30so that you may eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom; also you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel!"[4]

Peter will deny Him

31Then the Lord said:[5] "Simon, Simon! Indeed Satan has asked for you (pl) so as to sift you like wheat. 32But I have prayed for you (sg) so that your faith not fail completely;[6] so you, when you have recovered,[7] strengthen your brothers." 33But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death!" 34So He said, "I say to you, Peter, no rooster can crow today before you deny three times that you know me!"[8]

"Buy a sword"

35Then He said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?" And they said, "Nothing." 36So

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1 Versions generally place this phrase in verse 20, because that is where it is in the Greek Text, but comparing John 13:2, the bread also was after the meal.

2 Judas had crossed the line of no return. See Matthew 26:24 and John 17:12.

3 The gentle reproof is tempered with a word of appreciation.

4 Then the twelve tribes must still exist! God knows who and where they are. I wonder who will take the Iscariot's place. Note that there will be eating and drinking in the future Kingdom.

5 A mere handful (0.5%) of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "Then the Lord said" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

6 The Lord prayed for Peter, but evidently not for the Iscariot.

7 The KJV reads 'converted', which is a misleading translation.

8 This was the second warning; the first is recorded in John 13:37-38. For a complete discussion of Peter's denials, please see: "How many times did Jesus say Peter would deny Him?" on my website: www.prunch.org.

He said to them: "But now, he who has a money bag should take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword must sell his garment and buy one.[1] 37Because I say to you that this which is written must still be fulfilled in me: 'And he was classed with the lawless';[2] and because the things concerning me have an end." 38So they said, "Look, Lord, here are two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough."

Gethsemane

39Then going out He went to the Mount of Olives, as His custom was, and His disciples followed Him. 40When He came to the place, He said to them, "Pray, so as not to enter into temptation." 41Then He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down and prayed, 42saying, "Father, if you would just remove this cup from me—nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done!" 43Then an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. 44And being in anguish He prayed with total concentration;[3] then His sweat became like clots of blood, falling to the ground.[4] 45When He rose up from prayer and came to the disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. 46He said to them: "Why do you sleep? Get up and pray, that you may not enter into temptation!"

Betrayal and arrest

47But while He was still speaking—wow, a crowd; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them! He approached Jesus to kiss Him (he had given them this sign, "Whomever I kiss, it is he").[5] 48So Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of the Man with a kiss?"

49When those who were around Him saw what was about to happen, they said to Him, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" 50And a certain one of them struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear![6] 51But Jesus reacted by saying, "Allow at least this!" and touching

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[1] If you are obviously armed, this tends to slow down those who would otherwise attack you or take advantage of you. It is better yet to have spiritual power.

[2] See Isaiah 53:12.

[3] I believe that Hebrews 5:7 refers to this moment. To transpire blood is normally fatal, so Jesus came close to dying there in the garden. But He had to get to the cross, so the Father sent an angel to strengthen Him. The sleeping disciples did not observe this, so Luke received this information 'from Above' (Luke 1:3).

[4] The eclectic Greek text currently in vogue places verses 43-44 within double brackets (based on 1.3% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality), thereby denying that Luke wrote them. These verses contain important information that should not be questioned on such a feeble basis.

[5] Some 45% of the Greek manuscripts, including the best line of transmission (that I follow), have, "he had given them this sign, 'Whomever I kiss, it is he'". Every other version I have seen follows the 55%.

[6] "The servant of the high priest"—presumably this man was leading the expedition. We know from John 18:10 that his name was Malchus.

his ear He healed him.[1]

52Then Jesus said to the chief priests, officers of the temple, and elders who had come against Him: "Have you come out with swords and clubs as against a bandit? 53When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour; even the authority of the darkness!"[2]

Peter denies Jesus

54Then they seized, took and brought Him to the house of the high priest, with Peter following at a distance. 55Now when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. 56Then a certain servant girl, seeing him sitting by the fire, looked intently at him and said, "This man also was with him."[3] 57But he denied Him, saying, "Woman, I do not know him!"

58After a little while another saw him and said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not!" 59Then after about an hour had passed, another started insisting, "Surely this fellow also was with him, because he is a Galilean." 60But Peter said, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" And immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster[4] crowed.

61And the Lord turned and looked directly at Peter;[5] then Peter remembered the Lord's word, how He had said to him, "Before a rooster crows, you will deny me three times." 62And going outside he wept bitterly.

Guards mistreat Jesus

63The men who were guarding Jesus started mocking and beating Him. 64And having blindfolded Him they would hit His face and[6] ask Him, saying: "Prophesy! Who was it who struck you?"[7] 65And they kept saying many other insulting things to Him.

Crucifixion day

Jesus judged by the Council

66As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both the chief priests and scribes, came together and brought Him before their council, saying, 67"If you are the Messiah, tell us." But He said to them: "If I tell

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[1] We know it was Peter (John 18:10), and if the Lord had not healed that ear, things would probably have been nastier for Peter in the 'courtyard'. Please see "Harmonizing the accounts of the betrayal and arrest" on my website: www.prunch.org.

[2] This was Satan's hour, being part of the Father's Plan; 'the darkness' refers to Satan's kingdom; 'your hour' means that they were part of that kingdom.

[3] I wonder how the girl knew that!

[4] Instead of 'a' rooster, perhaps 3% of the manuscripts have 'the' rooster (as in TR, AV, NKJV).

[5] I take it that here the Lord broke the Satanic spell, and Peter could think normally again.

[6] Perhaps 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "they would hit His face and" (as in NIV, NASB, TEV, etc.).

[7] Those men were cowardly and perverse, but probably acted under demonic influence.

you, you simply will not believe. 68But if I also question you, you will neither answer nor release me.[1] 69Hereafter the Son of the Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." 70Then they all said, "Are you then the Son of God?" So He said to them, "You say it because I AM!" 71Then they said: "What further testimony do we need? We ourselves have heard it from his mouth!"[2]

Jesus taken to Pontius Pilate

23 1Then the whole crowd of them rose up and led Him to Pilate. 2And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this fellow perverting the nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar,[3] declaring himself to be Christ, a king." 3So Pilate questioned Him, saying, "Are you the king of the Jews?" In reply He said to him, "You said it!" 4Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no guilt in this man."[4] 5But they insisted, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee even to here."

Jesus taken to Herod

6When Pilate heard 'Galilee',[5] he asked if the man was a Galilean. 7Upon learning that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem during those days. 8Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was really pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see Him, having heard so many things about Him; and he was hoping to see some miracle performed by Him. 9He questioned Him with many words, but He gave him no answer.[6] 10On their part, the high priests and scribes stood by, vehemently accusing Him. 11Then Herod and his soldiers, after ridiculing and mocking Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate. 12(That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other—previously having been at odds with each other.)[7]

Pilate sentences Jesus

13Then Pilate, having called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, 14said to them: "You have brought this man to me as one who misleads the people, and yet, having examined him in your presence, I have found no guilt in this man as to those things of which

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1 Jesus tells them that He knows, and they know, that what they are doing is a farce.

2 They were condemning Him for blasphemy, but to do that they had to reject the obvious truth that Jesus was indeed the Son of God.

3 This was a plain lie.

4 It is necessary to read the parallel passages to get a fuller picture of what happened. It becomes clear that Pilate did not want to crucify Jesus. For a fuller discussion, please see: "Poor Pilate—wrong place, wrong time" on my website: www.prunch.org.

5 Perhaps 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "Galilee" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

6 Herod was irrelevant; it was Pilate who had the authority to crucify.

7 An interesting 'fringe benefit'.

you accuse him. 15Further, neither did Herod (for I sent you on to him);[1] indeed, nothing deserving of death has been done by him. 16I will therefore flog and release him." 17(It was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast.)[2]

18But they all cried out together, saying: "Away with this one! Release to us Barabbas!"—19who had been thrown into prison for a certain insurrection in the city, and for murder. 20Then Pilate, wanting to release Jesus,[3] addressed them again. 21But they just kept shouting: "Crucify! Crucify him!" 22For the third time he said to them: "But what evil has this man done? I have found no reason for death in him. I will therefore flog and release him." 23But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified! And their voices, especially of the chief priests,[4] prevailed. 24So Pilate decided to grant their demand. 25He released the one who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

Jesus is crucified[5]

26Now as they led Him away, they conscripted a certain Simon of Cyrene (coming in from a field), and put the cross on him to carry it behind Jesus.[6] 27A considerable crowd of people followed Him, including women who were also mourning and lamenting Him. 28So Jesus turned to them and said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; rather weep for yourselves and for your children. 29Because indeed, the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, even the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!'[7] 30Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!'[8] 31For if they do these things in the 'green tree', what will happen in the 'dry'?"

32There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. 33When they arrived at the place called 'The Skull', they crucified Him there; also the criminals, one on His right, the other on His left.

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[1] Instead of "for I sent you on to him", some 12% of the manuscripts have 'for he sent him back to us' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[2] About 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit verse 17 entirely (as in NIV, NASB, LB, [TEV], etc.).

[3] Comparing the accounts it is very clear that Pilate wanted no part of killing Jesus, but when they said "you are not Caesar's friend" he was beaten.

[4] A mere handful (0.5%) of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "especially of the chief priests" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[5] For a harmonization of the four Gospel accounts, please see `Harmonizing the accounts of the crucifixion` on my website: www.prunch.org.

[6] Whether or not Simon was already a disciple at this moment (he may have been prepared), he evidently became one. It appears that Jesus was having trouble carrying His cross.

[7] For Jews to say this, things would have to get really bad.

[8] See Hosea 10:8.

34 Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what
they are doing";[1] while they were dividing up His clothes by casting a
lot. 35 Meanwhile the people stood looking on. And especially the rulers
among them were sneering, saying, "He saved others; let him save him-
self, if such is the Christ, the chosen of God!" 36 Yes, even the soldiers
mocked Him, approaching and offering Him sour wine, 37 and saying, "If
you are the king of the Jews, save yourself!"[2]

38 In fact, above Him there was a written notice, in Greek, Latin and
Hebrew letters:[3]

THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

39 Then one of the hanged criminals started berating Him, saying,
"If you are the Christ, save yourself and us!"[4] 40 But the other reacted
and rebuked him, saying: "Don't you even fear God, since you are under
the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the
due reward for our deeds; but this man did nothing wrong." 42 Then he
said to Jesus, "Please remember me, Lord,[5] when you come in your king-
dom."[6] 43 Jesus said to him, "I tell you assuredly, today you will be with
me in Paradise."[7]

Jesus dismisses His spirit

44 Now it was about the sixth hour,[8] and darkness came upon the

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1 The eclectic text currently in vogue (following less than 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality) places within double brackets the first half of verse 34: "Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing'". In this way they deny that Luke wrote it, surely a perverse proceeding. I take it that the Greek grammar at this point indicates that Jesus said it while the soldiers were dividing up His clothes. I suppose that Jesus was referring precisely to those soldiers; they were simply obeying orders, and had no personal responsibility for what was happening.

2 The soldiers were just going along with the 'game'; after all, His stated crime was that He was 'the king of the Jews'.

3 A mere handful (0.5%) of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "written in Greek, Latin and Hebrew letters" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

4 According to Matthew 27:44 and Mark 15:32, both of them started out by reviling Him, but later one of them repented—they were on the cross for about three hours before the supernatural darkness, so there was time to observe Jesus, which caused one of them to change his mind.

5 Instead of "to Jesus, 'Please remember me, Lord'", perhaps 3% of the manuscripts have 'Jesus, remember me' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.), which seriously weakens the man's statement.

6 I find this statement to be impressive: the man is declaring that Jesus is the Messiah and will indeed inaugurate His Kingdom. Evidently the man knew the Bible; and his request was honored!

7 For Jesus to say 'today', He knew the man would die before sundown, so He knew the man's legs would be broken—otherwise he would most likely have lasted well into the night, which would have been 'tomorrow'. 'Paradise' here refers to that half of Hades (Sheol in the OT) reserved for the righteous dead. Hades is the 'half-way house' where departed spirits await the final judgment. In Luke 16:22 it is called "Abraham's bosom".

8 Luke uses Jewish time, so it was about noon. The darkness lasted three hours.

whole land until the ninth hour. 45Yes, the sun was darkened; also, the veil of the temple was torn in two. 46Then, after giving a loud shout, Jesus said, "Father, it is into your hands that I will commit my spirit." And having said this, He breathed out His spirit.[1]

Various reactions

47Well upon seeing what had happened, the centurion glorified God, saying, "Certainly this man was righteous!"[2] 48And the whole crowd that had gathered for the spectacle, when they saw what actually happened, went away beating their breasts.[3] 49But all His acquaintances, including the women who had followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

Jesus' body is buried

50Now then, there was a man named Joseph, a good and righteous man, a Council member 51(but he had not agreed with their counsel and action), from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was waiting for the Kingdom of God: 52this man went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. 53Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock, where no one had ever been laid.[4] 54It was a Preparation-day; the Sabbath was drawing near. 55The women who had come with Him from Galilee followed along, and they saw the tomb and that His body was placed there.[5] 56Then they returned and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

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[1] Both Matthew and John state overtly that Jesus dismissed His spirit. In John 10:17-18 He had declared that no one could kill Him, He would lay down His own life. The cross did not kill Jesus, as the centurion recognized (see the next note).

[2] Any centurion would be a hardened soldier, who had seen no end of crucifixions. He knew that a cross killed by asphyxiation. Hanging from the hands, with the arms stretched out, pushes the diaphragm against the lungs so you cannot breathe. Nailing the feet was a sadistic procedure to prolong the agony—even though painful, the victim would push up so he could get a breath, until finally too worn out to do so. Breaking the legs would put an end to that expedient, and the person died within a few minutes, asphyxiated. Someone who is dying asphyxiated does not shout. Since Jesus gave a loud shout, but then immediately died, the centurion knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that the cross had not killed Jesus (later, when Joseph asks for the body, Pilate is surprised that Jesus could already be dead). But who can just tell his spirit to leave? Putting two and two together, the centurion concluded that Jesus was a supernatural being. Just so!

[3] This was a cultural expression of sorrow and distress.

[4] Obviously the tomb had been prepared beforehand, and was a fulfillment of Isaiah 53:9, "He made His grave…with the rich at His deaths [plural]". Nicodemus had already placed a hundred pounds of spices in the tomb, before helping Joseph remove and carry the body (John 19:39).

[5] That is, they saw where the body was taken, but did not see inside, and obviously did not know about the 100 pounds of spices. Please see "Harmonizing the accounts of the burial" on my website: www.prunch.org.

Resurrection Day

"He is not here, but is risen!"

24 [1]Then on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb carrying the spices they had prepared, along with some others.[1] [2]They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, [3]but upon entering they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. [4]And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that wow, two men stood by them in dazzling clothing! [5]Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the ground, they said to them:[2] "Why do you seek the living One among the dead? [6]He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He told you while still in Galilee, [7]saying, 'The Son of the Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'" [8]And they remembered His words.[3]

The women report

[9]Then they returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the Eleven, and to all the rest.[4] [10]They were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them, who told these things to the apostles. [11]But their words seemed to them like nonsense, and they disbelieved them.[5] [12](But Peter had gotten up and run to the tomb, and stooping down he saw the linen strips lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.)[6]

The 'Emmaus' incident

[13]And then that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, which was about seven miles[7] from Jerusalem. [14]And they were conversing with each other about all that had happened. [15]And then, as they were conversing and discussing, Jesus Himself came up and started going with them. [16]But their eyes were restrained, in order that they not recognize Him. [17]So He said to them, "What words are these that you are exchanging with one another as you walk, and are gloomy?"[8]

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[1] A mere handful (0.5%) of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "along with some others" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[2] "They' is masculine and 'them' is feminine.

[3] These were the women who had been providing for Jesus for some time, and they doubtless heard much of His teaching, including this statement.

[4] There were more people in the upper room than just the Eleven.

[5] They had already been 'burned', their hopes dashed, and were not in a hurry to be 'taken in' again.

[6] According to John's account, this had already happened earlier, so Luke gives it out of sequence. Please see "Harmonizing the accounts of the Resurrection" on my website: www.prunch.org.

[7] Literally, 'sixty stadia'.

[8] Instead of "…walk, and are gloomy?" a mere handful (0.5%) of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have "…walk? And they stood gloomy." (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

18Then the one whose name was Cleopas[1] answered and said to Him, "Are you the only one living in Jerusalem who doesn't know the things that have happened there in these days?" 19He said to them, "What things?" So they said to Him: "The things concerning Jesus the Natsorean, how the man was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20and how the chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. 21And we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel![2] Further, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. 22Moreover certain women of our group astonished us—arriving early at the tomb, 23and not finding his body, they came saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. 24And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb[3] and found it just as the women had said; but him they did not see."

25Then He said to them: "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the Prophets have spoken! 26Was it really not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory?" 27And beginning from Moses, and then all the Prophets, He explained to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.[4]

28Then they approached the village where they were going, and He made as though He would keep going.[5] 29But they constrained Him, saying, "Stay with us, because it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." So He went in to stay with them. 30And then, as He was reclining with them, He took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.[6] 31Then their eyes were opened[7] and they recognized Him; and He became invisible to them. 32They said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked to us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"[8]

The two report

33So they got up forthwith and returned to Jerusalem, where they found the Eleven gathered together; also those with them, 34who said, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"[9] 35Then they described what happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

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1 The other person is not identified, but presumably it could have been his wife.
2 They were looking for the Messianic Kingdom right then.
3 Although in verse 12 above Luke mentions only Peter, Cleopas makes clear that more than one went, as is recorded in John 20:2-10.
4 He declares Himself to be the Messiah. I do wish that explanation had been recorded!
5 And He would have, if they hadn't restrained Him.
6 He was a guest, but He took charge.
7 They had been supernaturally hindered from recognizing Him, up to that point.
8 Don't you know that was so! To this day, if Jesus talks to you, your heart burns.
9 There were others in the room besides the Eleven, some near the door. So when the two burst in, all excited with their news, the others 'prick their balloon'—"Oh, we already know about that". Has human nature changed?

Jesus appears to the Eleven

36As they were saying these things, indeed, Jesus[1] Himself stood in
their midst, and He said to them, "Peace to you." 37But they, startled,
supposed they were seeing a ghost, and were becoming fearful. 38And He
said to them: "Why are you troubled?" and "Why do doubts arise in your
hearts? 39Look at my hands and feet; it is I myself! Feel me and see; a
spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." 40And saying
this He showed them His hands and His feet. 41But as they were still
disbelieving and marveling, because of the joy, He said to them, "Do you
have any food here?" 42So they gave Him a piece of broiled fish and some
honeycomb.[2] 43And taking it He ate in their presence.[3]

44Then He said to them, "These are the words that I spoke to you
while I was still with you, that everything that is written in the Law of
Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning me must be ful-
filled."[4] 45Then He opened their understanding so as to comprehend the
Scriptures. 46And He said to them: "Thus it was written. And so[5] it was
necessary[6] for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third
day; 47also that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed
in His name to all the nations,[7] beginning from Jerusalem. 48You are
witnesses of these things.[8] 49Take note, I am sending the Promise of my
Father upon you; but you must stay in the city of Jerusalem until you
are clothed with power from on High."[9]

Jesus ascends to Heaven

50He led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up His hands He
blessed them. 51And it happened, as He was blessing them, that He left
them and was carried up into heaven. 52Worshipping Him, they returned

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[1] A mere handful (0.5%) of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "Jesus" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[2] Less than 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "and some honeycomb" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[3] It is easy to criticize them for being so slow to believe, but would we have done any better? Note that Christ's glorified body, that could just pass through a wall, was palpable—it had flesh and bones (but perhaps not blood). The food that He ate presumably did not go through a normal process of digestion.

[4] The Lord recognizes the three divisions of the Old Testament.

[5] The Greek Text has 'thus and thus', which indicates separate topics. There is no reference to rising the third day in the OT, and the Lord did not say that there was.

[6] A mere handful (0.5%) of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "and thus it was necessary" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[7] The Gospel is for all nations, and it must include repentance!

[8] What things? Only up to the resurrection—the proclamation to all nations was still future.

[9] "Until you are clothed with power from on High"—what are the implications of this for us today? Without God's power, what difference can we make in this world?

to Jerusalem with great joy; 53and they were continually in the temple,[1] praising and[2] blessing God. Amen.[3]

[1] Jesus had declared that God had abandoned that temple, so why did they still go there? It was a logical place to evangelize Jews, if that was their object. It was also the largest meeting place in town, presumably. But subsequent events show clearly that they still regarded it as 'God's house', a special place for worshipping. I would say that this became a snare to them.

[2] A mere handful (0.4%) of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "praising and" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[3] Some 50% of the Greek manuscripts have a colophon that says, "published fifteen years after the ascension of Christ". For 50% of the MSS to have this information probably means that the tradition is ancient. If this information is correct, then Luke was 'published' in 45 AD. The same sources have Matthew published seven years earlier (38/39) and Mark five years earlier (40/41), while John was 'published' thirty-two years after the ascension, or 62 AD. Not only were the authors eyewitnesses of the events, but many others were still alive when the Gospels appeared. They could attest to the veracity of the accounts.