

## LESSON NUMBER 14

# JESUS FORETELLS HIS DEATH

Matt. 16:16-26

### INTRODUCTION

The events of our last lesson occurred in the borders of Magadan. From that territory Jesus traveled northward until he came into the region of Caesarea Philippi. This is one of the most northern points of the journeys of the Lord. Caesarea Philippi has no Old Testament connections. The word Philippi is used to distinguish it from the Caesarea on the Mediterranean sea coast, which was the headquarters of the Roman government in Palestine. Caesarea Philippi is situated near the base of Mount Hermon. Near the city is one of the sources of the Jordan River. The town was originally called Paenas. Some think that it bore this name because the god Pan had a temple erected there for his worship. The name was changed by Phillip in honor of Tiberias Caesar hence the name Caesarea Philippi.

It was on this occasion that Jesus asked His disciples what the people thought of Him. The disciples had been out on a preaching tour (Matt. 10:5ff.) and had come in contact with people in various sections of Palestine. Jesus was anxious to hear what the people were thinking and something of the impression which the disciples had made up on them. Some thought that Jesus was John the Baptist. This was the opinion of the man who killed John, for Matthew tells us that when Herod heard of the things Jesus was doing he said to his servants, *“This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore do these powers work in him.”* (Matt. 14:2.) Some said that Jesus was Elijah come back to earth. Perhaps this opinion was founded on an Old Testament prophecy, *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come.”* (Mal. 4:5.) They had failed to see the fulfilment of this prophecy in John the Baptist, for in speaking of this prophet it is said, *“Elijah indeed comes, and shall restore all things: but I say unto you, that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but did unto him whatsoever they would ... then understood the disciples that he spoke unto them of John the Baptist.”* (Matt. 17:11-13.) Others said He was Jeremiah or some other prophet. These were opinions, and as usual the opinions of the multitude were wrong.

### I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*“Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”* (Matt. 20:28).

**1. Jesus Taught That His Death Was His Own Act.** Since our lesson concerns the death of Christ as foretold by Him, it seems good to consider this key scripture in harmony with this thought. Our text says that Jesus came to give life. Jesus often spoke of His coming into the world as if it were His own act. He speaks of His birth and His coming in such way as to indicate that the time and purpose were determined by the Lord Himself. As He stood before Pilate, who asked Him if He was King, said, *“to this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world.”* (John 18:37) When

speaking of His death He referred to it as laying down His life. He said no man could take His life from Him, that He had power to lay it down and power to take it up again. (John 10:18) Surely He was more than human, or He was very badly deceived, or He was a wicked man. If He was deceived, or if He was wicked, we must confess that such a character has accomplished more good than all the righteous people of the world. Since this is unthinkable, we must accept the only other alternative, that He was the Son of God and all that He claimed to be.

**2. Jesus Taught That His Death Was the Chief Aim of His Coming into the World.** Our text says that He came to give His life a ransom for many. That was the purpose of His coming. The word ransom means a price which one pays for the redemption of captives. When children are stolen, kidnappers demand money for their release. This is called ransom money. So Jesus came to give His life to buy souls, or to redeem souls from the bondage of Satan. Here again is an absurd claim if Jesus was not more than human. What would we think of an individual today who would solemnly affirm that he came into the world for the purpose of ransoming people from spiritual bondage?

**3. Jesus Taught That His Death Had World-wide Significance.** Our text says that He came to give His life a ransom for many. Some have taken this statement to mean that His life was not a ransom for all. Their idea is that only the elect are ransomed and that they are the only people for whom Jesus gave His life. But the word many is often used in scripture for all. Paul says, *“For if by the trespass of the one the many died ...”* (Rom. 5:15.) Here the many died because of the trespass of one, Adam; but in 1 Corinthians 15:22 Paul says, *“All died in Adam.”* Hence, many means all. So when Jesus gave His life a ransom for many we are to understand that it was a ransom for all. Furthermore this harmonizes with other statements of scripture. *“He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.”* (1 John 2:2.) To sum up, we have Jesus speaking as if His coming into the world and His living were determined by Himself, that the purpose of His coming was to die, that His death was to be the ransom price to redeem sinners from sin, and that His death would have sufficient worth to redeem the whole world. If His teaching is true, He is the Son of God; if His teaching on these points is not true, we cannot afford to accept His word on any other. Modernism refuses to accept His word on these matters, but piously pretends to believe His moral teachings. They should realize that His moral teachings are of no value if His teaching on this point is false.

## II. A COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW 16:16-26

### 1. Promises to Build His Church (Matt. 16:16-20)

*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.* The word **“Christ”** is the Greek term for **“Messiah”** of the Hebrew and means **“the anointed.”** This part of the confession has to do with the office and work of our Lord. The expression Son of the living God refers to the nature and person of Christ. The Jews held that the Messiah was to be born as any ordinary human being and that His anointing would qualify Him for His special work. Holding this view, they were unable to answer a question which Jesus put to them when He asked them how David could call Him Lord if the Messiah was to be the son of David. (Matt. 22:43-45.) We cannot be sure that Peter understood all that was implied in this confession at the time he made it, but its comprehensiveness will be appreciated when we remember that it is the foundation on which the church rests and that our Lord did not see fit to add anything to it or require us to make any further confession.

*Flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you.* By “flesh and blood” we have usually supposed that Jesus referred to human sources, that Peter did not learn this truth from human beings, but from the Father in heaven. Albert Barnes suggests a different meaning of the terms, saying that Peter did not learn this truth from any external splendor of the Messiah, that His lowly appearance would not create the impression that He was the Messiah, but that Peter learned it by revelation. It was revealed in the teaching and confirmed by the miracles of Jesus.

*You are Peter.* This statement of Jesus has given rise to several false doctrines. The Catholic Church says that Peter is here made the foundation of the church. Others say that the rock on which the church is built is Christ, but neither Peter nor Christ can be the rock on which the church is built and for similar reasons. (1) The word rock in this verse is the translation of the Greek word *petra*, which is feminine gender. If the word rock referred to Jesus Himself, it would have been masculine gender. (2) In this figure Peter is given the keys to the house that is built on the rock. Peter could not occupy two positions, that of foundation and key-holder in the same illustration. Jesus is the builder in this figure, so He cannot be made both the builder and the foundation. (3) Since the word rock is in feminine gender, we will have to look for something that will be agreeable to this grammatical form. The truth which Peter confessed seems to be the only solution. The truth that Jesus is the anointed of God and the Son of God is the foundation on which the church rests. If He is what Peter confessed Him to be, the church will stand; if Peter was mistaken and deceived, the church built by Jesus has no durable foundation. Hence, the truth of Peter’s statement is the foundation of this verse.

*Gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.* These words are capable of two interpretations: (1) that all the powers of evil will not be able to destroy the church, (2) that our Lord’s entrance into Hades would not keep Him from building the church. Both of these are true, though the first is not true locally, for the powers of evil have prevailed against local churches. But no one who believes in the omnipotence of God would believe for a moment that Satan can destroy the church universally. This writer prefers the second interpretation, holding that Jesus said I will build My church and though My body shall be killed and my soul spend three days in Hades, in spite of it all I will come back to fulfill this promise.

*Whatsoever you shall bind on earth.* Though this statement was addressed to Peter, we learn from Matthew 18:18 and John 20:22,23 that the other apostles had as much of this power as Peter had. To bind and to loose simply meant to prohibit and to permit. If the apostles command obedience, we may be sure that God will require it of us. If they release us from an obligation, we may be sure that God will not require it of us.

## **2. To Die in Jerusalem (Matt. 16:21-23)**

*That He must go unto Jerusalem.* Jesus had made obscure references to His death previous to this. He said, “*destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*” (John 2:19.) The Jews thought He referred to the temple which Herod employed forty-six years to build, but John explains that He spoke of the temple of His body. Again He said, “*as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.*” (John 3:14.) The people who heard Jesus make this statement had no clear conception of its meaning, but as we look back upon it, we know that He referred to His being lifted up on the cross.

*Suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes.* Jesus no longer used obscure statements to His disciples, but told them plainly that He was to suffer even death at the hands of the religious leaders.

*The third day be raised up.* This statement was calculated to encourage the disciples. They had left all to follow Him. Now He speaks of His death in the near future. They would need this hope to bear them up through the trials that were immediately ahead of them. Here again we have proof of the divinity of Jesus. (1) That He knew of His death and resurrection beforehand and that He knew that His death would be caused by the religious leaders. It is also significant that He knew that His death would be in Jerusalem. (2) Not only is His divinity suggested in the prediction of His resurrection, but that His resurrection was to be accomplished. He was to be crucified because He claimed to be divine. He predicts His resurrection as a validation of His claims. Paul speaks of this as proof of His divinity in Romans 1:4.

*Be it far from You, Lord.* This is Peter's reaction to the prediction just made by our Lord. There is no indication that Peter spoke harshly to Jesus, but that he expressed an earnest wish that such might not happen to Jesus.

*Get behind Me, Satan.* This is the reply of Jesus to Peter. Jesus calls Peter Satan in the sense that Peter was acting as an adversary on this occasion. He was putting a stumbling block in the way of Jesus, making it more difficult for Jesus to accomplish the purpose for which He came into the world.

*You do not mind the things of God.* Peter was reacting in a very human way. He was putting human feelings and considerations uppermost. Many of this day allow their feelings and desires to have first place rather than to view matters as God views them. In this way and to this extent we may be an adversary of the Lord.

### **3. Losing Our Life for Him (Matt. 16:24-26)**

*If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself.* The remarks in these verses were of a general nature, and according to Mark delivered unto the multitude as well as His disciples. (Mark 8:34.) After telling Peter that he was not looking at this matter as God looks upon it, but as men would look upon it, Jesus seeks to show Peter, along with the multitude, God's viewpoint of these matters. Greatness is found in self-denial and sacrifice. God honors the man who gives himself in service and sacrifice. He does not honor those who shirk from service because it entails sacrifice. Jesus is willing to go on into Jerusalem where He knows He will suffer and be killed. He is willing to make this sacrifice that He may accomplish His purposes. Now, if any man would be His disciple he must have the same views; he must be willing to deny himself and take up his cross and follow his teacher.

*Whosoever would save his life shall lose it.* To save one's life means to preserve it from suffering and death in the cause of Christ. Jesus was going to give His life for the sake of His cause and would thereby save it. If a disciple should desert Him or deny Him in order to save his life from physical death, he would lose his life eternally.

*Whosoever shall lose his life.* Losing life here means giving it in service and sacrifice. Those who follow the example of Jesus and lose their life in His service will find it eternally. When the church

was being persecuted, people had this problem to face in a very literal fashion. Many of them weakened as they approached the fire or the arena where their bodies would be torn by wild beasts. Others found the courage to walk boldly into death, hoping to gain eternal life through their sacrifice. Some think that the principle does not apply today when we are free from such persecution. But we may as surely lose our lives as the martyrs of old. Those who give themselves in service to the church may expect to save their lives eternally, but those who save their lives that they may enjoy the pleasures of this world will as surely lose eternal life.

*What shall a man be profited if he gain the whole world and forfeit his life.* Jesus teaches that eternal life is worth more than all the world. If all the riches of the world could be translated into money and that should be piled in one great heap, it would not represent as much real worth as one soul; yet many people are losing their souls to gain a pitifully small fraction of that immense amount of wealth.

### **III. SOME APPLICATIONS**

1. Religion without a dying Christ is a dying religion. Those who deny that the death of Christ is vicarious, rob the gospel of its power to save.
2. Jesus shows Himself to be Lord both of life and death by coming of His own will and by giving up His life at the time before determined. In His care we need not shudder at the responsibilities of life nor fear the approach of death.
3. The soul is worth more than all the world, but many are exchanging their souls for a pitifully small portion of the world. Each should ask, for what will I sell my soul?

## QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 14

# JESUS FORETELLS HIS DEATH

1. What was one of the most northern points of the travels of Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. What do you know of Caesarea Philippi? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What great conversation took place there between Jesus and His disciples? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What opinions did the people generally have of Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How was the prophecy concerning the coming of Elijah fulfilled? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Did Jesus have anything to do with determining the time and purpose of His death? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What is the meaning of ransom, and illustrate it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What does the claim of Jesus on this point imply? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Can you prove that Jesus died for all? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Can one deny the miraculous birth and death of Jesus and be a Christian? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. What is the meaning of the words Christ and Messiah? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. Can you distinguish between the meanings of "Christ" and the "Son of God?" \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. Explain the statement that "flesh and blood" did not reveal the truth to Peter? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. What is the rock on which the church was built, and why cannot it be Peter? \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

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15. What is meant by the gates of Hades? \_\_\_\_\_

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16. What is meant by binding and loosing? \_\_\_\_\_

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17. In what obscure ways had Jesus referred to His death? \_\_\_\_\_

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18. Why did Jesus mention His resurrection in connection with His death? \_\_\_\_\_

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19. What proof do we have in these statements of the divinity of Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

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20. What did Peter think of His statement, and what did Jesus call him? \_\_\_\_\_

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21. In what is greatness found? \_\_\_\_\_

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22. What attitude must one have before he can be a disciple of Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

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23. How can one save his life? \_\_\_\_\_

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24. How can one lose his life? \_\_\_\_\_

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25. What is meant by losing one's life? \_\_\_\_\_

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26. What does Jesus teach in our lesson about the value of our life? \_\_\_\_\_

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27. Compare this with Paul's statement in Acts 20:24. \_\_\_\_\_

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28. What conclusions would you draw from this lesson? \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON NUMBER 15

# JESUS AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

John 7:2,10-24

### INTRODUCTION

Since the events of our lesson took place during the Feast of the Tabernacles, it will be well for us to get some Old Testament background of this feast. It was one of the three annual feasts which all Jewish men were required to attend. Passover and Pentecost were in the spring, but the feast of the Tabernacles was in the fall. It was to be celebrated on the fifteenth day of Tisri, which corresponds to the last half of our September and the first half of October. That was the first month of the civil, and the seventh month of the ecclesiastical year. This was sometimes known as the harvest festival, for it came at the end of the harvest. Moses said, *“You shall keep the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that you have gathered in from your threshing-floor and from your winepress.”* (Deut. 16:13.) And he continues by saying that they should rejoice with their families, their servants, the fatherless and the widow, and the sojourner, indicating that they were to share the bounties of their harvest with the stranger and with the poor. It was also stated that they were not to appear before Jehovah until *“every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of Jehovah your God which he has given you.”* (Deut. 16:17.) Once in seven years during this feast, the Jews were to gather for the reading of the law of Moses. (Deut. 31:9-11.) It was at this time and in obedience to Moses’ commandment that Ezra read the book of the law before the people in Jerusalem and discovered the commandment to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles by living in booths made from the branches of trees. (Neh. 8:13-18.) The Jews were not faithful in the observance of this feast, for Nehemiah tells us that it had not been observed since the days of Joshua until the return from Babylonian captivity.

### I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*“If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.”* (John 7:17).

**1. The will to know.** In our text Jesus implies that a knowledge of Him and His teaching may be had only by those who will to do His will. There must be a will to know as well as the will to do the things which the Lord commands. (a) Only those who have a genuine love of the truth can be said to will to know His truth. Paul speaks of some who perish by the deceit practiced by Satan because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. (2 Thess. 2:10.) So we would say that the first thing necessary to a knowledge of the Lord is a love of the truth. (b) There must be the intention of practising the truth. It is not enough to learn the truth, nor is it enough to love the truth unless we love it to that degree that we will apply it in our everyday life. It is possible for people to love the truth for the sake of argument and for the joy of being victorious in an argument, but still not have that practical love of the truth which leads them to make application of it in their own lives.

**2. Shall Know the Source of His Teaching.** Our text says that if one is willing to do the will of the Lord, he shall know about the Lord’s teaching, that is he shall know whether it is of God or whether

Jesus spoke from Himself. This verse teaches that the one who is in the proper frame of mind, who has the proper attitude toward God, will be capable of judging the source of teaching. (a) One who is willing to obey God and has a genuine love of the truth will recognize that teaching which is adapted to the nature of his heart. He will see in the gospel the facts which are adapted to his intellect. The facts of the gospel are simple and within the reach of the intelligence of the average person. He will also find commandments which are adapted to that part of the mind we call will, and he will find promises in the gospel which are suitable to the emotions. If there is that in the gospel which appeals to the intellect, the will, and the emotions of man, we conclude that the gospel is perfectly adapted to the nature of the heart it proposes to change. (b) The one who wills to know the truth of God will recognize in the teaching of Jesus that which fills every need of the soul. There is food for the hungry, the water of life to satisfy the soul that thirsts after righteousness. There is reproof for the wayward, encouragement for the fearful, and guidance for the wanderer. No one has ever discovered a longing of the soul for which there cannot be found a corresponding provision in the gospel.

**3. These Facts Given Above Account for the Fact That the Simple, the Poor, and the Humble of This World Understand and Appreciate the Gospel More Than the Wise, the Rich, and the Powerful.** Very few of the latter recognize their need and consequently do not will to know of the teaching of Christ. Jesus thanks the Father that He had hidden these saving truths from the wise and the understanding but revealed them unto babes. (Matt. 11:25.) Paul suggests the same when he said not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. (1 Cor. 1:26,27.) In the wisdom of God it seemed good to form a plan of salvation which would appeal to and be understood by the weak and simple rather than the wise and wealthy.

## II. A COMMENTARY ON JOHN 7:2, 10-24

### 1. Opinions of the People (John 7:2,10-13)

*The Feast of the Tabernacles was at hand.* The law required the Jews to spend seven days in this feast, but it is generally known that they added one, making it an eight-day feast. More burnt offerings were offered during this feast than either of the other two annual feasts. This feast was to the Jews something like Thanksgiving is to the Americans, since it came at the end of the harvest. It was also observed in commemoration of the goodness of God during the wilderness wanderings. God did not want His people to forget that He sheltered them through forty years of wandering. Hence, He had them to live in booths made from branches of trees one week in the year.

*When His brethren were gone to the feast.* These were the children of Joseph and Mary, despite the contentions of all Catholics and several Protestants. From verses 3 to 8 of this chapter, we learn that these brethren did not believe in Him at this time. There is no evidence that any of His brothers believed in Him until His resurrection and His appearance to James. (1 Cor. 15:7.)

*He went up as it were in secret.* The jealousy of the rulers was increasing with every public appearance of Jesus. He did not wish unnecessarily to excite their feelings of jealousy, nor did He wish to come to an open break with the Jews before the proper time. In verse 6 of this chapter He says, "My time is not yet come," and in verse 30 John explains why no man laid his hand on Him by saying, "because His hour was not yet come." So His secret arrival at Jerusalem was not because of any fear on His part.

*The Jews therefore sought Him.* By the term Jews we are to understand the leaders of the Jews, the scribes, Pharisees and Sanhedrin.

*There was murmuring among the multitudes.* Though Jesus did His work quietly and without any effort whatever to sell Himself to the people, He was in the minds and on the lips of all. The rulers were jealous and uneasy for fear He would supplant them in the eyes of the people. The people enjoyed His frank, forthright teaching which was not made tedious by the endless citation of authorities. They did not always agree with Him, but they listened to Him gladly.

*Some said, He is a good man.* As usual people were divided in their opinions about Jesus. These who said Jesus was a good man had no conception of His divinity. They may have thought Him to be a prophet, but it is not likely that they regarded Him as the Messiah.

*Not so, He leads the multitude astray.* Another portion denied His goodness because He led people astray. These obviously did not agree with His teaching. They still held to the teaching of their leaders, accepting their traditions with which Jesus differed so radically. It would be well for brethren to take notice of the fact that even these Jews considered one who would lead people astray from what they believed to be truth not to be a good man. We are inclined to think that men are good if they are honest and clean morally, but a teacher who leads people astray from the faith is not a good man regardless of His clean character.

*No man spoke openly of Him.* The word openly means boldly. His friends seemed not to have the courage to speak their sentiments at this feast because they were outnumbered by the enemies of Jesus.

## **2. Justification of His Teaching (John 7:14-18)**

*It was now the midst of the feast.* From verses 8 and 9 in this chapter we conclude that Jesus did not reach Jerusalem in time for the first days of the feast. Adam Clarke suggests that the first few days of the feast were taken up with observing Jewish traditions so that Jesus felt it not necessary for Him to be there. As was His custom, He used His time in teaching the people. It is remarkable that Jesus accomplished so much in so short a time and there is not a case on record of a man utilizing his time as profitably as did Jesus.

*How knows this man letters, having never learned?* The Jews were surprised at the knowledge of Jesus. The expression “*to know letters*” does not mean simply the alphabet, but to be versed in their writings. They could not understand how He could be so well versed in the scriptures and their traditions since He had never attended any of their recognized schools. Jesus learned the scriptures as any other young man would learn them. His full knowledge of them is a tribute to His untiring efforts to lay up the word of God in His heart.

*My teaching is not Mine.* Jesus does not claim originality, though being on equality with God He might very well have done so. However, he recognizes the Father as being the source of His teaching and Himself as the ambassador of the Father to make known the Father’s will. In this statement we have proof of a distinction between the Father and the Son. Those who hold to the “Jesus only” theory are unable to explain how Jesus could say the teaching is not Mine but the Father’s who sent

Me. Jesus indicates that (a) the Father gave Him the teaching, (b) the Father sent Him. If there is absolutely no distinction to be made between Jesus and the Father, it would be impossible for Him to say, without practicing deceit, that the Father gave Him the teaching or that the Father sent Him. The saying that the teaching which Jesus gave belongs to the Father emphasizes its importance and the necessity of our obedience to it. If we reject the teaching which He gave, we not only reject Him but we reject the Father who sent Him. (Luke 10:17)

*If any man wills to do His will.* Before an individual obeys any part of the gospel, he must have a proper disposition of heart. We usually say that faith is the first step toward salvation. But the disposition of heart which wills to do the will of God also wills to believe in Jesus as God's Son. The stubborn, rebellious soul can never become a believer. Jesus says that the individual who has this willing disposition will be able to know whether His teaching is from God or from a mere human source.

*He that speaks from himself seeks his own glory.* Jesus intimates that He is not seeking glory for Himself since He does not teach doctrine which originates with Him, but He is seeking the glory of God because He teaches the gospel which originated with the Father.

*The same is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.* Here Jesus makes a claim of sinlessness. His primary thought, however, is that His teaching is true, that He has told only that which the Father gave Him to teach. The word unrighteousness may have the limited meaning of falsehood in this place, and indicates that Jesus is simply saying that He has been faithful in the delivery of the message His Father gave Him, and there is no falsehood connected with it, that He is no impostor.

### **3. Justification of His Conduct (John 7:19-24)**

*Did not Moses give you the law?* The Jews were proud to admit that Moses gave the law. And they were so jealous of the law that they used to put to death everyone who refused to keep it. They charged Jesus with violating the law because He had healed a man on the Sabbath. (John 5:9,10.)

*Why seek you to kill Me?* The law which Moses gave forbade killing. Since they were accusing Jesus of breaking the law, He turns the accusation on them for violating the law which they professed to keep. It was as much a sin to kill as it was to break the Sabbath. This was not an admission on His part that He had broken the Sabbath, but it was answering them with their own argument.

*Who seeks to kill You?* There are two possible explanations of this reply. (a) Since they had taken no visible steps to kill Jesus, they could very well deny that He had correctly interpreted their intentions. (b) It is possible that the multitude made this statement and that they were ignorant of the designs of the rulers. Hence, they thought He had a demon, that He was deranged and not in control of His own mind since He made such unthinkable suggestions.

*Moses has given you circumcision.* Jesus qualified this statement about Moses giving them circumcision by saying that the rite was of the fathers. By this He means that circumcision among the Jews was older than the law of Moses. The covenant of circumcision was first given to Abraham. (Gen. 17.) Since it was incorporated into the law of Moses, it would be correct to say that Moses had given it.

*On the Sabbath you circumcise a man.* In this way Jesus justifies His conduct in the healing of the man on the Sabbath. His argument is that since the Jews circumcised on the eighth day in harmony with the law, even though the eighth day fell on the Sabbath and in spite of the fact that circumcision requires more work and activity than was required of Jesus in healing the man, they could not accuse Him of breaking the Sabbath by holding themselves guiltless. Jesus involved them in an inconsistency by showing that they would do more work on the Sabbath than He did, yet they would condemn Him for His work and justify themselves. But such has ever been the case of legalists; they can always find grounds for justification of their own actions and can as easily find ground for condemnation of the actions of others.

*Judge not according to appearance.* “Attend to the law, not merely in the letter, but in its spirit and design. Learn that the law which commands men to rest on the Sabbath day is subordinate to the law of mercy and love, which requires them to bring every activity to the promotion of God’s glory in the comfort and salvation of their fellow creatures; and endeavor to judge of the merit or demerit of an action, not from the first impression it may make upon your prejudices but from its tendency, and the motives of the person, as far as it is possible for you to acquaint yourself with them; still believing the best where you have no certain proof to the contrary.” (Adam Clarke.)

### **III. SOME APPLICATIONS**

1. Jesus was a man whom people cannot leave alone. People who were not actively for Him were actively against Him. So those who are not for Him today are against Him.
2. His own brothers had the best opportunity to know of His divine nature, but still they disbelieved. So many today who have unusual opportunities fail to use them for their best interests.
3. If we would remember that God does not judge according to appearance, we would not give so much time to our efforts to make a good appearance.

## QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 15

# JESUS AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

1. At what time of the year was the feast of tabernacles observed? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. By what other name is this feast known, and how long did it continue? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What was to be done once in seven years during this feast? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Tell of the observance of this feast in the time of Nehemiah? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What attitude of mind is essential to a correct understanding of the will of God? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What two things are necessary to a will to know the truth? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Who is capable of judging the source of the teaching of the Lord? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What is there in the truth which is adapted to the needs of the soul? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What class of people are usually attracted to the gospel? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What is said of the type of people in the church at Corinth? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. What type of offerings was most numerous in this feast? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. What was this feast to help the people remember? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. What do you know of the brothers of Jesus, and their attitude toward Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. Why did Jesus go to the feast in secret? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. What was the attitude of the rulers toward Jesus, and the common people? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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16. What reason did some give to prove that Jesus was not a good man? \_\_\_\_\_

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17. Why did Jesus not think it necessary for Him to go during the first part of the feast? \_\_\_\_\_

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18. At what were the Jews surprised? \_\_\_\_\_

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19. What did Jesus say of His teachings? \_\_\_\_\_

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20. What is emphasized by the idea that His teaching came from the Father? \_\_\_\_\_

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21. What is the first step necessary to salvation, an attitude, or an act of obedience? \_\_\_\_\_

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22. How did Jesus prove that He was not seeking His own glory? \_\_\_\_\_

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23. What unusual claim did Jesus make with regard to His life? \_\_\_\_\_

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24. According to Jesus, who gave the law? \_\_\_\_\_

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25. How were the Jews about to violate the law of Moses? \_\_\_\_\_

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26. What did the people think of Jesus when He charged that some were planning to kill Him? \_\_\_\_\_

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27. How did Jesus justify His conduct in healing on the Sabbath? \_\_\_\_\_

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28. What fault is common to legalists in religion? \_\_\_\_\_

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29. What lesson did Jesus teach on this occasion about judging? \_\_\_\_\_

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30. When is it right and when is it wrong to judge? \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON NUMBER 16

# JESUS TEACHES THE WAY OF FREEDOM

John 8:31-46

### INTRODUCTION

Since our lesson concerns freedom which comes through a knowledge of God, there are some things which need to be said on the subject for which a better place than the introduction cannot be found. Jesus said, *“And this is life eternal, that they should know You, the only true God, and Him whom You did send, even Jesus Christ.”* (John 17:3.) From this we conclude that freedom from sin comes from a knowledge of revealed truth, never through human philosophy. All the great moral truths which exercise a beneficent effect upon people have come through revelation. Knowledge of history and science is valuable, but such knowledge has no power to show us what is right and what is wrong, nor does it have any power to move us to do that which is right or restrain us from that which is wrong. In order to be specific, some divisions of this saving knowledge are here indicated. (1) Knowledge of the person and character of the Father. Jesus says that a knowledge of the Father and the Son is life eternal. But the world in its wisdom knew not God (1 Cor. 1:21); hence we must depend upon revelation for this knowledge. Some of the ancient philosophers concluded that there must be a Maker of the universe, but they knew nothing of the holiness or the goodness and love of this Creator. (2) The unity of God is a matter of revelation. There are three persons in the godhead, yet there is but one God. Humanity does not understand, nor is it capable of grasping the significance of this unity from revelation, and certainly could not have originated the idea. (3) The person of Christ and His relation to the Father are known only by revelation. *“No one knows the Son, save the Father; neither does any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son wills to reveal Him.”* (Matt. 11:27.) Jesus told Peter that flesh and blood had not revealed the truth of His person to him but the Father in heaven. (Matt. 16:17.) (4) The conditions of salvation are matters of revelation. Surely no philosopher or scientist could analyze sin and arrive at the conclusion that one may be saved from sin by doing that which Christ teaches as conditions of salvation.

### I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”* (John 8:32).

**1. You Shall Know the Truth.** This text very logically connects with that used in the introduction above. A knowledge of God and of His Son leads to eternal life. However, not all degrees of knowledge are capable of bringing this salvation. (a) There is a degree of knowledge which gives us a smattering idea of the material in hand, but it does not give us a clear, satisfactory view. (b) There is that degree of knowledge which satisfies the person, but it has not sufficient grasp of the material to explain it to others. When a student says he understands a problem, or knows the answer to a question, but cannot tell it to the teacher, we conclude that the student does not know the subject material. No one would expect such knowledge of God to have any saving influence on a person. (c) There is that degree of knowledge which gives one a clear understanding of the material in hand so that one may clearly and fully explain the matter to others. But the knowledge does not have any

effect on the life of the individual possessing it. He is not moved to live in harmony with it. This is not the knowledge which Jesus says is life eternal. Paul says such knowledge profits nothing. (1 Cor. 13:1,2.) (d) There is that degree of knowledge which not only enables an individual to impart the matters known to others, but it moves the individual to live in harmony with the knowledge possessed. This is the knowledge that saves.

There are two things necessary to the possession of such knowledge of saving truth. (a) There must be a revelation on God's part. As indicated above, the knowledge which saves is not such as comes from science and philosophy but from God. We have in Jesus the complete revelation of God. We should not confuse revelation as used here with inspiration. By revelation we mean the manifestation of God in the person of Christ, and by inspiration we mean the record which we have in the Bible of this revelation. (b) In order to have this saving knowledge, there must be study on our part. It matters not how clearly God has been revealed in Christ, nor how fully inspiration has preserved a record of that revelation, it will be of no benefit to one who is too lazy or indifferent to study. Salvation does not come to the ignorant and indifferent out in the cornfield or in the shop like a bolt of lightning. A saving knowledge of the truth comes to people who will do the will of God. (John 7:17.)

**2. Truth Makes Free.** Some regard the commandments of God as burdensome limitations. They are cramped by the "thou-shalt-nots"; hence they look upon Christianity, not as freedom, but as slavery. They fail to distinguish between freedom and license. They are seeking for some form of religion because they think it is the proper thing, or they are afraid to live and die without it; yet they do not want a form which will deny them their license to indulge in the lusts of the flesh and the pleasures of this world. A knowledge of the truth makes one free (a) from the practice of sin. It restrains our inclinations to do wrong and encourages us to do right. (b) It frees from the guilt of sin. By obeying the truth we meet the conditions upon which God has promised to forgive. (c) It frees from the penalty of sin. Jesus suffered in our place. Those who obey the truth are relieved of the necessity of suffering the penalty for their sins. (d) Truth makes us free from the presence of sin. One who learns and lives by the truth will be taken into the presence of God where there will be no sin. (Rev. 20:26,27.)

## II. A COMMENTARY ON JOHN 8:31-46

### 1. Freedom in the Way of Truth (John 8:31-37)

*Those Jews that had believed Him.* It will be noticed that in verse 30 John said these Jews "*believed on Him.*" Sometimes the word believe is used in the sense of an obedient faith as in John 3:16, Titus 1:6, and other passages, but obviously the expression here cannot be taken in that sense, for in verse 44 Jesus speaks of these very believers as children of the devil.

*If you abide in My word.* To abide in the word of Christ is to accept it without reservation and to follow it without questioning. Many people think they believe in the Lord who believe only so much of God's word as is verified by their moral conscience, or their sense of what is right and wrong, and either dispute or dispose of the rest of it by saying it is simply the ideas of the writers of the first century.

*Then are you truly My disciples.* Abiding in the truth is the badge of discipleship. One is inconsistent

to say that he is a disciple (learner) of Christ when he refuses to accept and abide by the teaching which Christ gives.

*You shall know the truth.* Jesus indicated to these believers that they had something more to learn of Him and that the knowledge that they were to learn would make them free from sin.

*We are Abraham's seed.* These Jews, though believers, caught the implication of bondage in the words of Jesus. They thought their connection with Abraham was sufficient to free them from sin. From this we learn that, though they believed, they were not yet free from sin and that they had to learn and obey the truth to be free from sin. This is sufficient to disprove the doctrine of salvation by faith only.

*Everyone that commits sin.* When they affirmed their freedom on account of being Abraham's children, Jesus taught them that every individual regardless of his ancestors who commits sin is a bond servant of sin.

*The bond servant abides not.* After teaching them that sin made them a bond servant, He then says that the bond servant does not abide in the master's house, but the son abides. Here is the distinction between those who are slaves and those who are sons. A slave might be sold or sent away at any time, but a son could not be so treated.

*If therefore the Son shall make you free.* Jesus pictures them as being in sin and Himself as a Redeemer from sin. He tells them that they can be made free from their sin only if they accept and abide in the truth as taught by Him. And if they are thus made free, it is freedom indeed, that is lasting freedom.

*I know that you are Abraham's seed.* Jesus now seeks to convince them that they are sinners in spite of their relationship to Abraham. He charges them with intent to murder and says that this is a sign that His teaching has not free course, or is not abiding in them.

## **2. Jesus Teaches About His Father (John 8:38-42)**

*I speak the things which I have seen with My Father.* Here is another confession on the part of Jesus as to the source of His teaching. He received it from the Father. (John 12:49,50.)

*You do the things which you heard from your father.* Notice the contrast between how Jesus received from His Father and how they had received from their father. Jesus had seen and they had simply heard. In this statement Jesus implies that His Father is not their father.

*They answered, our father is Abraham.* John the Baptist dealt with Jews of this type by saying. "Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." (Matt. 3:9.) Whether they understood that Jesus implied that Satan was their father we cannot know, but if they understood it they practised deception and intimated that they thought He was accusing them of not being children of Abraham.

*If you were Abraham's children.* Jesus says that they would do the works of Abraham if they were

actually the children of Abraham. He does not deny their physical descent from Abraham, but He denies that they have partaken of the nature of Abraham.

*But now you seek to kill me.* He charges them with intent to murder and later says, “*This did not Abraham.*” This is His proof that they were not the children of Abraham. Hence, we know that He did not have physical descent in mind.

*A man that has told you the truth.* This is an aggravation of their guilt. They were not seeking to kill an impostor or a blasphemer. They were not seeking to kill one who had enslaved them, or done them harm in any way. They were seeking to kill one who had told them the truth. On another occasion He said that the world hated Him because He testified that their works were evil. (John 7:7.) About the quickest way to cause the average worldly person to hate you is to tell him the truth about the way he lives.

*Which you heard from God.* This, too, is an aggravation of their guilt. They not only sought to kill Him because He told the truth, but a truth which came from God whom they proposed to love and honor. He had worked sufficient miracles to prove that His word was from God. (John 3:2)

*You do the works of your father.* Here again Jesus implies that their father is someone besides Abraham or God. But they deny being born of fornication and affirm that they have but one father, even God.

*If God were your father.* God’s children partake of God’s nature and such love Jesus who was only good and pure. Their lack of love for Him was undeniable proof that they were not sons of God. The fact that Jesus gave proof that He came from God and that He had taught the message God gave Him was enough to cause them to accept Him if they had been partakers of the nature of God.

### **3. Jesus Teaches About Satan (John 8:43-46)**

*Why do you not understand My speech?* The fact that Jesus expected them to understand is proof that men are capable of understanding His teaching. In verse 44 He tells them they were children of the devil, yet He expects them to understand His teaching. The theory that the alien sinner cannot understand until a direct operation from God enables him to understand is here shown to be false.

*Because you cannot hear My word.* These words have been taken as proof that the children of the devil are not capable of understanding spiritual things without a direct miraculous operation. The word hear in this passage is to be taken in the sense of bear or tolerate. It is so used in other passages as John 6:60. They were so determined in their opposition to Him, and so prejudiced against His message that they refused to give His words respectful hearing. These stand in contrast with the man described by Jesus when He said, “*If any man wills to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself.*” (John 7:17.) There are some who will to know the will of God and some who will not to know it. These Jews, though they believed many of the things Jesus taught, refused to accept His teaching as their rule of life and to walk in the light of it.

*You are of your father, the devil.* Jesus lays aside all implications and makes a positive assertion

which none of them can misunderstand. By this He means that they have the temper and disposition of the devil. They were imitating the devil in their opposition to Christ and hence betraying their relationship to Him.

*He was a murderer from the beginning.* In bringing about the fall of Adam and Eve, which culminated in their death, Satan became a murderer. He not only caused physical death, but he is the cause of all spiritual death and hence a murderer from that point of view. The word beginning here surely refers to his seduction of Adam and Eve at the beginning of the human race.

*When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own.* Jesus had just said that there is no truth in Satan. His whole nature and work are to deceive. Lying originated with Satan. Jesus says that he is the father of lies. All truth, moral and spiritual, originates with God; all falsehood, moral and spiritual, originates with Satan. Sometimes false doctrines are called traditions of men (Matt. 15: 9), but they are traditions of men in the same sense that the truth is the doctrine of the apostles. (Acts 2:42.) Men do not originate false doctrines; they only propagate them.

*Which of you convicts Me of sin?* Though the word sin may here have the limited application of falsehood with reference to the things that He had taught on this occasion, as Barnes affirms with Calvin and others, yet “there is no need to limit its reference; and in the unanswered query, while we cannot say that by itself this passage is sufficient to demonstrate the sinlessness of Christ, it reveals a sublime depth in His translucent consciousness, that places Him, unless He were the most deluded or self-sufficient of teachers -- on different position from that of all other divine messengers.” (Pulpit Commentary.)

Jesus concludes by saying, “*If I say truth, why do you not believe Me?*” They could not convict Him of error, yet they refused to accept His teaching.

### **III. SOME APPLICATIONS**

1. The service of sin is the most cruel unrelenting service man ever performs. Yes, there are pleasures--fleeting pleasures, but they lead to sorrow and death.
2. Jesus gave this lesson to people who believed on Him. (Verse 30.) Though they believed on Him, they were still children of the devil. Hence we conclude that “faith only” is not sufficient.
3. Satan is the father, source, of all that is false. Hence all false religious teaching has its source in him. For this reason Paul calls false doctrines the “doctrines of demons.”

**QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 16**

**JESUS TEACHES THE WAY OF FREEDOM**

1. Freedom from sin comes from what? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Contrast a knowledge of revealed truth with a knowledge of the sciences and Arts. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Give and discuss four divisions of saving knowledge suggested by our lesson. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Give and illustrate four degrees of knowledge. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What two things are necessary to the possession of such a saving knowledge? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How much time per week should one spend in such study, and do you? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Distinguish between freedom and license. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. A knowledge of truth makes us free in what four respects? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Is the word "believe" ever used to mean a mere mental assent? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Can you give instances of its use when it means more than mental assent? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. On what condition are we truly the disciples of Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

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12. On what did the Jews rely to save them from sin? \_\_\_\_\_

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13. How does Jesus define, or identify, the sinner? \_\_\_\_\_

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14. How did Jesus prove that the Jews were unlike Abraham? \_\_\_\_\_

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15. What did Jesus claim to speak in His teaching? \_\_\_\_\_

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16. What did He accuse the Jews of doing? \_\_\_\_\_

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17. What implication as to their relationship with Satan was in this statement? \_\_\_\_\_

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18. What served to aggravate the guilt of the Jews? \_\_\_\_\_

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19. What did Jesus say they would do if God were their Father? \_\_\_\_\_

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20. What proof do we have that men are capable of understanding the teaching of Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

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21. What is the meaning of the statement of Jesus that the people "cannot hear" His words? \_\_\_\_\_

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22. Can the devil be the father of believers? \_\_\_\_\_

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23. What is the relationship between Satan and murder? \_\_\_\_\_

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24. What is his relationship to falsehood? \_\_\_\_\_

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25. Who is the source of truth? \_\_\_\_\_

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26. Who is the source of falsehood? \_\_\_\_\_

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27. In what sense is a false doctrine the teaching of man? \_\_\_\_\_

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28. What challenge did Jesus give the Jews, and why did they not accept it? \_\_\_\_\_

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## LESSON NUMBER 17

# THE SEVENTY SENT FORTH

Lk 10:1-12

### INTRODUCTION

The sending forth of the seventy preachers was no doubt for the same general purpose as the sending of the twelve disciples on another occasion. Matthew gives us a better background of the reasons which moved our Lord to send additional workers. He says, *“Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd.”* (Matt.9:35,36) (1) Let us notice first the view which Jesus got of the people. It is said that He saw them as sheep distressed and scattered and not having a shepherd. We would expect Jesus to take such a view of the people since He said, *“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. . . . I am the good shepherd; and I know My own, and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.”* (John 10:11-14.) (2) Notice also how the condition of the people affected our Lord. We are told that He was *“moved with compassion for them.”* As the shepherd would have a feeling of pity for his wandering, wounded sheep so our Lord was moved with compassion for His people whose hireling shepherds had not given them the teaching and the protection which they needed and who had allowed them to be wounded by false teachers. (3) We are impressed with what Jesus did for them. He not only felt compassion for them, but He was moved to do something. People who have a feeling which does not move them to do something practical have no right to compare their feeling with that which characterized our Lord. In Mark’s report of this he adds that Jesus *“began to teach them many things.”* (Mark 6:34.) From this we conclude that proper teaching is the work of the true shepherd and that it is calculated to cure their distressed and scattered condition. Such is implied in Matthew’s account, for he says that when Jesus saw His people in this condition He told His disciples to pray that the Lord of the harvest would send forth laborers or teachers into the harvest.

### I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*“Then He said to them, ‘The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’”* (Lk 10:2).

**1. The Harvest Is Plenteous.** When Jesus looked out over Palestine and saw the people distressed and scattered and was moved to say the harvest is plenteous, surely today when we take a view of the whole world with its teeming millions of souls who have never heard of God, we should be impressed with the same thought. Truly the harvest is plenteous. Great portions of the earth, containing a vast portion of humanity, are untouched by teachers who carry the simple gospel. The great commission says for us to go unto all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, but in spite of this the majority of the people on earth today have never heard the gospel of Christ as preached by the apostles. Nor is it necessary that we confine ourselves to lands across the sea to find

this condition. In our own hemisphere there are millions of people who have never heard the gospel story. Central America, with its nearly ten million souls, and South America with many more are practically untouched by gospel workers. Nor do we have to get out of our own nation to find such conditions. There are whole states in our nation where the gospel in its purity is not preached with any regularity.

**2. The Laborers Are Few.** Jesus had less than one hundred teachers He could send out to give His message to the lost people of the house of Israel; a small number compared to the need of the field. What must He think today when He views not Palestine, but the world, as the field, and not very many more than He had in that day to depend upon to preach to the nations of the world. It is true that we have more preachers on foreign soil today than at any time since the days of the apostles. We have much to be thankful for and much to be encouraged about in our foreign evangelization program. Yet when we think of the immense amount of work that needs to be done and by comparison the infinitely small amount that is being done, we should be impressed anew with the truth of our Lord's statement that the laborers are few. We might also say that the laborers are few compared with the amount of laborers we could have in the field. Our workers in foreign fields are not few because we have no more available, but because we have no more who are willing to make the sacrifice of home and comfort and pleasures to give themselves to a life of hardships, and/ or churches willing to sacrifice financially to support men in these fields. We need more people who could say at least to some degree with Paul, "*I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake.*" (Rom. 9:2,3.) We need people who realize with Paul that they are "*debtors both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel.*" (Rom. 1:14,15.)

**3. Pray for Laborers.** When Jesus saw this condition in His day, His remedy was twofold: (a) He began to teach; (b) He told His disciples to pray for more workers. If each one who belongs to the Lord will do his part teaching and will pray for more workers who will do the same, the laborers will be plentiful enough to take care of the harvest.

## II. A COMMENTARY ON LUKE 10:1-12

### 1. Appointment of Laborers (Luke 10:1,2)

*After these things.* Reference is here made to the events immediately preceding and these include the sending out of the twelve apostles on a mission similar to that of the seventy. It also includes the record of a number of men volunteering to be the disciples of Christ, but who had matters of an earthly sort standing in their way. One would be His disciple after he had buried his father. Another would be His disciple after he had said farewell to his family. To all of these Jesus gave the idea that they must be willing to sacrifice these worldly connections and give themselves wholly to His work.

*The Lord appointed seventy others.* Why seventy, no less and no more, were appointed we have no means of knowing. Some suggest that the twelve apostles are parallel to the twelve patriarchs of the old covenant and the seventy were appointed to parallel with the seventy whom Moses appointed to aid him in judging the people. Clarke goes so far as to say that it was in harmony with the divine pattern for the church of the Old Testament and the church of the New Testament to have Similar

organization. But he forgot, or did not know, that the appointment of these seventy preachers was not part of the church and no mention is made of them after the establishment of the church.

*Sent them two by two.* Our Lord gives no reason for sending them in pairs, but it is easy to see the wisdom of doing so. They would be comfort and support to each other in times of danger and difficulty. Two will have more than twice the influence of one in a community, and men are not as liable to temptation to sin when they have a co-laborer along as when they are alone. We are finding it wise to send evangelists to foreign countries not merely in pairs, but in groups. The apostle Paul worked with the help of groups of co-workers at times and he nearly always had at least one or two with him. This is an apostolic example of how preaching in foreign fields should be done. Perhaps we think that we can improve upon God's pattern by working by ourselves but there is a beneficial result to be obtained from doing it according to the apostolic pattern and on this ground it should be encouraged.

*When He was about to come.* Jesus sent these seventy preachers into districts where He was planning to go personally, hence their work was largely that of preparing the field for His coming. They were to teach, create an interest in the minds of the people and a desire to hear the Master of these teachers. While this text was not given primarily to teach this lesson, yet it does suggest a very wholesome thought. Jesus does not go today into any village, state, or nation His teachers have not gone. If we wish Jesus to live in and influence for good a nation, we as His teachers must go before Him and create in the hearts of people an interest in Him and a desire for Him.

*The harvest indeed is plenteous.* This verse has been discussed as in the key scripture, but it remains here to say that Jesus sent His workers into a field which was ready for harvest, and He sent them because of the readiness of the field. Surely the field of Palestine was no more ready unto harvest than is the world today. Though He does not speak to us personally in audible tones, yet in His word He appeals for workers to go. If one of the seventy had said, "I don't have time," or "the sacrifice is too great," we would all agree that he would have merited the disapproval of His Master. No less today do we merit the Master's disapproval when we fail to accept our responsibility for carrying the truth to others.

## **2. Instructions to Laborers (Luke 10:3-9)**

*Go Your ways.* In these words Jesus sends His disciples as lambs among wolves. Theirs was not an easy task; they were not going among friends and well-wishers. They were being sent on a dangerous mission, and among people who might not receive them.

*Carry no purse, no wallet, no shoes.* The word purse here is from a Greek word which means girdle. We are told that the girdle was made sometimes of crude leather or camel's hair, but often of much finer material as silk, and that it was made in such a way as to carry money in the folds. The wallet, called scrip in the Authorized Version, is from a different Greek word and means a bag such as shepherds carry and was sometimes of considerable size. Various societies through the ages have taken this as a demand that preachers go without any financial provision whatever. It certainly meant that these disciples were to make no unusual financial preparation for their journey, but even that is not to be accepted as a law in the church, which was not established until later. The apostle Paul referring to the remuneration of evangelists or preachers says, "*Even so the Lord has commanded*

*that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.*” (1 Cor 9:14). The word for shoes in this verse is a Greek word which denoted a heavy shoe, used on long journeys. Mark says that Jesus told His workers on such trips to be shod with sandals. (Mark 6:8.) The sense of this whole verse seems to be that their journey was to be short and hurried.

*Salute no man on the way.* The eastern form of salutation was often long and tedious and if a traveller met many people during the day, much of his time was consumed in formal salutations. Jesus did not mean for His workers to be impolite, but dressed as carrier of news on an important and hurried mission, there would be no impropriety in passing the traveler without the long formal salutation.

*Peace be to this house.* They were to enter the first house in a community which returned their peace. They were not to go from house to house. This expression of peace was simply an expression of their good will and best wishes; it was their formal salutation.

*If a son of peace be there.* The term son of peace means one who is disposed to be peaceful, or who returns an agreeable salutation to the visitor. It simply means that he accepts the visitor and is willing to show him the common courtesies.

*Your peace shall rest upon him.* If the owner of the house was disposed to receive the visitors, the visitors’ salutation rested upon him or was simply accepted by him. But if the man of the house was not disposed to receive the visitors, the visitors’ expressions of peace would turn to him, or would not be allowed to remain upon the house.

*Go not from house to house.* This instruction was necessary on account of oriental customs. “A failure in the due observance of this system of hospitality is violently resented, and often leads to alienations and feuds among neighbors; it also consumes much time, causing unusual distraction of mind, leading to levity and in every way counteracting the success of a spiritual mission.” (Barnes.)

*Eat such things as are set before you.* This practical instruction might very well be taken to heart by some preachers among us. Preachers being entertained in homes of brethren while they do the preaching in a gospel meeting are out of place when they criticize the cooks and the keepers of their quarters. If conditions are unbearable, they might be justified in a move to better quarters, but no one is ever justified in criticizing others when he is a guest in their homes.

*Heal the sick that are therein.* The healing of the sick had a twofold purpose: (1) to confirm the word preached. They could not prove their message by giving book, chapter, and verse. They proved it by the working of miracles. (2) It was a service calculated to soften and open the hearts of the people to their message. The church today that fails to serve will find the majority of hearts closed against its message.

*The kingdom of God is come nigh.* This was their message. It was a soul-stirring message to the Jew. Long had they loathed the tyranny of Rome. Great was their expectation of delivery by the Messiah. When these preachers said the kingdom of God is come, it meant that the Messiah was coming to establish a kingdom which would deliver them from their oppressors. Their idea of the kingdom was material when they should have had a spiritual conception of it. Our hearts should be stirred even more today than were theirs, since our conception of the kingdom means a spiritual delivery from sin.

### **3. Punishment for Rejection of Laborers (Luke 10:10-12)**

*The dust from your city.* Jesus told His disciples that if they entered into a city which would not receive them, they were to go out into the streets where they would be in plain view of all, and shake off the dust from their feet. The dust of all heathen countries was considered impure and was defiling to a Jew. And any Jewish city which refused to accept the messengers of Jesus was to be treated as a heathen city. Even the dust of their streets was considered polluted because of this rejection. These men were the messengers of the Messiah and as such deserved to be accepted and treated in keeping with the dignity of their mission. Those who fail to accept them as such were to experience the wrath of the Messiah.

*Nevertheless know this, the kingdom of God is come.* So important was their message that they were to deliver it in spite of their rejection by the people of the city, but it became a message of doom rather than a message of promise. So the gospel today may be a savor from life unto life or from death unto death. (2 Cor. 2:16.)

*It shall be more tolerable in that day of Sodom.* That we might appreciate the seriousness of rejecting the messenger of the Lord, Jesus says that the people who reject His messenger will fare worse in the day of judgment than the people of Sodom. Jude tells us that Sodom is an example to us that the wicked will suffer the punishment of eternal fire (Jude 7), so we may see how serious it is for people to reject the messengers of the Lord.

### **III. SOME APPLICATIONS**

1. Jesus saw a connection between prayer and sufficient number of laborers to take care of the harvest. We do not know the full potential of the power of prayer, but we do know that people who pray earnestly and sincerely are most likely to do something to see their prayers answered. Hence, if we leave out the power of prayer at the throne of grace and consider only its effect upon the one who prays, it is still worth while to pray that laborers be sent into the harvest.

2. There has been opposition to the program of service which some of our evangelists have carried on in foreign countries. Jesus equipped His teachers to serve and gave them the instructions to serve in the communities where they went. He Himself realized the value of service for He “*began both to do and to teach.*” (Acts 1:1.) Those who follow His example of serving that they may have the opportunity to teach will most likely succeed.

## QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 17

# THE SEVENTY SENT FORTH

1. How did Jesus view the people of His time? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What effect did the condition of the people have on Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What did Jesus begin to do for the people? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What does this suggest with reference to the importance of our teaching program? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. What is meant by the great harvest of our text? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What impression do you have of the greatness of the harvest today? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. How did the number of laborers compare with the harvest then, and now? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. How does the evangelists on foreign fields compare with time past? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. Do we have the ability to help them, and how? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Are there a great number of men who are willing to go do work for the Lord in other fields? \_\_\_\_\_

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11. How did Jesus propose to increase the number of laborers in the field? \_\_\_\_\_

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12. What did Jesus teach people who would be His followers and laborers? \_\_\_\_\_

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13. How many laborers did Jesus appoint and send out? \_\_\_\_\_

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14. Why did Jesus send His workers out two by two? \_\_\_\_\_

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15. Why did Jesus send these men where He wanted to go later? \_\_\_\_\_

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16. What instruction did Jesus give them about temporal necessities? \_\_\_\_\_

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17. What do you know of Eastern customs of salutation? \_\_\_\_\_

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18. What is meant by son of peace? \_\_\_\_\_

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19. What is meant by peace resting upon a house? \_\_\_\_\_

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20. What did Jesus say for them to do about a place to stay when in a city? \_\_\_\_\_

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21. What services did He tell these preachers to render the people? \_\_\_\_\_

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22. What message did He give them to deliver to the people? \_\_\_\_\_

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23. How do you think this message stirred the hearts of faithful Jews? \_\_\_\_\_

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24. How did the Jews consider the dust of heathen countries? \_\_\_\_\_

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25. What is meant by shaking off the dust of a city? \_\_\_\_\_

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26. Were they to deliver their message to a city which rejected them? \_\_\_\_\_

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27. What did Jesus say of the punishment of the city which rejected His message? \_\_\_\_\_

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28. What wicked city is used as an example to teach us of this punishment? \_\_\_\_\_

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## LESSON NUMBER 18

# THE LOST SHEEP AND THE LOST COIN

Lk 15:1-10

### INTRODUCTION

Since our lesson deals with sheep and shepherd, and the key scripture presents Jesus as coming and seeking that which was lost, it seems in place to say something of shepherds by way of the introduction. Abraham and his descendants were shepherds. Regardless of man's wealth, the work of the shepherd was not beneath his dignity. It is said that the Egyptian captivity did much to implant a love of settled abode in the people of Israel, and that the increase of agricultural activities in Palestine decreased pasture and changed the work of many from that of shepherds to farmers and husbandmen of vineyards. On account of this change, the position of the shepherd became a rather humble one. Amos seems to speak of the position of a herdsman as a lowly position as compared to that of the prophet and the ruler. (Amos 7:14,15.) However, in the poetical portions of the Bible the shepherd's life and position became the ideal as in the pastoral poetry of several other nations. David speaks of Jehovah as his shepherd, leading him into green pastures and beside the still waters. (Psalm 23.) Isaiah says, "*He will feed His flock like a shepherd, He will gather the lambs in His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and will gently lead those that have their young.*" (Isa. 40:11.)

The one outstanding characteristic of the shepherd is his faithfulness in feeding and protecting the flock. It was the duty of the shepherd to protect his flock with his life, and Jesus said that only the hireling will flee when danger comes to his sheep. The good shepherd will lay down his life for his sheep. (John 10:11-15) The hard conditions under which shepherds served in Palestine, the heat and cold, the rugged country infested with wild beasts, and the barren wastes over which they led their sheep to pasture, serve to emphasize the faithfulness and steadfastness with which the Judean shepherds served their flocks. When Jesus pictures Himself as a shepherd, He emphasizes His humility, His faithfulness, and His willingness to suffer for those whom He came to serve.

### I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*"For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."* (Lk 19:10).

**1. That Which Was Lost.** Since Jesus came to seek and save the lost, let us see the condition of that which was lost. (a) Lost from God. To be lost from God means to be separated from His fellowship and communion, from His guidance and protection. All efforts to picture the sad condition of the lost soul will fall short of its aim. It is impossible for us to realize fully the terrible consequences of being lost or separated from God. (b) Lost in sin. This is but another way of saying that one is lost from God, for all who are separated from God are in sin; there is no middle ground. One is either in fellowship with God or with the devil. All those who are in sin are in fellowship with Satan and own him as their lord and master. With him they are associated in rebellion against God, the ultimate consequence of which is to suffer his punishment for disobedience and rebellion against God. (c) Lost from usefulness to God and man. No one can live in sin and live a useful life. Since sin means rebellion against God, one in sin cannot be useful to God. The sinner is also in no position to be useful

to humanity. He may serve humanity in temporal ways to some advantage, but viewed as a whole his life is far more detrimental than useful. (d) Lost as to hope for eternity. A lack of hope for life after death of the body is a part of the sinner's condition. There is no such thing as living in sin and entertaining a hope of happiness hereafter. The wages of sin is death. (Rom.6:23.)

**2. Seeking the Lost.** (a) Our text says Jesus came to seek the lost. Since Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, we have the unusual picture of God seeking man. We hear a lot about man seeking God, and certainly man's primary purpose in life is to seek God and to find Him (Acts 17:27), but here we have the unusual thing in God seeking man. (b) In God seeking after man we have an indication of the value of man in God's sight. Man's value is not the primary reason for God seeking man, but it is not out of place to call attention to the evaluation of man as demonstrated in His seeking for him. If God considers man worth seeking for, every evangelist and every evangelistic effort will seem justified, since they are doing only that which God has done, seeking to save that which is lost. (c) God seeking the lost is a demonstration of the love which God had for man. Heaven could not better demonstrate its love for the lost than by sending the only begotten Son of God.

**3. Saving the Lost.** The object of seeking was to save. (a) Saving the lost means bringing back to God. Man had wandered as a sheep from its shepherd. He must be reconciled, brought back into harmony and fellowship with God. (b) Saving the lost means delivering from sin. Sin is a hard master which destroys all its servants. Jesus came to seek and to save from destruction those held in the grasp of sin. (c) Saving the lost means restoring man's usefulness. The sinner is in no position to serve either God or man, but when the sinner is saved by grace, he is made a vessel unto honor, fit for the Master's use in serving and saving. (2 Tim. 2:20,21.)

## II. A COMMENTARY ON LUKE 15:1-10

### 1. The Jews Criticize Jesus (Luke 15:1,2)

*Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near.* Publicans were servants of Rome for the purpose of collecting taxes. Since the Jews despised the Romans, and had strong feelings of resentment about paying their taxes to a foreign power, they hated all who were connected with the system. When a Jew became a tax gatherer, he was looked upon as having betrayed his people. The system of taxation was so corrupt that there was some ground for the attitude of the Jews toward them.

When Jesus showed sympathy for them, His enemies immediately classified Him with them. The word sinners in this passage refers both to Gentiles and the outcasts among the Jews. Paul says, "*We being Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles.*" (Gal 2:15.)

*The Pharisees and scribes murmured.* The upper class of the Jews looked upon the publicans and sinners as hopelessly lost; no effort was made to reform them or to better their condition socially.

*This man receives sinners.* This statement was calculated to stir up prejudice against Jesus. It seemed not to occur to these Pharisees that a good man could have a good motive in associating with these outcasts. Hence, when they saw Jesus associating with them they simply classed Him on a social plane with them.

*And eats with them.* The Pharisees might have overlooked Jesus' world of teaching among the outcasts, but they would not excuse His freedom in eating with them. Jesus did not violate any rule of religion or good morals by eating with these outcasts. It would be a mistake to say that He made them His bosom friends and associates. It has sometimes been said that if Jesus were on earth today He would not associate with the leaders of the church, but with the outcasts of our community. This statement is a misrepresentation of Jesus. It would be unfair to say that He found His bosom friends among the outcasts of His day. Lazarus and his sisters, the apostles, and the seventy disciples were not outcasts. But it would also be a mistake to say that Jesus would completely ignore the outcasts of our great cities, those who live in the slums and on the edge of the city dump. Churches who never make any effort to better the social, moral and religious conditions of these unfortunate people are not like Jesus. One distinguishing mark of the Messiah was that He preached the gospel to the poor. (Matt. 11:5.) It is still a distinguishing mark of the disciples of Jesus that they are interested in the poor and are seeking to better their conditions. If it becomes necessary for us to eat with them or to have them in our homes to eat with us in order to reach them with the gospel, we should be willing to associate with them in this way even though it might mean the loss of our social standing in the community. Jesus not only lost His social standing, but He lost His life that He might save such people. Why should we be unwilling to lose our social standing in order that we may reach them with the gospel?

## **2. The Lost Sheep (Luke 15:3-7)**

*What man of you having a hundred sheep.* Jesus appealed to these Pharisees with the most touching appeal and the one most likely to obtain His objective. They could appreciate the interest of the shepherd in the sheep that was lost. They could appreciate the idea of recovering the value represented in a lost sheep. This parable has several objectives. (1) Perhaps the first idea that strikes us is the fact that Jesus was justifying His course of action on this occasion. He had eaten with publicans and sinner. He was severely criticized by the leaders of the Jews for doing so. He now justifies Himself by picturing Himself as the shepherd and the publican and sinner as the sheep. The shepherd would not only be justified in going after that which is lost, but he would be severely criticized for not doing so. On another occasion Jesus represented Himself as the physician and the publican and sinner the sick who needed the physician. (Matt. 9:12.) (2) Jesus spoke this parable to teach the love of God for the lost. He pictures Himself as the shepherd going after the lost sheep and since He claimed to be the Son of God, we have His indication of the depth of the love of God for the sinner.

*Having lost one of them.* This is perhaps intended to indicate the value which God attaches to the lost soul. The shepherd leaves ninety and nine to go out after the one that is lost. We must not push the comparison so far as to teach that only one in a hundred of the world's population needs saving, but rather to indicate the value of the lost. But even though there might be but one out of a hundred, the effort to save that one is justified. If that be true, how much more that multiplies our guilt in allowing the ninety and nine lost to go unsaved while we entertain the saved one.

*Go after that which is lost until he find it.* In these words we have a suggestion of the diligence and the persistence of the Lord in His efforts to save the lost. We should profit by His example. We sometimes go to a community and spend ten days in what we are pleased to call a gospel meeting. We advertize our work in the community and invite all to come. We preach to the few who respond

to our invitation. We move out of the community until time for another meeting next year. We have shown very little interest, diligence, or persistence in our efforts to save the lost. If Jesus had done no more to save the lost, it is rather certain that none of us would be among the number saved.

*Lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.* This indicates something of the value of the sheep and the interest which the shepherd had in them. Jesus represented Himself as finding great joy in saving even the outcasts of His day. If we could look upon personal work as a joyful experience rather than as an endless duty which we must perform, no doubt we would engage in it more often.

*Calls together his friends and neighbor.* This serves to emphasize the joy of the shepherd over finding his sheep. It further suggests his wish to share his joy with others. It is implied that his neighbors responded to his invitation to share with him his good fortune. If we could be sincere as this shepherd is pictured in saving the lost, and if we wish to share our joy with our neighbors, and if they were of the disposition to enjoy our good fortune, there is no doubt that the program of saving the lost would have a greater place in our lives. Perhaps the apostle Paul came nearer perfection in this respect than anyone else. He often speaks of his joy and satisfaction in his mission work and speaks of his converts as his joy and his crown in the Lord. Everyone of us should make a sincere effort to cultivate an interest in the lost, a joy in saving the lost and a willingness to share our joys with others that we may move them to greater efforts in saving the lost.

*Joy in heaven over one sinner that repents.* This again is an effort on the part of Jesus to justify His work among the outcasts. If heaven rejoices when one of them repents, He is justified in losing His social standing in order to save one of them. There is also an implied rebuke to the Pharisees; they were murmuring because Jesus gave attention to these outcasts. This was an ugly contrast with the attitude of heavenly beings. They rejoiced when Jesus went among these outcasts to save one of them. Why was there joy in heaven over one penitent outcast? (1) Because that which is the offspring of God has returned to its Father. Though the sinner is in one sense a child of the devil, there is another sense in which he is at the same time the offspring of God and belongs to God. The ownership of Satan is usurped and illegal. The soul has returned to its rightful owner. (2) There is joy in heaven over the returning sinner because the suffering of Christ has not been in vain. One more for whom Christ died has been brought back to safety and to purity. Angels in heaven rejoice because they see the fruit of their own labors, for they are sent forth to do service for them who shall be heirs of salvation. (Heb. 1:14.)

### **3. The Lost Coin (Luke 15:8-10)**

*What woman having ten pieces.* In the parable of the lost sheep, it was the lost sheep that was in danger, that was suffering, but in the parable of the lost coin it is the woman that is suffering the loss. Being one in ten, her loss is emphasized. From this we gather that there is a real loss on the part of God when a soul goes away from Him.

*Seek diligently until she find it.* Jesus represents the woman as lighting a lamp and sweeping the house in her diligent search for the coin. So again, the diligence of God in the interest of heaven in that which is lost. There is another line of study suggested in these parables which has not been mentioned. In the parable of the lost sheep, there is an indication of how people are lost. As the sheep had his head down to the ground looking for a sprig of grass to satisfy his hunger and wandered away

unconsciously until he was lost from the shepherd and the flock, so men today in their lust for wealth and pleasure with their heads down to the material things of life are wandering away from God and the church. In the parable of the lost coin, the coin was lost because when dropped it followed the path of least resistance. So people today leave God because they follow the path of least resistance. It is easier to follow the ways of the world than it is to deny ourselves these worldly things and take up the cross to follow Jesus.

### **III. SOME APPLICATIONS**

1. The interest heaven has in a lost race is incomprehensible. The efforts God has put forth to save humanity from sin cannot be understood. We can only wonder, love, and adore Him for His immeasurable love and power.
2. When man sinned against God. God did not withdraw and leave man alone in his sin. God came seeking and wooing man to save him. In this is a wonderful example to show us how to treat people who sin against us.
3. If the church should imitate the angels in their interest in saving the lost, there would be more activity, sacrifice, and self-denial in the church than we have ever seen before.

## QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 18

# THE LOST SHEEP AND THE LOST COIN

1. How was the work of a shepherd regarded in the time of Abraham, and Amos? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. How are the shepherd's life and work pictured in the poetic books of the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What is the outstanding characteristic of a shepherd? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What characteristic does Jesus emphasize when He refers to Himself as a shepherd? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Whom did Jesus come to seek and save? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What four things are mentioned to describe the lost condition of a sinner? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. What unusual thing do we have suggested by Jesus seeking the lost? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. What does this seeking indicate as to the value of man? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. What does this imply as to God's attitude toward lost man? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. What three lessons are implied in saving the lost? \_\_\_\_\_

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11. Why did the Jews criticize Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

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12. What do you know of publicans and their work? \_\_\_\_\_

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13. What action of Jesus was most objectionable to the Jews? \_\_\_\_\_

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14. Did Jesus violate any rule of morals or religion to eat with the publican? \_\_\_\_\_

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15. Does eating with them prove that He made them His bosom companions? \_\_\_\_\_

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16. What should be our attitude toward the poor and outcasts from our society? \_\_\_\_\_

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17. What is the primary lesson in the parable of the lost sheep? \_\_\_\_\_

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18. How does God indicate His estimate of the value of one lost soul? \_\_\_\_\_

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19. How do we sometimes show our lack of proper valuation of the lost? \_\_\_\_\_

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20. What is said of the joy in heaven over the saving of a soul? \_\_\_\_\_

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21. Is seeking the lost the duty of the preacher only? \_\_\_\_\_

22. How many hours a week would you say that you devote to seeking and saving the lost? \_\_\_\_\_

23. What can we do to increase the interest and activity of each one of us along this line? \_\_\_\_\_

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24. In what respect does the parable of the lost coin differ from the parable of the lost sheep? \_\_\_\_\_

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25. How is the lesson of diligence suggested in this parable? \_\_\_\_\_

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26. What is suggested in the parable of the lost sheep as to how people are lost? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

27. What is suggested in the parable of the lost coin as to how people are lost? \_\_\_\_\_

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## LESSON NUMBER 19

# PARABLES ON PRAYER

Lk 18:1-14

### INTRODUCTION

By way of introduction we will study some conditions of acceptable prayer. (1) Since no man can come unto the Father but by Jesus (John 14:6), and since Jesus is high priest over the house of God (Heb. 10:21), it follows that those outside the house of God do not have Jesus as their high priest through whom they may approach God. There are but two spiritual houses or families of which people may be members -- the family of God and the family of Satan. Jesus is high priest over the family of God, not over the family of Satan. Hence if one in the family of Satan approaches God he must make direct approach. Since no man can come to the Father but through Jesus, it follows that no one can make this direct approach. (2) But there are conditions which those in the house of God must meet to pray acceptably. James says we must ask in faith, not wavering. (Jas. 1:6.) (3) We must also be obedient to God in order to be heard. John says, *"Whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight."* (1 John 3:22.) James teaches the same thing when he said, *"The supplication of a righteous man avails much in its working."* (Jas. 5:16.) Since a righteous person is one that does righteousness and all God's commandments are righteousness (Psalm 119:172), it follows that the righteous man is the one who keeps God's commandments. And it is the prayer of this righteous man that avails much. (4) We must also ask in harmony with the will of God. *"And this is the boldness which we have toward Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."* (1 John 5:14.) Jesus taught His disciples to pray *"Your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth."* (Matt. 6:10.) In the garden He set us an example of praying, *"not My will, but Your, be done."* (Luke 22:42.) (5) James teaches us that our prayers must be unselfish. He says, *"You have not, because you ask not. You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it in your pleasures."* (Jas. 4:2,3.) Praying for prosperity that we may maintain high standards of living is not an acceptable prayer.

### I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*"Pray without ceasing."* (1 Thess 5:17)

**1. Meaning of the Text.** Our text tells us to pray without ceasing. This cannot mean, of course, that we are to be on our knees in prayer at all times. Nor can it mean that we are to be speaking at all times. Some have argued that a prayer must be an expressed desire and have used Romans 10:1 as proof of a difference between the heart's desire and the prayer. But if the heart's desire must be expressed before it is accepted as prayer, our text demands continuous expression with the lips which would be an unreasonable demand. Others have taught that our text demands regular hours of prayer such as the Jews observed morning, noon, and night. But this could hardly be called praying without ceasing. The only plausible meaning of the text seems to be that one should maintain a spirit of prayer constantly, that we should constantly recognize our need of God, our inability to approach Him directly, and hence our need of the mediation of Christ. It goes without saying that we should never

be in a place or have such an attitude or disposition that would make it impossible for us to pray. If one maintains this constant attitude it will not be necessary to insist on that person observing regular habits of prayer. One may observe regular hours of prayer and never cultivate this prayerful disposition, but it would be impossible for one to have the disposition and attitude of prayer and not maintain regular habits of prayer. Someone has said that apostasy begins at the closet door. Jesus told His disciples to enter into their closet, close the door and pray in secret. As long as one maintains such habits of prayer in secret, that one will not drift far from God. But when he loses this habit of secret prayer he is well on the road to apostasy.

**2. Prayer, a Duty and Privilege.** Prayer is commanded. Jesus gave the commandment in the sermon on the mount. (Matt. 7:7.) Our text has all the force of a commandment. Hence it is the duty of Christians to pray. Jesus says that not all of those who say Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that does the will of the Father. It is the will of God that His people pray. Those who do not pray are disobeying God, hence have no right to expect to go to heaven.

Christians should not however, look upon prayer so much as a duty as a privilege. It is difficult to see how the Christian could have and enjoy a greater privilege than prayer. Someone has said that prayer is the key to the great storehouse of God, and certainly we have but to ask that we may receive anything we need. We may not always receive what we ask for, or if we receive it, we may not get it at the time or in the way we expect; but when we pray that the Father's will may be done we may rest assured that the answer we receive will be for our good. Many church members are living beneath their privileges, for James tells us that we have not because we ask not. The Bible student can, with a little searching, read the great prayers recorded in the Bible and in many instances see the answers to those prayers. These are recorded for our encouragement that we may obey the teaching of our text to pray without ceasing.

## II. A COMMENTARY ON LUKE 18:1-14

### 1. Perseverance in Prayer (Luke 18:1-8)

*That they ought always to pray.* Luke says that Jesus gave this parable to teach men the necessity of continuing in prayer.

*And not to faint.* The word faint is not to be taken in the literal sense, but that of growing weary and giving up. Sometimes prayers are not answered immediately. This may or may not be a trial of faith, but if an individual becomes discouraged and ceases to pray, he may be said to faint in the sense in which the word is used here.

*A judge who feared not God.* A judge of this character was necessary to teach the lesson which Jesus intended to teach. People who are dependent on such a judge before whom to plead their cases are unfortunate. A judge who has no fear of God or respect for Him cannot be depended upon ever to do the right thing.

*Regards not man.* This, too, is a characteristic of the judge. It is such a characteristic as we would expect in one who has no fear of God. In fact one could hardly have proper regard for man unless he had some fear of God.

*There was a widow in the city.* Jesus constructs His parable so as to increase our interest. We would expect the judge to be more considerate of a widow than of some man who was able to take care of himself.

*Avenge me of my adversary.* Jesus says that the widow came often to the judge making this petition. In the margin instead of *avenge* we have *do me justice of*. We are not to think that the widow was asking the judge to take vengeance on some one for the satisfaction of this woman's desire. "All she wanted was that the judge should deliver her from the oppression which her adversary exercised over her, no doubt in keeping from her the heritage to which she was lawfully entitled." (Pulpit Commentary.)

*He would not for a while.* This is another indication of the poor character of the judge. His lack of fear for God and lack of regard for man rendered him senseless to the rights of the oppressed widow.

*Because this widow troubles me.* Jesus represents the judge as reminding himself that he did not fear God and that he had no regard for man's welfare, yet for his own relief from the trouble which the widow afforded him, he would take action.

*Lest she wear me out.* The judge is pictured as taking action from purely selfish motives. He would not grant the woman's request because it was right in the sight of God, nor would he grant her request because it was the humane thing to do. He had so little regard for the rights of the poor and oppressed that he would not go to the trouble to do his duty as a judge to relieve the poor. But out of base selfishness he would take action in the behalf of this oppressed widow lest he be worn out by her continual petitions.

*Shall not God avenge His elect?* Jesus draws a contrast; on the one hand we have a selfish man who neither fears God nor regards man. On the other side we have the Lord whose love and pity for His people are well known. There is another contrast suggested; on the one side this poor widow unknown to the judge and unrelated to him with no appeal to him other than his sense of duty. On the other hand we have the elect of God, related to God as His creature and as His elect children. Here then is the conclusion; if this judge would respond to the continual petitions of this woman who meant nothing to him, surely God, the merciful Father, will respond to the continual petitioning of His elect children.

*Yet He is long-suffering over them.* This language is capable of two interpretations. (1) God is slow to punish evildoers on the behalf of His elect. This is in harmony with the widow's request in the parable to be avenged of her adversaries and suggests that God will hear such prayers of the oppressed, but will be long-suffering or slow to take action against the wicked. (2) God will hear His elect, but may try their faith in His response to their petitions.

*I will avenge them speedily.* This seems to be a contradiction of His long-suffering in the preceding verse, but the thought is that He will avenge them suddenly, "quickly, quite compatible with delay; quickly when the hour comes, that is suddenly." (Expositors Greek Testament.)

*Shall He find faith on the earth?* Jesus was sure of God's faithfulness to hear the prayers of His people, but the language of our text suggests that He was not so sure that God's people would

persevere in prayer. The word faith in this verse is that humble obedient persevering faith which should characterize every child of God. Will there be sufficient faith on the earth in spite of the continued worldliness, tribulation and persecution to pray to God with the perseverance which this widow manifested? No doubt there will be formal religion on earth when Jesus comes, but there can be formal religion without the determined faith which characterized this widow who continued to petition the judge until she got what she wanted. It would be well for church members to ask themselves this question, am I as determined and continual in my prayers to God as was this widow?

## **2. Humility in Prayer (Luke 18:9-14)**

*Trusted in themselves that they were righteous.* These two parables teach two practical lessons with reference to prayer. This one has to do with humility. Jesus pictures that man as a self-righteous individual who exalted himself above all others.

*Set all others at naught.* One characteristic of a self-righteous person is that he has a very low estimate of other people. He must shut his eyes at his own faults and at the good in others. He must magnify what little good there is in himself and magnify the evil in the other person.

*One a Pharisee, the other a publican.* Jesus was in continual conflict with the Pharisees on account of their hypocrisy. They viewed themselves as having a special connection with heaven on account (1) of their relationship to Abraham, and (2) on account of their rigid and minute obedience to the precepts and traditions of the fathers. Jesus used these two classes, the Pharisee and the publican, because they stood at two extremes of society. The Pharisee represented the formal church member and the publican represented the lowest of the outcasts.

*The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself.* (1) The Pharisee stood. This seems significant since the usual posture of prayer of the humble penitent is bowing or kneeling. (2) Prayed with himself. This language seems to place himself before God. It was not a humble address to God, but a speech which took himself into consideration more than God.

*I am not as the rest of men.* The Pharisee took occasion to acquaint God with his character, not realizing that God knew more about him than he knew of himself. Whether the Pharisee considered his good character to be his own work or that of God is not clear, but since he gives himself so much credit in the prayer, it is probable that he felt that his goodness was the product of his own attention and exertions.

*Extortioners.* An extortioner is one who wrests from a person by force or any undue or irregular power or iniquity a thing desired.

*Unjust.* The Pharisee was thankful that he was not unjust in the treatment of his fellow men. He was also thankful that he was not an adulterer. Then, as if to sum up all of the sins that mar men's characters, he said he was thankful that he was not like the publican who was near by.

*I fast twice in the week.* After telling God all the things he was not, he turns to the positive side and informs God of what he is. The Jews had a custom of fasting on the second and the fifth days of every week. This was their private fast and was in addition to the public fasts which all were expected to

keep. Naturally the Pharisee would not make mention of these public fasts, but of the private fasts which would not be seen of men.

*I give tithes of all that I get.* Tithing was the glory of the Pharisee. In fact, it is thought that the sect originated with tithing as one of their distinguishing characteristics. Jesus called them hypocrites for tithing mint and anise and cummin while they left undone the weightier matters of the law such as justice and mercy and faith. Jesus said they should have tithed, but should not have left the weightier matters undone. (Matt. 23:23.)

*The publican would not lift up his eyes.* Jesus contrasts the humility and self-abasement of the publican with the pride and arrogance of the Pharisee. The publican was so ashamed of his sins that he would not look toward heaven.

*Be Thou merciful to me, a sinner.* He did not enumerate either his good points or his faults. He simply begged for mercy.

*This man went down to his house justified rather than the other.* Some have taken this statement to mean that if either prayer had been heard, the publican's prayer would. This does not seem to do justice to the connection. Jesus says the publican was justified rather than the other. The word *rather* has the sense of *but not*. His conclusion is that everyone that exalts himself shall be humbled, and he that humbles himself shall be exalted. The application is the Pharisee exalted himself, therefore was humbled in that his prayer was not heard. The publican humbled himself and was exalted in that his prayer was acceptable to the Lord. We should be careful in our prayers to maintain proper humility and to remember that we are sinners addressing the holy God.

### **III. SOME APPLICATIONS**

1. If one had the privilege of talking with the President or with the Queen of England, he would feel honored. How much more should we honor the privilege of prayer, for that is talking with God.
2. Paul's prayers for the churches to whom he wrote letters are models of brevity and pointedness, and we will do well to use them as examples.
3. Paul suggests prayer as a part of the cure of anxiety and worry so that we may enjoy the peace of God which passes understanding.

## QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 19

# PARABLES ON PRAYER

1. Can you show how those outside Christ have no way to approach God in prayer? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Name and discuss five conditions essential to acceptable prayer? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

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3. What is meant by praying without ceasing? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Must the heart's desire be expressed audibly in order to be a prayer? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Is the regular habit of prayer suggested by our text? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Where does apostasy begin and why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Are we commanded to pray? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Can you distinguish between duty and privilege as relates to prayer? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. What is meant by fainting as related to prayer? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. What is said of the judge before whom the woman of our text appeared? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. What request did the widow make of the judge? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. What response did the judge make to the widow's petition? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13. Why did he finally grant her the thing she requested? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

14. What conclusion did Jesus draw from this parable? \_\_\_\_\_

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15. What is meant by the Lord being “long-suffering over them?” \_\_\_\_\_

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16. What kind of faith did Jesus indicate would be hard to find when He comes again? \_\_\_\_\_

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17. What attitude does the self-righteous have with respect to others? \_\_\_\_\_

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18. How does he view his own faults? \_\_\_\_\_

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19. How does he view his own good traits? \_\_\_\_\_

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20. What do you know of the Pharisees and the publicans? \_\_\_\_\_

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21. What is said of the posture of the Pharisee in prayer? \_\_\_\_\_

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22. What did the Pharisee say of himself in the prayer? \_\_\_\_\_

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23. What should he have said? \_\_\_\_\_

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24. Fasting and tithing were outstanding characteristics of Pharisees. What did this one say about these things? \_\_\_\_\_

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25. What is suggested with reference to the attitude of the publican in prayer? \_\_\_\_\_

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26. What did the publican say about himself? \_\_\_\_\_

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27. What request did he make of God? \_\_\_\_\_

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28. Give the central lesson in this parable? \_\_\_\_\_

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29. Does Jesus teach that the publican’s prayer was heard? \_\_\_\_\_

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## LESSON NUMBER 20

# THE PARABLE OF THE POUNDS

Lk 19:12-26

### INTRODUCTION

The dual nature of the parable in our lesson has given commentators some trouble. Some have supposed that Luke has combined two parables, one concerning a king and his subjects and the other the parable of the talents given in Matthew 25. Indications of this dual nature are that the main actor appears to be at once a king and a private person, a nobleman and a tradesman. The persons to whom this actor is related are both subjects and servants, and the sum he gives the servants is unworthy of a king, while the rewards are inappropriate to the character of a trader. Bruce explains the dual nature as follows:

“Jesus found Himself surrounded by a mixed multitude of people of diverse tendencies, and variously affected towards Himself. On one side were men of Pharisaic sympathies, to whom it was an offense that He had gone to be a guest of a man like Zacchaeus, who, being a chief publican, was therefore of course a chief sinner; on the other side were many who had followed Him from Galilee, full of the admiration awakened in their minds by His ministry in that region, and confidently believing that the journey towards Jerusalem portended the near approach of the long and ardently expected kingdom. From the lips of the one class came sullen murmurs; in the countenances of the other were visible the traces of enthusiastic and romantic expectation. By both classes Jesus was utterly misunderstood; the one having no comprehension of, or sympathy with, the yearning love for the lost which was the key to His conduct towards Zacchaeus, the other being equally ignorant of the nature and future history of the kingdom whose coming they eagerly desired. He was alone in the midst of that great crowd. Here was a situation fitted to evoke the parabolic mood; for it was, as we pointed out in our introductory observations, when made conscious of isolation, by the stupid or malignant misapprehensions of men, that Jesus spoke in parables. But if a parable is to be the outcome of the situation, we expect that it will be a faithful reflection of the situation; that it will show on the one hand what the murmurs of the disaffected will come to and on the other hand, how far the hopes of the friends will be fulfilled or frustrated by coming events. We are not surprised therefore to find in the evangelistic record a parable said to have been spoken at this time of the two-sided character which the circumstances called for, with one side turned towards foes, and the other side turned towards friends; warning the one of the fearful doom awaiting them if they persisted in their present mind, and seeking to moderate the ignorant enthusiasm of the other by a sober picture of the future that lay before them.” (The Parabolic Teachings of Christ, pp. 217, 218)

### I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*“His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’”* (Matt 25:21).

**1. When the Service Was performed.** Our key scripture deals with the reward of the “good and

*faithful servant*” who had received his five talents and by trading with them had gained another five. This reward came because of his faithfulness in service. This service was rendered between the time of the going away of the master and his return. In the parable of the talents, from which our key scripture is taken, and which is very similar to the parable of the pounds, a master is pictured as distributing his money to his servants that they might put it to use while he was away on an extended tour. Jesus also represents the master of these servants as calling the servants together for a reckoning as soon as he returned from his journey. Hence, all the work which these servants did to gain this reward was done between the time of his going away and his return. In the application of the parable we have the master representing Jesus; the servants represent those blood-bought servants of Christ whose duty it is to serve the Master in His absence. The going away of the Master represents the ascension of Jesus to the Father. The return of the Master and His reckoning with the servants represents the second coming of Jesus and the final judgment in which His servants receive rewards for faithfulness or are punished for a lack of faithfulness. Hence, we conclude that all the work which the servants of Jesus render and for which they may expect rewards is to be done between the ascension of Jesus and His second coming. Our premillennial friends would have us believe that the greater part of the work is to be done subsequent to the return of Jesus instead of all of it being done prior to His second coming. According to their conception, the servants of Jesus will do much more and much better work under the personal supervision of Christ on David’s throne in Jerusalem. But if this parable teaches the truth, the time for work is during the absence of the Master; the coming of the Master is a signal for judgment, for rewards for the faithful and punishment for the unfaithful.

**2. Faithfulness in a Little Is Rewarded with Authority over Much.** The master is represented as saying, *“you have been faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things.”* This is a principle on which Jesus deals with servants. He gives them such as they are able to accept and use for His glory. When they have proved their faithfulness He gives them greater responsibilities. People who sit and wait for big opportunities while many little opportunities pass them by unused will be disappointed, because the Lord gives the big opportunities to them who use the little opportunities for good.

**3. Entering into the Joys Prepared by the Lord Is Conditional upon Our Being Faithful.** It matters not whether we have little or much with which to serve the Lord, whether our opportunities are small or great. The reward depends on how we use the opportunities we have. The man who received two talents was told to enter the joys of his lord the same as the man who had the five talents.

**4. He Who Meets the Lord’s Approval Must be Both Good and Faithful.** Both the two talent and the five talent men were called good and faithful. Their goodness and faithfulness did not depend upon the number of talents they returned to their master, but upon the honest and faithful use of the talents which they had.

## II. A COMMENTARY ON LUKE 19:12-26

### 1. Receiving a kingdom (Luke 19:12-14)

*A certain nobleman went into a far country.* Jesus is represented as a nobleman or a prince, one who had some right to expect to receive a kingdom. Jesus represents Himself as going into a far country

to receive for Himself this kingdom. This was not an unusual idea in the time in which Jesus lived. Both Herod and Archelaus had gone from Palestine to Rome to receive their kingdoms from Caesar. We are not, however, to press the details of the parable so far as to teach that the king did not exercise any authority in his kingdom until his return. In fact, the work which these servants performed for this nobleman was not performed in the kingdom which this nobleman went away to receive.

*He called ten servants.* There is no significance to be attached to the number ten. In fact, in the unfolding of the parable the number ten is not used, as only three of the servants gave reports of their activities.

*Gave them ten pounds.* In this parable the master is represented as giving each servant one pound. In the parable of the talents (Matt. 25), the servants each received a different amount. In the parable of the talents they were given money according to their ability to handle it and were rewarded for their faithfulness. In this parable they are given the same amount and rewarded according to the amount of gain they showed.

*Trade herewith till I come.* In this statement we find the nobleman placing a responsibility upon his servants. In the application of the parable our Lord places responsibility upon His servants. According to God's eternal purpose, Jesus is dependent upon His servants to do the work of preaching the gospel which is God's power to save. He places this responsibility upon us and imposes this trust in us. If we prove unfaithful to this trust we can deserve only the punishment as pictured in this and other parables.

*His citizens hated him.* Here we have another familiar item in this parable, for it was not unusual for citizens to send a hostile deputation to the emperor to oppose his granting the kingdom to one of their fellow citizens. When Archelaus went to Rome to receive his kingdom, the Jews sent an embassy of fifteen men to oppose him. Their mission was unsuccessful, and in the parable Jesus represented the nobleman as receiving a kingdom in spite of the efforts of his citizens. Here again we have an item in the parable for which there can be no application. Certainly no embassy could be sent from earth to heaven to oppose Jesus. It is simply a detail to emphasize the fact that some people refuse to allow Jesus to reign over them, and prepare the way for His teaching as the dire consequences following such refusal.

## **2. The Day of Accounts (Luke 19:15-23)**

*When he was come back, having received his kingdom.* Giving the money to these servants and demanding that they trade therewith indicated that the nobleman expected to be gone a long time. Jesus gave this parable to teach His disciples that the kingdom was not immediately to appear. (Verse 11.)

*That he might know what they had gained by trading.* Upon the return of the nobleman, he demands that his servants come before him to give an account of their activities during his absence. In this respect this parable agrees with the parable of the talents. The going away of the nobleman, his tarrying in the far country for a long time, his return, and the accounting of the servants are all similar points in the two parables. Some have taken this parable of the pounds as proof that Jesus went away

to receive a kingdom and to administer the affairs of the kingdom after His return, but both the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds emphasize the judgment of the day of accounting immediately upon the return of the master.

*Lord, your pound has made ten pounds more.* We are told that the word pound here refers to the Jewish minah which is worth about \$15 of our money. “Here the very smallness of the sum entrusted to the servants has its typical meaning. The ‘nobly born’ one who is about to receive a kingdom, represents our Lord, who here is in a state of the deepest poverty and humiliation. The little sum in one sense represents the work he was able then to entrust to his own. Again, the paltriness of the sum given them seems to suggest what a future lay before them.” (Pulpit Commentary.) This small sum indicated that they need not expect a rich, worldly kingdom which would satisfy their desires for financial security and worldly ambitions for power and authority. Their relationship with their Lord in his kingdom was to be one characterized by humble service in the use of little opportunities day by day.

*Well done, you good servant.* The nobleman commends his servant for the faithful use of the pound with which he had been entrusted. For this faithful service in a very little the servant is given authority over ten cities. Here again, our premillennial friends give us a literal interpretation. They expect Jesus to set up His kingdom on earth at His second coming and each one expects to receive some portion of the earth as his reward. Such liberalizing is contrary to the spirit of Christianity and forces lessons from the parable which Jesus did not intend. We might as well take the money in this parable literally and expect Jesus to start each Christian out with a pound or a talent as to make the ten cities literal and expect Jesus to give us ten cities over which to reign in His everlasting kingdom. The only lesson Jesus intended to teach is that faithful service will be rewarded.

*Your pound, Lord, has made five pounds.* This is the report of the second servant and he is rewarded according to his accomplishment He is given five cities over which to rule.

*Lord, here is Your pound.* Jesus reports this servant as having wrapped the pound in a napkin for safe-keeping until the master’s return.

*I feared You, because You are an austere man.* This servant is ready with his excuses. He has failed to serve and is ready to tell why. He represents that class today who think the Lord expects too much for the little He gives. He also represents a class who never do anything because they have nothing with which to do. They have so little ability and can do so few things that they are satisfied with doing nothing.

*Out of your own mouth I will judge you.* Since the servant knew the austerity of the master, he should have been all the more careful to render acceptable service. Since the servant knew that the master reaped what he did not sow, he should have put the master’s money out on interest. He could not plead a lack of knowledge, either of his master or of what his master expected of him. Neither can church members today plead an ignorance of these things. As to the truth of this faithless servant’s excuses, nothing is known, nor are we to interpret this as meaning that our Master is an austere person. The practical lesson for us is that in judgment each man will be judged according to his works and if any expects the mercy and compassion of Jesus to excuse laziness, indifference, and unfaithfulness, he must deny the truth as set forth in this parable. Certainly Jesus gives no comfort

in this parable to those who expect Him to overlook unfaithfulness.

### **3. Rewards and Punishment (Luke 19:24-26)**

*Take away from him the pound.* Jesus represents the nobleman as commanding them that stood by to take from this unfaithful servant the pound which he had not used. There is no principle more clearly taught in scripture than that we lose that which we do not use. How often we hear people say they cannot remember things as well as they once did. They have lost their power to remember because they have not exercised it.

*Give it to him that has the ten pounds.* Here again is an illustration of a well-known scriptural principle. Those who have are the ones who receive.

*Unto everyone that has shall be given.* This is our Lord's concluding lesson from this part of the parable, and this is a principle of scripture which is often taught. In everyday life we often see the same principle at work. A landowner has two tenants, one cultivates the farm diligently and raises bountiful crops. The other allows his farm to grow up in weeds and reaps a poor harvest. When the leases are out, the landowner dismisses the careless, lazy farmer and leases the farm to the man who has made good.

*From him that has not even that which he has shall be taken away.* The thought in this verse is that servant which has not accepted responsibility and has not responded to the expectations of his master, even that which the master entrusted to him will be taken away. The Lord does not allow unfaithful servants to enjoy forever His mercy and longsuffering. When they have proved their lack of appreciation and their unwillingness to show appreciation by rendering faithful service, their opportunities for service are taken away from them. This lesson really has a twofold application. (1) One's ability to serve in this life becomes less and less as he passes by his opportunities and offers excuses for not using them. (2) In the final day of reckoning, the faithless servant will suffer his great and eternal loss. From him will be taken every vestige of hope that he may have entertained and he will be sent away to spend eternity with the devil and his angels.

### **III. SOME APPLICATIONS**

1. The Lord never requires more of us than we are able to do. He knows our ability and demands of us what we are able to do.
2. It is human to minimize our ability in order to evade responsibility. People often say they can't when they mean they do not wish to try. All such must answer to their Lord in the last day.
3. Excuses are usually untrue. The unfaithful man of our lesson gave the excuse that his master was an austere man, but there is no evidence it was true. Our excuses rarely have any better foundation.

## QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 20

### PARABLE OF THE POUNDS

1. What is there in the parable in our lesson which makes it difficult to explain? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. To what two classes of people was this parable spoken? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. For what purpose was this parable spoken? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Between what two events was the labor of this parable performed? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What do these two events represent in the application of the parable? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How does this affect the doctrine of premillennialism? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. On what basis were the servants rewarded? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. On what condition were the servants allowed to enter the joys of their master? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What two characteristics are necessary for servants to meet the approval of the Lord? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Where does Jesus represent Himself as going to receive His kingdom? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. What rulers of His time had gone to Rome to receive their kingdoms? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. What did the master expect of his servants while he was gone? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. Compare this parable with the parable of the talents in Matthew chapter 25. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. What responsibility did the master put upon his servants? \_\_\_\_\_

15. What was the attitude of some of the servants toward the master? \_\_\_\_\_

16. What do these things mean in the application of the parable? \_\_\_\_\_

17. What did Jesus teach as to the time of the coming of the kingdom? \_\_\_\_\_

18. What did the master demand of his servants upon his return? \_\_\_\_\_

19. Is there any proof in this parable that the affairs of the kingdom are to be administered by the Lord after His second coming? \_\_\_\_\_

20. What was the value of a pound as used in this parable? \_\_\_\_\_

21. What is suggested by the small sum allowed each servant? \_\_\_\_\_

22. How were the servants rewarded for their work? \_\_\_\_\_

23. What report did the unfaithful servant make? \_\_\_\_\_

24. How did the master deal with the unfaithful servant? \_\_\_\_\_

25. What lessons do we get as to our rewards and punishment from this parable? \_\_\_\_\_

26. What lesson do we learn from the fact that the unfaithful servant's pound was taken away from him and given to the one who had ten pounds? \_\_\_\_\_

27. What two lessons are suggested in the two-fold application of this parable? \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON NUMBER 21

# THE BARREN FIG TREE

Mk. 11:12-18; Matt. 21:19-22

### INTRODUCTION

Since our lesson has to do with trees and the fruit they bear to teach us spiritual lessons, it will be well for us to observe that in the Bible three different kinds of trees are used to represent the Christian and his relationship to the Lord. (1) There is the tree that bears good fruit. Jesus speaks of the vine which bears fruit as being pruned so that it may bear more fruit. (John 15.) The fruit which we are to bear as trees in the Lord's vineyard is called the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5), and the fruit of righteousness. (Phil. 1:11) The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control. These may be viewed as elements, not as different fruits, but nine elements that make one fruit (2) The tree that bears evil fruit. Isaiah pictures Israel as the Lord's fruit trees planted in a very fruitful hill. The Lord expected His vineyard to bear grapes, but it bore wild grapes. He had planted Israel in Palestine, a land flowing with milk and honey, *"and He looked for justice but, behold, oppression; for righteousness, but, behold, a cry."* (Isa. 5:7) We have the same lesson from the Hebrew writer when he said, *"The land which has drunk the rain that comes often upon it, and brings forth herbs meet for them for whose sake it is also tilled receives blessing from God: but if it bears thorns and thistles, it is rejected and nigh unto a curse; whose end is to be burned."* (Heb. 6:7,8) This represented people in the church who are expected to bear the fruit of the Spirit, but who engage in the works of the flesh. Their end is to be burned. (3) The non-fruit bearing tree. Fruit trees may be barren. From their nature they are expected to bear fruit, but for some reason they are barren. Jesus represents them as not being worth the space they occupy nor the labor which is required to keep them. (Luke 13:6-9.)

### I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*"Therefore by their fruits you shall know them."* (Matt 7:20)

**1. We Are Expected to Bear Fruit.** Our text implies that every individual bears fruit. In fact, it is impossible for an individual to live in this world without bearing some kind of fruit. The amount of fruit one bears seems not to enter so much into this lesson as the quality of the fruit. In the verses preceding our text Jesus said, *"Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit."* (Matt. 7:17.) He continued by saying that a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. So its not the amount but the quality of the fruit that is under consideration. Since this lesson was given in connection with false prophets, we may conclude that this lesson applies especially to teachers and preachers of the gospel. We certainly have a right to measure a preacher by the work that he does. (1) If he preaches a poor sermon, if his material is scattered and disorganized, if his lessons are shallow and have little spiritual strength, we have a right to conclude that there is something wrong. (2) If every church where a certain preacher lives for any length of time is involved in trouble and division, we have a right to conclude that this is the fruit of that preacher's work and teaching. Not every church trouble is the fault of the preacher, but if there is trouble in every church where a certain preacher labors, we have a right to conclude that trouble is the fruit of this man's labors.

**2. Fruit versus Leaves.** In the body of the lesson we will learn that fruit represents practice while leaves represent profession. It is significant that Jesus did not say that a tree is known by its leaves, and we may be sure that a man is not known by his profession. His profession may differ considerably from his practices. A group of religious people may profess to be the church of the Lord, but if they engage in scriptural worship and hold to and teach unscriptural doctrines we must conclude that the church does not belong to the Lord regardless of its profession. Schools and colleges sometimes profess to be engaged in the building of Christian character, but practice sometimes denies the profession. When students of a college regularly come out infidels or skeptics, we judge the school to be of that nature regardless of its profession. If the majority of the graduates of a school believe and teach premillennialism, we must conclude that the school is of that type. The fruit is the proof of the nature of the institution.

**3. Fruit Bearing and Judging.** Some oppose determining the nature of a tree by its fruit because Jesus said for us not to judge. (Matt. 7:1.) But the same Lord said, “*Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment.*” (John 7:24.) Determining the nature of a tree by the fruit it bears is not the kind of judging which Jesus condemned. It was censorious, self-righteous judgment that Jesus condemned. We cannot keep from judging a tree by its fruits.

## II. A COMMENTARY ON MARK 11:12-18; MATTHEW 21:19-22

### 1. Cursing the Fig Tree (Mark 11:12-14)

*When they were come out from Bethany.* The events of our lesson were during the last week of our Lord’s life on earth. He made His home with Lazarus and his sisters during this time, spending the nights there and His days in Jerusalem teaching. The Mount of Olives lay between Bethany and Jerusalem. There were two roads into the city, one around the mount to the south the other directly over the mount into Jerusalem. Jesus took the direct way into the city. Climbing the mountain in the early morning, He became hungry. Some think that His hunger on this occasion indicates that He had spent the night in prayer as He often did.

*Seeing a fig tree away off having leaves.* There has been much discussion as to whether Jesus expected to find fruit on this tree. Mark says that it was not the season of figs. Barnes thinks that this statement is to be interpreted as meaning that the season for gathering figs was not passed. The fact that the tree had well developed leaves is an indication that fruit might be found upon it. It is peculiar to the fig tree that its fruit begins to appear before the leaves, and since this particular tree had leaves, Jesus had every right to expect to find fruit.

*No man shall eat fruit from you henceforward forever.* This is the curse which Jesus placed upon the fruitless tree. Here unbelievers have found a pretext for criticizing Jesus. They questioned His divinity for not knowing that there would be no fruit on the tree, or if knowing there was no fruit for deceiving His disciples by pretending to look for fruit on a tree which He knew to be fruitless. It is true that our Lord was divine, and that He could read even the hearts of people. It is also true that He was human and did not know some things. He did not know the time of His appearing. (Matt. 24:36.) If in His humanity He did not know the time of His appearing, may we not conclude that He practised no deception whatever when He looked for figs on the tree? We may not understand how He could know the heart of a critical Jew (Mark 2:8) and still not know the day of His return, but we believe it because of His word. So we may not understand why He did not miraculously discern the fruitlessness of this tree, but rather acted as any other human being to determine its fruitlessness. We may safely surmise

that He went through this incident for the very purpose for which He used it and that was to teach the disciples a very practical lesson. Fruitlessness on the part of His disciples will no more be tolerated than fruitlessness in this tree. Professing to be something when we are nothing is a kind of hypocrisy which Jesus does not allow in His disciples. We should learn from the destruction of this tree what will happen to all professing to be Christians, but who do not fill their lives with Christian work.

## **2. Cleansing the Temple (Mark 11:15-18)**

*They came to Jerusalem.* Some months before Jesus had told His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and the third day be raised up. (Matt. 16:21.) He has now come to the city to endure what the foreknowledge and counsel of God had determined. (Acts 2:23.)

*He entered into the temple.* This does not mean He went into the Holy Place or the Most Holy Place. Not being of the tribe of Levi, Jesus had no right to go into the Holy Place and much less the Most Holy Place. He was in that part of the temple to which all Jews had a right.

*Began to cast out them that sold and them that bought.* In the beginning of His ministry (John 2:13-22) Jesus cleansed the temple, calling it “*My Father’s house.*” This time He speaks of it as His house. It was hardly possible for worshippers from foreign lands to bring their animals for sacrifice, so they expected to buy the animals for sacrifice. Jews in and around Jerusalem took advantage of this situation to raise and sell animals for this purpose. There seems to be nothing wrong with the practice unless it was abused. Undoubtedly these who sold animals for sacrifice were charging exorbitant prices.

*Overthrew the tables of the moneychangers.* These, too, could have rendered good service to their brethren from foreign lands. The temple tax was collected in small coin. It was not convenient for foreign Jews to bring enough of such small coins to use in their worship. Hence, it would be necessary for them to exchange large coins for smaller. It would also be necessary for some of them to exchange foreign money for the half-shekel which was used in the temple. There would necessarily be a rate of exchange, so Jesus cast them out of the temple perhaps for two reasons. (1) That the temple area was not the proper place for carrying on such business. (2) Because of the dishonesty and greed practised on the part of those who were in business. Whether He had authority to do what He did has been a question with many. Believing in Him as the Son of God, we would not deny Him the right to cleanse His own temple, but whether the Jews who did not believe in Him as the Son of God could recognize His right is another problem. He not only drove out those that sold and changed money, but it is said that He would not allow any one to carry a vessel into the temple.

*My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations.* As suggested above, He here speaks of the temple as His house and not as His Father’s house. He openly asserts His ownership and thereby justifies His unusual action in driving out the money-changers.

*You have made it a den of robbers.* Instead of using it for prayer they had made it a den of robbers. This justifies the conclusion reached above that those who sold animals were charging too much, and those who changed money were charging too high a rate of exchange.

*Sought how they might destroy Him.* The chief priests and scribes were angered by His action and the assertion of His authority and they began to devise ways and means of destroying Him that they might

be rid of His competition.

*For they feared Him.* There was a bearing and carriage about our Lord which seemed more than human. When they sent men to arrest Him, they came back without Him saying that man never so spoke. When they did put Him to death, they were afraid of Him. Their fear is emphasized by the fact that when they went to arrest Him, they took along a mob of unusual numbers.

### **3. More About the Fig Tree (Matt. 21:19-22)**

*How did the fig tree immediately wither?* In this section of our lesson we have Matthew's record of Jesus looking for figs on the barren tree and His pronouncing a curse upon it. From Matthew's account we might conclude that the fig tree withered while the disciples were standing about it. But from Mark 11:20,21 we read, "And as they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away from the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance says unto Him, Rabbi, behold, the fig tree which you cursed is withered away." So we conclude that they did not notice the withering of the tree until about the same time the next morning.

*If you have faith.* This is the language of Jesus in response to their statement that the fig tree had withered away. Whether we are to take this statement about removing mountains by faith literally or whether we are to get a spiritual lesson from it is difficult to decide. Perhaps both lessons are suggested. There is such a thing as a miraculous faith, a gift of the Spirit imparted by the laying on of the hands of an apostle. (1 Cor. 12:9.) And then there is the common faith which comes by hearing the word of God. (Titus 1:4, Romans 10:17.) If one had the miraculous faith he could actually remove mountains, for certainly it would take no more power to remove a mountain than to raise the dead. But perhaps the lesson that Jesus intended for His disciples to get is that there is no difficulty in the way of a Christian which cannot be overcome through faith in God. In another place Jesus indicates that a little faith, as much as a grain of mustard seed, is all that is necessary to remove the mountain. (Matt. 17:20.) Hence, it is the nature of faith and not the quantity of the faith that gets the results.

*Whatsoever you ask in prayer.* This seems to be the conclusion which our Lord intended His disciples to get from the incident. When you ask in faith, you shall receive. When difficulties are before us we are not to depend on our own wisdom or ingenuity, but to take the matter to the Lord in prayer.

### **III. SOME APPLICATIONS**

1. Our Lord expects us to be fruitful in every good work. There is no place in the kingdom of Christ for non-producers. The lazy, indolent, and indifferent need not entertain hope of reward in this life or that which is to come.
2. Profession may cover up in the sight of men, but God looks through the thin covering of hypocritical profession to see us as we actually are. The thought that God sees and knows us for what we actually are should sober us and move us to ever increasing activity in His work.
3. As Jesus cleansed His Father's house, so He has power and authority to drive out of His kingdom all who do not meet His approval. It is our task, by the help of His grace, to bring ourselves into harmony with His will so that we will not be a part of that which is displeasing to Him.

## QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 21

### THE BARREN FIG TREE

1. Name and discuss three kinds of trees which are used in the Bible to represent the Christian and his relationship to the Lord. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What is to be the end of unfruitful persons in the vineyard of the Lord? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Of what is the fruit of the Spirit composed? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Is the emphasis in this lesson on the amount or the quality of the fruit? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. By what are we allowed to measure a preacher? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Did Jesus say a tree is known by its fruit or by its leaves? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. How may this principle be applied to individuals? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. How may this principle be applied to colleges? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Are we guilty of unrighteous judgment when we judge the tree by its fruit? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Can you distinguish between righteous and unrighteous judgment? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. In what city was Jesus staying? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Whose home was Jesus staying in? \_\_\_\_\_

13. What route did Jesus take into Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_

14. Why did Jesus have a right to expect to find fruit on this fig tree? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

15. How can you account for the fact that Jesus did not know that the tree was unfruitful? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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16. What curse did He pronounce upon the tree? \_\_\_\_\_

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17. What lesson do we get from this? \_\_\_\_\_

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18. Did Jesus foreknow His death in Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_

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19. Into what part of the temple could Jesus not go, and why? \_\_\_\_\_

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20. Did Jesus speak of the temple as His house or as His Father's house? \_\_\_\_\_

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21. What was being sold in the temple, and why? \_\_\_\_\_

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22. To what did Jesus object in this situation? \_\_\_\_\_

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23. What did He do to cleanse the temple? \_\_\_\_\_

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24. What did He say that His house was to be called? \_\_\_\_\_

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25. What did He say they had made His house? \_\_\_\_\_

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26. What did the Jews seek to do on account of His action? \_\_\_\_\_

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27. Why did they not do it? \_\_\_\_\_

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28. When did the disciples notice the withering of the fig tree? \_\_\_\_\_

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29. What did Jesus say one must have to accomplish great things? \_\_\_\_\_

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30. What two kinds of faith are mentioned in the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_

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31. Is it in the nature or in the quantity of faith which gets results? \_\_\_\_\_

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32. What connection is there between faith and prayer? \_\_\_\_\_

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## LESSON NUMBER 22

# JESUS SILENCES THE SADDUCEES

Lk 20:26-40

### INTRODUCTION

On one occasion Jesus debated the question of human traditions with the Jews. (Matt. 15:1-20) In this debate the Jews were affirming that the disciples of Jesus, as well as all others, should obey the traditions of the elders. Jesus denied this proposition and showed the consequences of such a course. In His debate with the Herodians, (Matt. 22:15-22) the question of paying tribute to Caesar was considered. In this debate Jesus took the unpopular side of the question and affirmed that it was their duty to pay tribute to Caesar, and yet He said it in such way that the Herodians were unable to offer much objection. His next debate was with the Sadducees. (Matt. 22:23-33) In this debate Jesus was in the affirmative, introducing scriptures to prove the resurrection, as well as disproving the various contentions of the Sadducees. After He had disposed of the Sadducees the Pharisees gathered themselves together, feeling that they were more unanswerable than the other sects. (Matt. 22:34-46) The debate was more in the form of asking difficult questions than in the affirmation of specific propositions. When the Pharisees had asked their questions and Jesus had answered them, Jesus then put a difficult question to them. When they were unable to answer His question, they were embarrassed and left Him in control of the field. Leaders of the early church followed the example of Jesus in carrying on debates with those with whom they differed. Stephen so embarrassed his opponents in debate that they became enraged so that they stoned him to death. It is said that Apollos silenced the Jews with his unanswerable arguments. Paul often engaged in religious discussions. (Acts 17:1-3.) Paul also says that men who serve as elders are to be able *“both to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers.”* (Titus 1:9.) He continues by saying that there are false teachers going about teaching things which they ought not and that it is the business of the elders to stop the mouths of these teachers. Since we cannot use force to stop their mouths, we must do it by exposing their false doctrines. This necessitates public discussion. Churches should not be afraid of such discussions; the elders should want to see to it that when such discussions are conducted they be held on a plane consistent with Christian love and consideration.

### I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.’”* (John 11:25).

**1. Jesus Asserts His Character and Relation to Life.** First, Jesus says, *“I am the resurrection.”* By this He can mean nothing more than that He is the author of the cause of the resurrection. He said, *“No man can come to Me, except the Father that sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day.”* (John 6:44.) This and several similar statements attribute the resurrection to Jesus. Hence we conclude that the resurrection will be through His agency. We might also consider this statement as meaning that His resurrection in a very real way involves the resurrection of all His disciples. Paul speaks of the resurrection of Christ as the first fruits, saying, *“As in Adam all die, so also in Christ*

*shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; then they that are Christ's at His coming.*" (1 Cor. 15:22,23.) In this text we find Jesus affirming His divinity, His deity. Surely the resurrection can be accomplished by nothing less than omnipotence and this is enjoyed by none other than God.

Next, Jesus says, *"I am the life."* This expression also suggests that Jesus is the source of life. John, after saying that the Word of God said also, *"In Him was life."* (John 1:4.) Jesus said, *"For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He will."* (John 5:21.) In this statement, Jesus claims equality with the Father in the matter of giving life. He is the source of both physical and spiritual life.

**2. Jesus Asserts His Power to Communicate to the Living and the Dead, the Power to Triumph over Death.** Jesus promises the believer, even though he may die physically, that he shall live again and follows this with the statement that in reality the believer shall never die. In His own experience He triumphed over death and the grave and this becomes the assurance to the believer that He will exercise this same power to give him triumph over death. Though the body may be brought to the grave, the soul goes on to be with Christ. And as surely as Christ arose from the dead, these bodies of ours shall rise and shall be fashioned like unto His glorious body in the resurrection. (Phil. 3:21.) Again we notice that this claim is equal to an assertion of His divinity. Surely no one less than God could promise to give people triumph over death.

**3. Jesus Reveals the Condition on Which He Gives Power over Death.** In our text Jesus says, *"He that believes on Me, though he die, yet shall he live."* The belief under consideration here is an obedient belief. It is not such a belief as the Jews of John 8:30,31 had, for Jesus speaks of them as being the children of the devil. (John 8:44.) Nor is it the kind of belief which the rulers of the Jews had when they refused to confess Him because they were afraid they would be put out of the synagogue, loving the glory of men more than the glory of God. (John 12:42,43.) But it is humble, obedient faith such as the people on Pentecost had when they repented and were baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of their sins and were added to the church. (Acts 2:41,47.)

## II. A COMMENTARY ON LUKE 20:27-40

### 1. Sadducees State the Question (Luke 20:27-33)

*There came to Him certain of the Sadducees.* We have noticed in preceding lessons that the Sadducees were a group of Jews who did not believe in the possibility of a resurrection, and Luke adds by way of identifying this sect that they are the people who say there is no resurrection. A resurrection implies a burial; it is the coming forth from the burial. That which has never been buried cannot be resurrected. The heavenly body in which we will live is a resurrected body, not a created body. There are a few Sadducees among us today who believe that our bodies will not be resurrected but that an entirely new body will be given the spirit in heaven. It remains for them to show why this can be called a resurrection and not a creation.

*Moses wrote unto us.* The Sadducees pointed to a law given by Moses on which to base a hypothetical case. The law is contained in Deuteronomy 25ff. They state the law as briefly as can be stated. *"That if a man's brother die, having a wife, and he be childless, his brother shall take the*

*wife and raise up seed unto his brother.*” This has been called the levirate law, Latin word meaning a husband’s brother. There are some interesting features of this law which were not necessary to mention to make out their case. One of these is that if the husband’s brother refused to marry the widow and raise up children to his deceased brother, the elders of the city were to call him before them and in the presence of the widow, this brother was to affirm that he would not perform his duty. Following this the widow was to loose his shoe from off his foot, spit in his face, and say, “*So shall it be done unto the man that does not build up his brother’s house.*” Another interesting feature of this law is the fact that it authorized in some instances polygamy. An interesting example of this type of marriage may be found in the case of Ruth and Boaz. While Boaz was not the brother of Mahlon, the principle extended to the nearest of kin. There was one man who was a closer relative than Boaz and hence entitled to marry Ruth. He declined to do the part of the near kinsman, so in the presence of the elders of Bethlehem, this man removed his shoe and gave it to Boaz and Boaz was thus free to take Ruth to be his wife.

*In the resurrection whose wife shall she be?* The problem submitted by the Sadducees was this: Seven brothers had taken a woman to wife in accordance with this levirate law. All seven of them died, leaving no child. They wished to know to which of the seven she would belong in the resurrection. They seemed to believe that the same relationships we enjoy here would be continued after the resurrection. To them this was positive proof either that there would be no resurrection, or that such confusion would result in heaven as would be out of harmony with the nature of God and of heaven. To avoid such confusion they preferred to believe that there would be no resurrection of the body.

## **2. Jesus Gives His Answer (Luke 20:34-36)**

*The sons of this world marry.* Jesus draws a contrast between this world and the world to come. Marriage is for this world and not for the world to come. Jesus does not mean by this use of the word world to say that marriage is a worldly thing or had its origin in worldliness. He simply means to say that marriage is an arrangement given by the Lord for the accomplishment of the purposes of God in this world, but that the purposes of God in the world to come do not include such an arrangement.

*Accounted worthy to attain to that world.* This suggests that our character has something to do with determining whether we will be in heaven. Since some are accounted worthy, we naturally conclude that others will be counted unworthy. We do not become worthy by any works of merit which we perform, but simply through humble obedience to the commands of the gospel of Christ. The teaching of Christ on the judgment scene (Matt. 25:31-46) would indicate that our obedience to Him will determine our worthiness in that day.

*Neither marry nor are given in marriage.* People of the earth were given the commandment to multiply and replenish the earth. Heaven is a place of reward for those who prove faithful in this earthly life. Heaven is not a place where people multiply. Hence, there is no need for marriage.

*For neither can they die any more.* This is simply another item of contrast between this world and the next. In this world it is appointed unto men once to die, but in that world there will be no more death. (Rev. 21:4.)

*For they are equal unto the angels.* This statement implies that angels have bodies. It also teaches that in this respect we will be as the angels. This teaching was especially given for the Sadducees who did not believe in the existence of angels. Jesus took advantage of this opportunity to give them teaching not only on the point under discussion, but a point on which they needed instruction.

*And are sons of God.* This statement does not imply that we are not sons of God in this world. It may imply that we are sons in some different sense of this word from what we are here. Jesus adds, being sons of the resurrection. This phrase in some way explains the relationship expressed by the term sons of God. If the sonship spoken of is the result of the resurrection, there is a difference between that relationship and our relationship before the resurrection. Since Jesus was raised from the dead to die no more and is in that respect the first born from the dead forevermore, so we in the resurrection will be sons of God forevermore. Our sonship here is conditioned upon our obedience to God. If we continue to obey Him, we continue in the relationship. But in heaven there will be no sin. Hence, our sonship will be eternal. This eternal sonship is dependent upon the resurrection and so the term sons of God is to be understood.

### **3. Application and Conditions** (Luke 20:37-40)

*That the dead are raised Moses showed.* The Sadducees refused to accept the teaching of the prophets. They claimed to receive the teaching of Moses, but denied the authority of the prophets. Jesus meets them on their own ground by showing that Moses taught the resurrection. Jesus then mentioned the incident of the burning bush found in the third chapter of Exodus.

*Calls the Lord the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.* The incident referred to is that of Moses when caring for the sheep at Mount Horeb. Jehovah appeared in a flame of fire in the bush, but the bush was not consumed. When Moses saw it he turned aside to see why the bush was not burned. God spoke to him from the bush and identified Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

*He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.* Since God is the God of these patriarchs, but is not the God of the dead, we must conclude that these patriarchs are living. This is not a positive proof of the resurrection of the body, but it does imply the resurrection of the body. It is positive proof that these patriarchs were in some way alive at the time of the experience of Moses at the burning bush. If at death these patriarchs ceased to exist, God would be the God of nothing, or of things that did not exist. The Sadducees denied any consciousness whatever after the death of the body, but since God is the God of these patriarchs, they must be conscious somewhere. If God preserves them in a state of consciousness, contrary to the belief of the Sadducees, their denial of the resurrection of the body would be rendered unreasonable. Matthew adds, “*You do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.*” (Matt. 22:29.) Jesus used the only section of scripture which the Sadducees accepted to disprove their contentions. They did not have a working knowledge of those scriptures which they accepted. A good many mistakes today both in teaching and in practice are made because of a lack of knowledge. In the second place, Jesus said their mistake was to be attributed to their lack of knowledge concerning the power of God. No doubt the Sadducees, like many of their tribe today, thought it a scientific impossibility for God to raise the body after it had returned to dust. The God who has the power to create a body from dust can surely resurrect that body from the same dust.

*Teacher, You have well said.* This bit of commendation came from certain of the scribes standing

near. The scribes were more often associated with the Pharisees and would welcome one who could defeat their long time opponents, the Sadducees. It did them good to hear Jesus use the few scriptures which the Sadducees accepted to destroy their position.

*They did not any more ask Him any question.* Jesus was an expert in debate as well as in all other forms of teaching. He so completely answered His opponent that there was nothing left to say.

### **III. SOME APPLICATIONS**

1. The mistake made by the Sadducees was caused by their lack of knowledge of the scriptures and the power of God. (Matt. 22:29.) Ignorance of God's word is the source of many mistakes.
2. Many people doubt statements of the Lord if it seems impossible for such things to be done. Some deny the resurrection of the body because it is scientifically impossible.
3. Molding clay and spirit together to make man is a scientifically impossible process but man is a living demonstration of the power of God to do such. Our failure to comprehend His power is the source of many mistakes and much of our lack of faith.

## QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 22

# JESUS SILENCES THE SADDUCEES

1. What do you know of the debate Jesus had on the subject of human traditions? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What question did Jesus debate with the Herodians? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Who were the Herodians? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What question did Jesus discuss with the Sadducees? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What leaders of the early church engaged in debates, and with whom? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. According to Paul, who should be able to convict the gainsayers? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. How and why should they be able to convict the gainsayers? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What did Jesus mean when He said that He was the resurrection? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What does Jesus affirm as to His nature in the key scripture? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. In what words does Jesus affirm that He is the source of all life? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Jesus asserts His power to communicate what to the living and the dead? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. On what condition does Jesus give us power over death? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. What kind of faith is under consideration here? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. What is the meaning of the term resurrection? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. Can that which was never buried be resurrected? \_\_\_\_\_
16. What is the levirate vow, and where is it found in the Old Testament? \_\_\_\_\_

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17. Name two interesting features of this law mentioned in our lesson? \_\_\_\_\_

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18. What prominent Old Testament characters followed this law? \_\_\_\_\_

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19. How did the Sadducees use this law in their debate with Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

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20. How did Jesus contrast this world with the next? \_\_\_\_\_

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21. What is implied by our being worthy to attain to the next world? \_\_\_\_\_

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22. With what beings shall we be equal in the next world, and in what respect? \_\_\_\_\_

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23. What is meant by being sons of God in the next world? \_\_\_\_\_

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24. What part of the Old Testament did the Sadducees reject? \_\_\_\_\_

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25. Jesus used the teaching of what man to answer the Sadducees? \_\_\_\_\_

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26. To what Old Testament incident did Jesus appeal in this discussion? \_\_\_\_\_

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27. Jehovah is the God of whom? \_\_\_\_\_

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28. What does this prove with reference to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? \_\_\_\_\_

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29. What two reasons did Jesus give to explain the error of the Sadducees? \_\_\_\_\_

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30. Who commended Jesus for His part in this debate? \_\_\_\_\_

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31. What effect did this debate have on His opponents? \_\_\_\_\_

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## LESSON NUMBER 23

# THE JUDGMENT

Matt. 25:31-42,46

### INTRODUCTION

The idea of the judgment is to be found in both the Old Testament and the New. Solomon said, *“For God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”* (Eccles. 12:14.) John the Baptist implied as much when he said that God will *“gather His wheat into the garner, but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire.”* (Matt. 3:12.) Jesus had much to say of the judgment, saying that it would be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon and even for Sodom in the day of judgment than for the people to whom He preached. (Matt. 11:20-24.) Judgment was often on the lips of the apostles in their preaching and their writing. Paul said that God overlooked certain ignorance for a time, but now commands all men to repent, *“inasmuch as He has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom He has ordained; whereof He has given assurance unto all men, in that He has raised Him from the dead.”* (Acts 17:31.) According to this, God has determined the day when the judgment will be held. From Paul we learn that the judgment is to be the day of wrath, for he spoke of the impenitent as treasuring up for himself *“wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.”* (Rom. 2:5.) Again, he speaks of Jesus as delivering us *“from the wrath to come”* at the time of the second coming of Christ. (1 Thess. 1:10.) That the judgment is to be at the time of the coming of Christ is taught in these words, *“Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts.”* (1 Cor. 4:5.) Jesus places the time of the judgment; at His second coming in that familiar passage concerning the judgment in Matthew 25:31-46.

### I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”* (2 Cor. 5:10).

**1. All to Appear in Judgment.** The idea of one vast assemblage of all humanity in the judgment has come to mean but little to the modern student of the Bible. Many who would class themselves as conservatives see no need of a judgment, except for those living at the time Jesus comes, but according to Jesus, when He sits on the throne of His glory *“before Him shall be gathered all the nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.”* (Matt. 25:32.) However, many think this refers only to the nations alive at the coming of Christ. But Jesus said that the people of Tyre and Sidon would be in the judgment with the people of His day, and that the people of Sodom would also be in the judgment, and that it would be more tolerable for these ancient cities in the day of judgment than for the people to whom He spoke. (Matt. 11:20-24.) Again He said the people of Nineveh would stand up in the judgment with the generation in which He lived, and that the queen of the south would rise up in the judgment with His generation because she came to hear the wisdom of Solomon and His generation refused to hear a greater than

Solomon. (Matt.12:41-45.) From these passages we learn that people from five generations out of five nations separated by great periods of time will be in the judgment in the day of judgment. If these five generations out of five different nations will be in the judgment together, who can say with any degree of certainty that all other nations will not be in that same judgment?

**2. Christ to Be the Judge.** Our text states that all shall be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ. Paul says that Christ shall judge the living and the dead. (2 Tim. 4:1.) Again Peter told Cornelius, “*He charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is He who is ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead.*” (Acts 10:42.)

**3. The Purpose of the Judgment.** Some object to all nations being in the judgment on the ground that their eternal destiny has already been determined, hence, no need of a judgment. The Bible does not suggest that the purpose of the judgment is to hear evidence for and against a person and to reach a decision as to where each individual will spend eternity. Rather, the purpose of the judgment is to pass sentence upon the wicked and to reward the righteous. When Jesus spoke of all nations being gathered before Him in judgment, He pictured them as being separated, the righteous on the right hand and the wicked on the left. There is no indication of the hearing of evidence but rather a statement of rewards to those upon the right hand and the passing of sentence upon those on the left. He closes the scene by saying that the righteous shall go away into eternal life, but the wicked shall go away into eternal punishment. (Matt. 25:46.)

**4. Judgment Is on an Individual Basis.** The judgment will be as individual as if there were only one individual on earth to be judged. Paul says, “*So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.*” (Rom. 14:12.) Neither will there be any partiality in the judgment, for according to our text, each one will receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether it be good or bad. From this we conclude that we are not to be judged according to the love of God, but according to what we have done. Some people think that God loves us too much to punish, but according to our text the love of God is not the standard by which we are judged; our life determines where we will spend eternity.

## II. A COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW 25:31-42,46

### 1. Setting of the Judgment (Matt. 25:31-33)

*When the Son of man shall come in His glory.* As already suggested, the time for the judgment is at the second coming of Christ. We have also learned that this day has been appointed. (Acts 17:31.) Notice that Jesus is here referred to as Son of man. This is a term which indicates His humanity and is usually used with reference to His humiliation. So there is somewhat of a contrast when He speaks of the Son of man coming in glory. Paul speaks of Him at the time of His coming as being glorified in His saints and marvelled at in all them that believe. (2 Thess. 1:9,10.)

*And all the angels with Him.* Jesus is pictured as being accompanied by a throng of angels at the time of His second coming. Paul speaks of the voice of the archangel accompanying His second coming. (1 Thess. 4:16.) In the parable of the tares Jesus said, “*The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire.*” (Matt. 13:41,42.)

*Sit on the throne of His glory.* Some have mentioned this passage to teach that Jesus will begin at that time to sit on His throne. Zechariah said, “*He shall be a priest upon His throne.*” (Zech. 6:13.) If Jesus does not sit upon His throne until His second coming, it follows that He cannot be a priest until His second coming. But this is contrary to all the teaching on this subject, especially in the book of Hebrews. (Heb. 4:14-16; 7:26-28; 8:4; 9:11; 10:21.) Our text simply means to say that when Jesus comes, He will sit as king and judge over His people.

*Before Him shall be gathered all nations.* We have seen from our study of the key scripture that the term *all nations* includes such as the people of Sodom, Tyre and Sidon and others. Hence, we conclude that the resurrection will precede this judgment. Paul says that the wicked people of Thessalonica who persecuted the church will be in that judgment and that they will be recompensed with affliction. And he specified the time when this punishment will be meted out by saying, “*At the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of His power in flaming fire.*” (2 Thess. 1:7.) This destroys the idea of separate resurrections, one for the righteous and one for the wicked a thousand years apart. Since both the wicked and the righteous of Thessalonica will be in the judgment at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven, it follows that the wicked of Thessalonica will be raised at the same time the righteous are raised and judged at the same time. Hence, no thousand years reign between the two.

*Separate them one from another.* Jesus is pictured as a shepherd separating the sheep from the goats. Sheep are often used to represent righteous people, but the figure must not be pressed too far. Some have gone so far as to prove eternal election and damnation, pointing out that it has never been possible for a sheep to become a goat, or for a goat ever to become a sheep. But that a righteous person can become an unrighteous person and that an unrighteous person can become righteous is abundantly proved in scripture. (Ezek. 33:10-16)

## **2. Dealing with the Righteous (Matt. 25:34-40)**

*Come, you blessed of My Father.* This is the language of the King to those upon the right hand. He speaks of them as being blessed of His Father. They are to receive the rewards which the Father has determined in His wisdom for those who have conducted themselves during their earthly life in such way as to meet His approval.

*Inherit the kingdom prepared for you.* Here we have mention of a kingdom which is different from the kingdom in which they have lived and labored. Paul tells us that at the time of His second coming Jesus will deliver up the mediatorial kingdom to the Father and will Himself be in subjection to the Father. Hence, the kingdom which the righteous inherit on this occasion is not the mediatorial kingdom over which Christ is now reigning. Peter speaks of the same kingdom when he said that those who have added the Christian graces shall be richly supplied with an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Pet. 1:11.) Jesus says this kingdom is prepared for the righteous. In another place He speaks of it as mansions in His Father’s house. (John 14:1-3)

*From the foundation of the world.* The whole scheme of redemption existed in the mind of God even before the creation of the world. Jesus is spoken of as a lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. (1 Pet. 1:20.) Paul speaks of our having been called according to God’s own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal. (2 Tim. 1:9.) Hence, we are not

surprised to learn that the kingdom which the righteous shall inherit existed in the mind of God before creation, but is pictured as being prepared by Him after His ascension. (John 14:1-3.)

*I was hungry, and you gave Me meat.* The righteous are said to be blessed here because of what they had done for Christ.

*Lord, when saw we You hungry?* From this statement we gather that the righteous include many who did not live in the time of Christ, for they imply that they had never seen Him.

*Inasmuch as you did it unto one of these My brethren.* Jesus replies that it is not necessary to serve Him in person, a privilege which none of us could have, but that serving even the least of His disciples is counted as service to Him personally.

### **3. Dealing with the wicked (Matt. 25:41-46)**

*Depart from Me, you cursed.* This is the language of the King to those upon the left hand. They are said to depart into eternal fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. Hell is never spoken of as having been prepared for God's people, but rather as a place for Satan. (Rev. 20:1-15.)

*For I was hungry and you gave Me no meat.* Those on the left hand are said to be there because they did not feed the hungry and visit the sick. It is not intended that they were there because they had rejected Christ, rather it is implied that they had accepted Christ but had not served as Christians should. Those on the right hand were said to be there because they had done good works. Disbelievers, or alien sinners, seem not to be included in this judgment scene. Other scriptures teach that they are present in the judgment, but Jesus deals only with His servants in this judgment picture. The parable of the virgins and the parable of the talents preceding this judgment scene deal only with servants. Hence, we conclude that some of the servants of Jesus will prove faithful during life and will be rewarded according to their works, and that some of His servants will prove unfaithful during life and will be punished for their lack of good works. It is not to be concluded that good works constitute the ground of their salvation or that the lack of good works constitutes the ground of the damnation of the wicked. But it certainly is taught in this passage that salvation is conditional upon doing good to others. If only the servants of Jesus are included in this judgment lesson, the doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy is demonstrated to be false.

*These shall go away into eternal punishment.* It should be remembered that the judgment described in this lesson is held at the time of the second coming of Christ. From that judgment the wicked go away into eternal punishment. (1) We must conclude that the wicked have been raised prior to this judgment; they would certainly not be judged in their absence. Furthermore, they are spoken of as being present and as going away from this judgment. (2) We also conclude that there cannot be a reign of a thousand years between the resurrection of the righteous and that of the wicked. (3) It is also obvious that there will not be a reign of a thousand years after this judgment since they go away to their eternal destinies.

*The righteous into eternal life.* No one doubts that the term eternal life means happiness without end. Hence, we conclude that the term eternal punishment means punishment without end. Since punishment implies consciousness, we conclude that the wicked will be eternally conscious of the

punishment inflicted.

### **III. SOME APPLICATIONS**

1. If it will be more tolerable for Sodom in judgment than for the people to whom Jesus spoke (Matt. 11:24), will there be degrees of punishment?
2. If the judgment is held on the day the Lord comes, and if both the good and the evil are sent away from judgment to their eternal destinies, how can there be a reign of one thousand years on earth after the coming of Christ?
3. Eternal destruction is to be the portion of all the wicked on the day that Jesus comes again. (2 Thess. 1:7-10.)

## QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 23

# THE JUDGMENT

1. Quote and discuss an Old Testament reference to the judgment. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What did John the Baptist say concerning judgment? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What reference did Jesus make concerning Tyre and Sidon and the judgment? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What did Paul say with reference to the judgment? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What is said about the time for the judgment? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What proof can you give of the assemblage of all humanity in one judgment? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What passages can you quote that teach that Jesus will be the judge? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What is the purpose of the last judgment? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. From this judgment where do the wicked go? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Where do the righteous go? \_\_\_\_\_
11. What proof can you give that the judgment will be on an individual basis? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. What is implied in the term Son of man? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. By whom will Jesus be accompanied at His second coming? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. What work will the angels do at that time? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. Does our text teach that Jesus will begin to sit on His throne at His second coming? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
16. What particular nations are mentioned as being in this last judgment? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

17. Can you prove that there will be no period of a thousand years after the resurrection of the righteous and before the resurrection of the wicked? \_\_\_\_\_

18. What separation will be made in the judgment? \_\_\_\_\_

19. How will Jesus address the righteous in the judgment? \_\_\_\_\_

20. What blessing will Jesus bestow upon the righteous in that day? \_\_\_\_\_

21. How long has this blessing been in store for the righteous? \_\_\_\_\_

22. On what condition is this great blessing to be received? \_\_\_\_\_

23. How can we today render such service to Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

24. What curse will be pronounced upon the wicked? \_\_\_\_\_

25. Are alien sinners included in this judgment scene? \_\_\_\_\_

26. Who are the wicked in this lesson? \_\_\_\_\_

27. Whose duty is it to feed the hungry and visit the sick? \_\_\_\_\_

28. If the wicked of this lesson are servants of Jesus, who failed to do their duty? \_\_\_\_\_

29. What effect does this have on the doctrine of impossibility of apostasy? \_\_\_\_\_

30. Since this judgment is held the day the Lord comes, and since the wicked go from this judgment to eternal punishment, what must we conclude with reference to the resurrection of the wicked? \_\_\_\_\_

31. Since this judgment is held the day the Lord comes, and since the wicked go from this judgment to eternal punishment, what must we conclude with reference to a thousand years reign between two resurrections? \_\_\_\_\_

32. Since this judgment is held the day the Lord comes, and since the wicked go from this judgment to eternal punishment, what must we conclude with regard to a thousand year period on this earth after the judgment? \_\_\_\_\_

33. What proof do we have that the punishment of the wicked will never end? \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON NUMBER 24

# JESUS INSTITUTES THE LORD'S SUPPER

Mk. 14:22-25; 1 Cor. 11:23-29

### INTRODUCTION

No one denies the importance of the Lord's supper, yet the religious world is divided on the question of how to recognize and emphasize this importance. Practically the whole religious world refuses to accept regular weekly observance of the Lord's supper as being necessary. The absence of any positive command makes it all the more necessary that we study the passages of scripture which deal with the institution and the observance of the Lord's supper. As to the time for the observance, we are dependent upon the example of the early Christians. *"And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them."* (Acts 20:7a.) One other mention of the first day of the week in connection with worship is to be found in Paul's letter to the church at Corinth. *"Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come."* (1 Cor. 16:2.) It is true that no mention is made of the Lord's supper in this passage to the Corinthians, but there is an implication of a meeting of the saints on that day, and Paul's instruction to them is that they contribute money when they are met together on the first day of the week. That the early disciples under the guidance and teaching of the apostles met upon the first day of every week is suggested in the language used with reference to the gathering at Troas. When we say that the Americans celebrate their independence on the fourth of July, no one asks what fourth of July they mean. That is an annual date and whatever is to be done on that date is done as often as the date comes. We say the bill collector comes on the first of the month, and no one asks what month. That is a monthly date, and as often as the date comes, that which is to be done on the date is done. So the first day of the week is a weekly date and as often as the date comes, that which is done on the date should be done. Hence, when we read that the disciples met on the first day of the week to break bread, we conclude that it was a weekly observance.

### I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."* (1 Cor. 11:26).

**1. One Bread and One Cup.** Various doctrines have been taught with reference to the bread and the cup. The Catholics believe that when blessed by the priest, the bread becomes the literal body of Jesus Christ. On this ground they deny the cup to the laity since, they contend, that there is sufficient blood in the flesh for the laity. Besides being an impossibility, the doctrine is revolting in that the creature turns worse than cannibal and eats the literal flesh of his God. When Jesus instituted the supper, He took bread and said, *"This is My body."* That language is as strong as the idea can be expressed, and yet it is obvious that the bread was not transformed into His literal body because His fleshly hand held the bread. Paul says that a rock followed the Israelites in the wilderness, and that rock was Christ. (1 Cor. 10:4.) No one believes that the rock was literally Jesus Christ. Again Paul

says, Hagar is Mount Sinai (Gal. 4:24); no one believes that Hagar, Abraham's concubine, was actually and literally Mount Sinai. So when Jesus said this is My body, He simply meant this represents My body.

Others have difficulty with the text in reference to the number of containers used for the fruit of the vine. When Jesus instituted the supper, He took the cup. Nowhere is the plural of cup used; hence, some good brethren think it sinful to use more than one container when taking the Lord's supper. It should be noticed that the disciples drank the cup and that Jesus said, "*This cup is the new covenant in My blood.*" Surely no one thinks that the cup which they drank was the container, nor would anyone suppose that the container is the new covenant in His blood. Hence, the cup which Jesus took and blessed and which the disciples drank was simply the contents of the cup. Some brethren argue that the cup of the Lord is composed of both the container and the contents. If that be true, and one drinks the cup of the Lord, He must drink both the container and the contents. When Paul was at Ephesus, he wrote the church at Corinth and said, "*We partake of the one bread,*" and he said, "*The cup of blessing which we bless.*" (1 Cor. 10:16,17.) Paul at Ephesus and the church at Corinth drank one cup and ate one bread. Surely no one gets the idea that Paul at Ephesus drank out of the same container used by the brethren at Corinth. The one cup is the fruit of the vine, the contents and not the container.

**2. Proclaim His Death.** Paul says as often as we take the Lord's supper we proclaim the Lord's death. The Lord's supper is a monument in proof of the fact that Jesus died. Marble monuments perish, but this monument is not of such nature that it will perish with the passing of centuries. As long as Christians take the Lord's supper, the world has the proof of the death of Christ. Such a practice could not have escaped the criticism and denial of the enemies of Jesus during the first century if it had not been based upon fact. But since there is not a line of writing in criticism of their observance of the supper without basis in fact, the enemies of Christ must grant the fact of the death of Christ. Paul teaches that this will be done until Jesus comes again. Hence, when we take the supper, we should think both of His death for our sins and His second coming to take us out of this world of sin.

## II. A COMMENTARY ON MARK 14:22-25; 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-29.

### 1. Record of the Institution (Mark 14:22-25)

*As they were eating.* This refers to the eating of the passover supper. The reader will find some instructions with reference to preparation for this last passover in Mark 14:12ff. and Matt. 26:17-25. A record of the institution of the passover is found in Exodus 12:1-14. In the institution of the passover, it seems that nothing but roast and bitter herbs with unleavened bread were used in the supper. However, in later times, wine was added and Jewish writings specify as many as four cups of wine at certain intervals during the eating of the supper. The first cup was taken following a benediction, the second cup was taken in connection with a son in the family asking his father to explain the significance of the passover. The third cup was taken in connection with a prayer which followed the meal, and the fourth cup was taken in connection with the singing of the Psalms which were usually used in connection with the passover. These Psalms were 113 to 118.

*He took the bread.* This was, of course, the unleavened bread of the passover. No one denies that our

Lord used unleavened bread in instituting the supper, but many contend that is no reason why we should be limited to use unleavened bread today. However, those who respect the example of Christ and His apostles will continue to use unleavened bread.

*When He had blessed it He brake it.* The word blessed has bothered many. Often we hear it said that we cannot bless the bread as did Jesus, but we can give thanks. Here Mark says that Jesus blessed the bread. Luke says that He gave thanks. (Luke 22:19.) Hence, Jesus did not do some miraculous or mystical thing when He blessed the bread; He simply gave thanks for it. So we can do all to the bread that Jesus did. The breaking of the bread seems to have some significance. It is probable that Jesus intended to suggest the suffering which His body was about to undergo. One author says, "This breaking of the bread represented the sufferings of Jesus about to take place . . . this broken bread was the manner in which My body will be broken; or this will serve to recall My dying sufferings to your remembrance. It is not meant that His body would be literally broken as the bread was, but the bread would be a significant emblem or symbol to recall to their recollections His suffering." (Barnes.)

*Take; this is My body.* While Jesus was still living in the flesh and while His hand of flesh held a piece of bread, He said, "This is My body." Surely He did not mean for the statement to be taken literally. When Jesus said, "I am the vine," He certainly did not mean that statement to be taken literally. Again when He said, "I am the bread which came down out of heaven," He did not mean that He was transformed into actual bread. If His statement that He was bread does not mean that was transformed into literal bread, we should not take this statement, this bread is My body, to mean that the bread was transformed into His literal body.

*He took a cup.* Whether Jesus passed one literal container and all the apostles drank out of this container is not stated in this or any other passage. Mark simply says He took a cup and gave to them and they all drank of it. Furthermore, while holding this cup Jesus said, "This is My blood . . . which is poured out." The word *this* refers to the cup and yet Jesus says, "This is My blood," that is, this cup is My blood. Hence, the term cup cannot refer to the container, for by no stretch of the imagination can we think that Jesus said that the container was His blood. Obviously He spoke of the contents of the cup which He held in His hand.

*Blood of the new covenant.* When the old covenant was given to the Jews, blood was sprinkled on the book and all the people (Heb. 9:19), and by this action was the covenant ratified or sealed. So Jesus says this cup is My blood of the new covenant, that is; it represents or symbolizes the blood which I am about to shed to ratify and seal the new covenant. A covenant was not of force without and until blood had been shed in connection with it.

*Which is poured out for Me.* Some brethren carelessly use the word "spill" instead of "pour." The word spill implies accident. The shedding of Jesus' blood was not accidental; He poured it out or shed it on purpose. Hence, it is incorrect to say that Jesus spilled His blood for many.

*I drink it anew in the kingdom of God.* Jesus indicated in this language that He would drink of the fruit of the vine in the kingdom of God, but since the Lord's supper is to be taken only until He comes again (1 Cor. 11:26), and since He is to drink it in the kingdom we conclude that He drinks it in the kingdom of God before His second coming. Certainly He does not literally drink of it as we do, but He does commune with us as we drink the cup. Paul said, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is

*it not a communion of the blood of Christ?"* In this passage Paul suggests our communion with Christ in the world. Paul condemned the eating of things sacrificed to idols on the ground that those doing so were holding communion with the demons. (1 Cor. 10:20.) Hence, when we partake of the table of the Lord, we are holding communion with the Lord. In this sense, He drinks the cup with us.

## **2. Paul's Teaching at Corinth (1 Cor. 11:23-29)**

*I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you.* Speaking of the gospel which he preached, Paul said, "*For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ.*" (Gal. 1:12.) Here Paul wishes the Corinthians to understand that his teaching on the Lord's supper is not based on human tradition, but on a direct revelation from Jesus Christ.

*In the night in which He was betrayed.* The betrayal of Jesus was the act in which He was delivered to His enemies for crucifixion. Paul used this statement perhaps to include the whole of the sufferings of Jesus and to suggest the solemnity with which we should partake of the supper.

*When He had given thanks.* Here again we have the expression thanks instead of blessed as we have in Mark. Hence, we should have no trouble in concluding that Jesus simply gave thanks when He blessed the bread. Again we have the same order as we have in the gospel records of the giving of thanks and the breaking of the bread. The giving of thanks precedes the breaking, and it is well for us to follow that example.

*This is My body, which is for you.* The King James Version adds the word broken, suggesting that His body was broken for us. Some object to this statement because it is said that not a bone was broken. Our version leaves out the word broken, but not because it contradicted the statement with reference to the breaking of His bones. We often speak of our flesh being broken when wounded. So when His side was pierced, His body was broken. Hence, the statement in the King James Version is not objectionable.

*This do in remembrance of Me.* No one wishes to be forgotten, and doubtless Jesus does not want us to forget Him. But the joy which He derives from being remembered is not to be compared with the good which we derive from remembering Him. Hence, it is primarily for our good that He gave us this monument by which to remember Him. The bit of bread and fruit of the vine we take cannot be of any physical good to us. Hence, the only good we derive from the Lord's supper is the meditation and its influence on us. Those who go through the form without meditating upon His death and looking forward to His second coming get absolutely no benefit from the supper. Paul says that, "*For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep.*" This is the result of failing to discern the body of Christ in the supper. By discerning the body is meant meditating upon the sufferings His body endured and the purposes for which He suffered. It does us good to be reminded each week that Jesus suffered the penalty for our sins. It helps to keep us faithful in the performance of our duty, and when we remember that sin made it necessary for Him to suffer on the cross, we are restrained from indulging in sin.

*Drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner.* Those who fail to discern the Lord's body, or meditate upon His death, take the supper in an unworthy manner.

*Shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.* This is a rather difficult statement, but seems to mean that one who takes the supper in an unworthy manner is guilty of conduct equal to that of which the Jews were guilty in putting Christ to death. This thought is enforced by the statement that he that eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body. This word judgment means condemnation. Hence, the individual who takes the supper in an unworthy manner eats and drinks condemnation. This condemnation follows because the individual is guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. This view of the matter should impress us with the seriousness and the solemnity of the Lord's supper and cause us to be more careful of the manner in which we partake of the supper.

### **III. SOME APPLICATIONS**

1. When Jesus said the bread is His body and the cup is His blood, the statement is no more to be taken literally than is Paul's statement, "*Now this Hagar is mount Sinai.*"
2. On what do your thoughts dwell while the emblems are being passed? This is a time of serious meditation, not a time for visiting with the one sitting by, or for planning how to spend the afternoon.
3. Failure to observe the Lord's supper properly is the cause of spiritual illness and death. We should, therefore, give this part of the worship much prayerful thought.

## QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 24

# JESUS INSTITUTES THE LORD'S SUPPER

1. What does the religious world think of the importance of the Lord's supper? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How do we determine the time for the observance of the Lord's supper? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What other act of worship is mentioned as being on the first day of the week? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Can you prove that the Lord's supper should be observed weekly? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the Catholic position with reference to the bread? And the cup? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What did Jesus mean when He said, "*This is My body*"? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Give examples to prove your position. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. How can you disprove the contention that only one container may be used in the supper? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Of what is the Lord's supper a monument? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. In what way does this monument differ from monuments men build? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. In connection with what meal did Jesus institute the Lord's supper? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. What do you know of the manner in which the Jews celebrated the passover? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. What is unleavened bread? And why should we use it in the Lord's supper? \_\_\_\_\_  
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14. What did Jesus do when He blessed the bread? \_\_\_\_\_

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15. What is the significance of breaking the bread? \_\_\_\_\_

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16. What is the meaning of the word cup as used in our lesson? \_\_\_\_\_

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17. What did Jesus mean when He said the cup was the blood of the new covenant? \_\_\_\_\_

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18. Is it correct to say that Jesus "spilled" His blood? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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19. What is meant by Jesus drinking the cup in the kingdom of God? \_\_\_\_\_

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20. Where did Paul get his instruction as to how to observe the Lord's supper? \_\_\_\_\_

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21. Is the bread to be broken before or after giving of thanks? \_\_\_\_\_

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22. Is there any significance to be attached to this order? \_\_\_\_\_

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23. Was the body of Jesus broken for us? \_\_\_\_\_

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24. What indication do we have that Jesus wishes to be remembered? \_\_\_\_\_

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25. What is there about the Lord's supper which is profitable to us? \_\_\_\_\_

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26. What happens to us if we do not take the supper in the right manner? \_\_\_\_\_

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27. What is meant by being guilty of the body and blood of the Lord? \_\_\_\_\_

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28. What is meant by discerning the body and blood of the Lord? \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON NUMBER 25

# JESUS CONDEMNED AND CRUCIFIED

Matt. 27:26,29-38

### INTRODUCTION

For the events between the institution of the Lord's supper and the arrest of Jesus in Gethsemane, we are indebted to John. In chapters 14-17 we have a record of the conversation which Jesus had with His disciples and of the prayer which He prayed to His Father before He entered Gethsemane. It was at this time that He spoke of the mansions in His Father's house which He was going to prepare for His disciples. It was at this time also that Philip asked Him to show him the Father and Jesus replied, "*He that has seen Me has seen the Father.*" In both the fourteenth and sixteenth chapters is recorded the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit. It is from these statements that we learn much of the nature and the work of the Holy Spirit. The lesson on the vine and the branches, teaching the necessity of our relationship with Christ and the consequence of failing to abide in Him were given at this time. In the prayer which Jesus prayed to the Father are a number of interesting things suggested. (1) A knowledge of God and His Son means eternal life. Since we are dependent upon Jesus for a revelation of the Father (Matt. 11:27), and since this knowledge is essential to eternal life, we come to realize the importance of Jesus and His value to us. (2) Jesus asserts that He came from the Father and that He was with the Father before the world was. This is equal to an affirmation of His deity and eternity. (3) Jesus suggests that: faith comes by hearing the words of the apostles, for He says, "*Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on Me through their word.*" (Verse 20.) (4) The nature of Christian unity is suggested in the unity which exists between the Father and the Son, for He prays that those who believe on Him through the words of the apostles may be one as He and the Father are one.

Two other events of importance occurred between the time of our last lesson and this one. One was the agreement of Judas to betray the Lord for money; the other was the denial of Jesus by Peter. In spite of the fact that Peter was warned that he would deny Jesus, and in spite of his confident affirmation that he would not do so, he failed when the test came.

### I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* (Rom 5:8).

**1. The Objects of God's Love.** (a) The weak. If we include a part of the context in which this key scripture is found, we will find a number of expressions which indicate the objects of the love of God. In verse 6 Paul speaks of our being weak. The word weak suggests that man was unable to save himself. He had neither the wisdom to devise the means of salvation nor the ability to execute a plan which would save him. It is humiliating to the wise men of the world to suggest that they have not the wisdom to devise a plan of salvation, but Paul teaches very clearly that the world through its wisdom could not come to know God. (1 Cor. 1:21.) He also suggests that "*God chose the foolish*

*things of the world, that He might put to shame them that are wise.*” (1 Cor. 1:27.) It was this weak condition of the world that became an object of pity on the part of God and moved Him to send His Son to save the world. (b) The ungodly. Paul says that Christ died for the ungodly. In another place he says that God justified the ungodly. (Rom. 4:5.) In spite of the ungodliness of humanity, God loved them. This is the one thing about God’s love that makes it infinitely greater than man’s love. Though a man may be found who would die for the righteous, yet no one would die for the ungodly, but God commends His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. (c) It is true that the word ungodly is similar in meaning to the word sinner. But while the former suggests inactivity, the latter suggests activity. We were not only unlike God in that we failed to do good, but we were sinners in that we were consistently engaged in the doing of things that were wrong.

**2. Christ Died for Us.** (a) To atone for our sins. Nothing man can do can atone for sins. The obedience which we render to God does not atone for sin. We are taught that nothing short of the shedding of the blood of the Son of God could atone for our sins. Hence, it is said that Christ died for our sins. (1 Cor. 13:3.) In this death He made satisfaction for our sins so that God may forgive us without doing wrong. Whether we understand why or not, it was not possible for God to forgive us of our sins without Jesus suffering the penalty in our place. It was the suffering of the penalty that atoned for our sins. (b) To reconcile us to God. Men had been alienated and had become enemies of God through their evil works. (Col. 1:21.) The sin of Adam had nothing to do with our alienation from God. (Isa. 59:1,2; Eph. 2:1.) It was necessary that Jesus die for us in order to reconcile us unto God. *“Yet now has He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unreprouvable before Him.”* (Col. 1:22.) (c) To give us access to God. The death of Christ not only reconciles us to God but makes it possible for us to approach God. *“For through Him we both have our access in one spirit unto the Father.”* The Hebrew letter has much to say about our approach to God through Christ, teaching us that we enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way through the vale, that is to say his flesh. (Heb. 10:19-21.)

## II. A COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW 27:26, 29-38

### 1. Jesus or Barabbas (Matt. 27:26)

*Then released he unto them Barabbas.* Little is known of this man. His name means “son of the father.” The word simply suggests that he was the son of a rabbi. He is the man whom the Jerusalem mob chose to set free in preference to Jesus. Pilate had a custom of setting free one prisoner whom the people chose. Not wishing to condemn Jesus as the Jews demanded, Pilate thought he saw a way out of his dilemma. Surely the mob would not ask that Barabbas be set free instead of Jesus, for Barabbas had taken part in an insurrection in which murder had been committed. (Mark 15:1.) But the high priests stirred the people to ask for the release of Barabbas and the death of Jesus. This incident may well be used to illustrate vividly the fact that Jesus died in our place. When the guard went for Barabbas and opened his cell door, likely Barabbas thought the time had come for his execution. When the guard explained that Jesus was being substituted, that Jesus would die instead of Barabbas, surely his joy knew no bounds. But Jesus died in our places as surely as He took the place of Barabbas that day.

*Jesus he scourged and delivered to be crucified.* Scourging is an ancient method of punishment. The law of Moses prescribed scourging for women guilty of unchastity as well as men. One type of

scourging was known as bastinado, consisting of the use of a stick usually applied to the soles of the feet. The form used on Jesus was that of a whip made by fastening rawhide thongs to a handle, and usually knots were tied in the end of the thongs, or light pieces of metal or bone tied in the ends. The body was stripped to the waist and the hands were tied to a post. A Roman citizen was protected in that it was unlawful to scourge him. Scourging was practised among the Jews. They limited the number of stripes to forty and they stopped at the count of thirty-nine for fear of exceeding the limit. (2 Cor. 11:24.) But Jesus was not a Roman citizen, hence did not have that protection. The only limit to the number of stripes laid upon Him was the strength of the soldier or his thirst for blood and cruelty.

## **2. Jesus Mocked by the Soldiers (Matt. 27:29-31)**

*The soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium.* The word Praetorium is used to indicate the headquarters of the Roman officers and was usually applied to the governor's official residence. We are told that this building which was the palace of Herod occupied the highest part of the southwest hill in Jerusalem called Zion.

*Gathered unto him the whole band.* The word band here is from cohort and usually consisted of six hundred men, or a tenth part of a Roman legion. Army life in our day makes no contribution to the good manners or gentleness of men. The common soldier of the time of Christ was known for his brutality. It is almost unthinkable that our Lord should be forced to bear the insults and foul treatment of such a bestial group.

*They stripped Him and put on Him a scarlet robe.* In the place of scarlet, Mark says they put a purple robe on Him. We are told, "The ancients gave the name purple to any color that had a mixture of red in it, and consequently these different colors might be called by the same name." (Barnes.) "This was probably the short military woolen cloak worn by officers, in color either scarlet or purple, and fastened by a buckle on the right shoulder. Some think it was a castoff garment from the wardrobe of King Herod, which they found and appropriated to this purpose." (Pulpit Commentary.)

*They platted a crown of thorns.* Their object was to mock Jesus in His claim to be a king. They used some sort of bramble or thorny vine which grew abundantly in Palestine with which to make a crown. They would not be careful to keep the thorns from piercing His flesh.

*A reed in His right hand.* The reed was a straight slender growth found in marshy places especially along the banks of the Jordan. The reed was a poor imitation of a sceptre, and hence, appropriate for the use which the soldiers made of it.

*They knelt down before Him.* As they knelt before Him they said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" The word hail is a term commonly used in a salutation to a king. It might also be used in saluting friends. It is a term of high respect. In this use of the word it was for ridicule and mockery. They had no intentions of paying honors to Jesus. They considered Him a religious fanatic who would be overcome and outdone by the religious leaders. They spat upon Him. As in our time so then, spitting in the face of an individual was a means of showing the greatest contempt possible.

*They smote Him on the head.* This was done with the reed which they had put in His hand. Perhaps

a reed was not a sufficient weight to do much injury, but it would serve to drive the thorns of His mock crown deeper into His flesh. After offering Him every insult it was possible for course, cruel soldiers to give Him they put upon Him His own clothes and led Him away to the place of crucifixion.

### **3. Simon Carries the Cross (Matt. 27:32)**

*As they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name.* Little is known of this man who was compelled to bear the cross of Jesus. It is known, however, that he was the father of Alexander and Rufus. Paul mentions a Rufus in Romans 16:13, which scholars have usually identified as the one here mentioned. If so, we may well suppose that Simon and his sons were believers in Christ. Cyrene was a district in northern Africa. Whether this Simon lived in Cyrene and was in Jerusalem solely for the feast, or whether he formerly came from Cyrene and now lived in or near Jerusalem has been a question with scholars.

*Him they compelled to bear the cross.* In John 19:17 we learn that Jesus started out of the city bearing His own cross. Our text says that they found Simon “*as they came out.*” Hence, we conclude that Jesus carried His cross about to the city limits where they met Simon coming into the city. Tradition has it that Jesus fell through weakness and was unable to bear the cross any farther. Since the scripture does not say that He fell, we can only conjecture that Simon was compelled to bear it because He could bear it no farther.

### **4. The Crucifixion (Matt. 27:33-38)**

*A place called Golgotha.* Golgotha is a Hebrew word and as our text explains means a skull. There are several wild speculations as to why this place was called Golgotha. One tradition attributed to Origen says that Adam was buried there and that his skull was found and gave the place its name. The most probable suggestion is that this was the common place for crucifixions and that skulls were plentiful. The actual location of this place is not certainly known since authorities differ in their conclusions. Some claim that the place is now within the city limits, while others point out a small hill northwest of the city on the Damascus road.

*They gave Him wine to drink, mingled with gall.* This potion was given to stupefy the senses, to render men insensible to the pain incident to such a cruel death. Gall usually means a bitter secretion from the liver, but here indicates simply some bitter substance which was mixed with the wine.

*He would not drink.* Jesus refused to take this drink because it was necessary in the wisdom of God that He suffer to atone for the sins of the world. Had He accepted this drink He would have been rendered less conscious if not altogether unconscious of His sufferings. If He had accepted this drink the thief would have gone unblessed, and we would have been robbed of several statements which indicate His thinking while on the cross.

*They parted His garments among them, casting lots.* Custom allowed the executioners to have the garments of the one crucified. It was customary to crucify people in the nude as a matter of humiliation.

*This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.* From John we learn that this title was prepared by Pilate and was

conceived in terms studiously offensive to the Jews with whom he was deeply indignant.

*There were crucified with Him two robbers. In this was fulfilled the prophecy which said, "He was numbered with the transgressors." (Isa. 53:12.)*

### **III. SOME APPLICATIONS**

1. If people could see a man crucified and see the suffering which our Savior endured in order that sins might be forgiven, surely all would be more careful to resist temptations. It is not simply the sins of the other man, but our own sins that made it necessary for Jesus to die this horrible death.
2. Surely all of us would count it an honor to be privileged to bear the cross as did Simon of Cyrene, but we overlook the fact that we may as surely bear the cross as did Simon. When we suffer ridicule and persecution and when we deny ourselves in order that we may preach the gospel to the lost, we are bearing the cross.
3. To the people of our Lord's time, crucifixion meant about the same as dragging the nude body of a man through the streets until he is dead means to us today. It was their way of showing the greatest ridicule and contempt, hence, Jesus suffered the most shameful and horrible death it was possible for man to inflict.

## QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 25

# JESUS CONDEMNED AND CRUCIFIED

1. To whom are we indebted for a narration of the incidents between the institution of the Lord's supper and the events of Gethsemane? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name some of the items of interest mentioned in this connection. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Name some things said of the Holy Spirit in these chapters. \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Name and discuss four interesting things suggested in the prayer of Jesus. \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Name and discuss the objects of God's love mentioned in our lesson. \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

6. What distinction is made between the meaning of the words ungodly and sinner? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Give and discuss three reasons why Christ died for us. \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

8. What does the word Barabbas mean? And what is known of this man? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Of what crime was this man guilty? \_\_\_\_\_

10. Why was Barabbas brought into the story? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. What is suggested to us by the fact that Jesus died in the place of Barabbas? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Can you describe the Roman method of scourging? \_\_\_\_\_

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13. What is meant by the Praetorium? \_\_\_\_\_

14. How many men were usually in a band or cohort? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Describe the treatment Jesus received from the band of soldiers? \_\_\_\_\_

16. What was the primary purpose of such treatment? \_\_\_\_\_

17. What conception do you think the soldiers had of Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

18. What do you know of Simon? And of his sons? \_\_\_\_\_

19. Did Jesus fall beneath the weight of His cross? \_\_\_\_\_

20. How far do you think Jesus carried His own cross? \_\_\_\_\_

21. Where was Jesus crucified? And what is the meaning of the word? \_\_\_\_\_

22. Is the place of the crucifixion certainly known? \_\_\_\_\_

23. What was Jesus given to drink while He was on the cross? \_\_\_\_\_

24. Did he take the drink? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

25. What was done with the garments of Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

26. What title was placed over Jesus? Who put it there? And why? \_\_\_\_\_

27. Who were crucified at the same time with Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

28. What prophecy was fulfilled in this act? \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON NUMBER 26

# THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION

Lk. 24:1-6, 50-53

### INTRODUCTION

Though others had been raised from the dead before the time Jesus was raised, His resurrection differs from theirs in several important points: (1) He foretold His own resurrection. *“From that time began Jesus to show unto His disciples, that He must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up.”* (Matt. 16:21.) No one could conceive of Lazarus or the son of the widow at Nain predicting their resurrection and the time for it. Yet Jesus was able to predict that He would be raised and that it would be on the third day. (2) He was raised to die no more. The resurrection of Jesus differed from all others in that He was raised to die no more, while they must meet the grim reaper a second time to be buried in the hope of the final resurrection. (3) He had something to do with His own resurrection. No one can conceive of Lazarus or the son of the widow at Nain having anything to do with their own resurrection. And while we do not know how much Jesus had to do with His own resurrection, we do have His statement which indicates that His own power was to be used in the raising of His body. *“Therefore does the Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No one takes it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again.”* (John 10:17,18.) Jesus said He had this commandment from His Father, yet it is clearly implied that His own power was used in His resurrection. (4) The resurrection of Jesus differs from all others in that it is said to be the first fruits of them that sleep. *“But now has Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep.”* (1 Cor. 15:20.) The term firstfruits implies that His resurrection guarantees the resurrection of all others.

### I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*“He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”* (Matt. 28:6).

**1. There Is No Other Event in All History Better Substantiated than Is the Resurrection of Jesus.** We have the word of an angel that He was raised from the dead. Matthew tells us that an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. The rolling away of the stone was not essential to the resurrection of Christ. It simply made the soldiers watching the tomb conscious of the fact that they were guarding an empty tomb and it enabled the disciples to see for themselves that He had been raised. In the language of our text, the angel said, *“He is not here; for He is risen.”* Again he said, *“He is risen from the dead; and lo, He goes before you into Galilee.”*

**2. The Empty Tomb.** The angel not only said that He is risen but he also said, *“Come see the place where the Lord lay.”* The empty tomb was a thorn in the side of the Jewish leaders who condemned Him. They tried to invent a story which would explain the empty tomb. They paid the guards *“much money”* to say, *“His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we slept.”* Of course, this

was a thin explanation, but it was the best that could be done; and the fact that no writer of the time denies the fact of the empty tomb is still evidence of the resurrection of the Lord.

**3. The Lives of the Men Who Wrote of the Resurrection of Jesus Prove the Truth of Their Statements.** These men ate and talked and lived with Jesus for more than three years before His death. They were separated from Him but three days. It is unreasonable to think that they would fail to recognize a man with whom they had been so intimately associated after being separated from Him for so short a time. Furthermore, these men all died violent deaths rather than give up their belief that Jesus arose from the dead. They went about telling the story of His resurrection, suffering persecution constantly for the privilege of telling people that Jesus not only died for them, but that He arose again for their justification. Surely these men would not have suffered for the privilege of perpetuating a falsehood.

**4. The Conversion of Saul Cannot Be Explained on Any Other Ground than That Jesus Arose from the Dead.** Saul was a zealous persecutor of the members of the church, going to Damascus for no other reason than to persecute those who believed in the resurrection. He went away from Damascus a believer in the resurrection of the Lord. What is the explanation? He says that he saw the Lord and talked with Him. He has been accused of epilepsy and various other things, but no one can read his writings and hold seriously to any view other than that he saw the resurrected Lord who changed the whole course of his life.

## **II. A COMMENTARY ON LUKE 24:1-6, 50-53.**

### **1. The Resurrection (Luke 24:1-6)**

*On the first day of the week.* Some have been bothered by the fact that Matthew says, “*Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week.*” (Matt. 28:1) Barnes explains that the expression in Matthew may be expressed in these words, “In the night following the Sabbath, for the Sabbath closed at sunset, as it began to dawn ....” It was early dawn when the women came to the tomb. The first day of the week started at six o’clock the preceding evening. Hence, there was plenty of time for the resurrection of Jesus between the beginning of the first day of the week and the time the women arrived at the tomb.

*Bringing spices which they had prepared.* Some of these spices had been prepared on the evening of the burial. It seems that time had not permitted them to put the body away as they wished to do, so they came early on the first day of the week to complete that which had already been begun. “The customs at this time would seem to have been to anoint the body and wrap it in fine linen, with spices and ointments in the folds, and afterwards to pour more ointment upon it, and perhaps also to burn spices. In the case of our Savior, the hurried burial and the following of the Sabbath may have caused unusual delay. Ordinarily everything was probably completed at once.” (McClintock and Strong.)

*They found the stone rolled away.* From Matthew we learn that the angel rolled the stone away. Some have carelessly concluded that Jesus rolled the stone away when He arose from the dead. The tomb was constructed by digging out a room in the solid rock. “In front of the tomb belonging to a rich family there was generally a vestibule open to the air, then a low entrance sometimes, as in this case, in the side of a rock, leading into a square chamber of moderate dimensions, on one side of which was

a place for the body, either cut some seven feet into the rock, or lengthways, three feet deep, with a low arch over it ... the tomb had been lately made, and the door which closed the entrance, the only aperture into the room, was a large stone.” (Speaker’s Commentary.)

*Two men stood by them in dazzling apparel.* Critics have thought to find a contradiction in the fact that Luke mentions two angels, while Mark and Matthew mention but one. There is, however, no contradiction. Neither Matthew nor Mark deny there were two; they simply mention that an angel rolled the stone away and that an angel spoke to the women. Luke mentions the fact that two were present. Others think they find an inconsistency in that Luke says that two men stood by them, while Matthew and Mark mention angels. Since angels assume the form of men, they are often spoken of as men. (Gen. 18:2,16,22; 19:1-5.) The mention of dazzling, or shining apparel should indicate that these were heavenly beings.

*Why seek the living among the dead?* This is the language of the angel to the women. Jesus is referred to here as the living, or Him that lives, indicating that He had already been raised from the dead. This reminds us of the language of Jesus when He appeared to John on the Isle of Patmos on the memorable Lord’s day and said, “*Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.*” (Rev. 1:17,18.) John also speaks of Him in similar language saying, “*And the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness. and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.*” (1 John 1:2.) Again John refers to Him in a similar manner, saying, “*This is the true God, and eternal life.*” (1 John 5:20b.) He is spoken of as the Living one, not simply because He was raised from the dead but because, “*In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.*” (John 1:4.) Again, “*For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He will.*” (John 5:21.) The language of our text implies that we should not seek the Living one, the source of all life, among the dead.

*Remember how He spoke unto you when He was yet in Galilee?* This refers to another prediction of His resurrection. “*And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be delivered up into the hands of men; and they shall kill Him, and the third day He shall be raised up. And they were exceeding sorry.*” (Matt. 17:22,23.) See Mark 9:30 and Luke 9:44 for other records of what He told His disciples while they were yet in Galilee. The verses following this portion of our text explains that He told them while He was in Galilee of His approaching death and resurrection.

## **2. The Ascension (Luke 24:50-53)**

*He led them out over against Bethany.* The exact site of our Lord’s ascension, like so many other sites, is not known. Ancient tradition says that He ascended from the central summit of the Mount of Olives, but this language seems to indicate that it was somewhere on the eastern slope. Bethany was east of the Mount of Olives, and if He led them until they were over against Bethany, we would conclude that He was on that side of the slope next to Bethany. Dean Stanley says, “On the wild uplands which immediately overhang the village, He finally withdrew from the eyes of His disciples, in a seclusion which perhaps could nowhere else be found so near the stir of the mighty city; the long reach of Olivet screening those hills, and those hills the village beneath them, from all sound or sight of the city behind; the view opening only on the wide waste of desert rocks and ever-descending valleys, into the depths of the distant Jordan and its mysterious lake.”

*Lifted up His hands and blessed them.* Luke records some of the conversation that took place between Jesus and His disciples on this occasion. According to Luke they asked Jesus, “*Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? And He said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father has set within His own authority. But you shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*” (Acts 1:6-8.) The term blessed indicates that He simply pronounced upon them His benediction.

*He was parted from them.* Our text says that while in the act of blessing them He was parted from them and was carried up into heaven. Again we have to turn to Luke’s other record of this event to fill in the details. “*And when He had said these things, as they were looking, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they were looking steadfastly into heaven as He went, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; who also said, You men of Galilee, why stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you beheld Him going into heaven.*” (Acts 1:9-11.)

*And they worshipped Him.* Barnes makes three practical suggestions from this verse. First, they offered this worship to an absent Savior. It was after He left them and had vanished out of their sight. It was therefore an act of religion, and was the first religious homage that was paid to Jesus after He left the world. Next, if they worshipped an absent Savior -- a Savior unseen by the physical eye it is right for us to do so. It was an example which we may and should follow. Next, if worship may be rendered to Jesus, He is divine.

*Return to Jerusalem with great joy.* The apostles mourned when Jesus died and was buried. On this occasion, He leaves them for what they have every reason to believe is a longer period, and yet they rejoiced. Surely they now began to see something far greater than they had ever seen in the death, the resurrection, and the ascension of Jesus.

*Continually in the temple, praising God.* Luke says that when the apostles returned to Jerusalem they spent their time in the temple praising God. They understood sufficiently the plans and purposes of Jesus to rejoice in the fact that they were to have a part in the working out of these great plans. We, too, should count it a joy to be a part of the plans which had their beginning with the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus.

### **III. SOME APPLICATIONS**

1. No other event in history has more valid evidence to support it than has the resurrection of Jesus, yet many refuse to accept it simply because it is not in harmony with human reason.
2. The resurrection of the human nature of Jesus is proof of our resurrection. It is proof also that we may overcome death through His power.
3. His ascension is proof of the fact that our bodies may be made in the likeness of His glorious body and fit to enter heaven.

**QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 26**

**THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION**

1. Give and discuss four ways in which the resurrection of Jesus differs from the other resurrections mentioned in the Bible. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What is meant by the term “firstfruits” as applied to His resurrection? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Whose word do we have as proof of the resurrection of Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. How does the tomb of Jesus contribute to the proof of His resurrection? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. How do the lives of the men who wrote of the resurrection tend to prove it? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What connection is there between the conversion of Paul and the resurrection of Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. On what day was the resurrection? And can you harmonize the accounts of it? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Why did women come to the tomb of Jesus? And how was such anointing done? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. How was the tomb of Jesus constructed? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. To whom did it belong? \_\_\_\_\_

11. How many angels appeared at the tomb? And how many rolled the stone away? \_\_\_\_\_

12. What term did the angel use to refer to Jesus? And what is the meaning of this term as applied to Jesus?

13. Of what conversation did the angel remind the disciples of Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

14. Is the exact site of the ascension known? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Near what city was it? And on what mountain? \_\_\_\_\_

16. What conversation took place between Jesus and His apostles at this time? \_\_\_\_\_

17. In what act was Jesus engaged when He was taken up from His apostles? \_\_\_\_\_

18. What three lessons do we learn from the fact that the apostles worshiped Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

19. Where did the apostles go? And what were they doing after the ascension? \_\_\_\_\_