



Life of Christ IV

International Alpha Bible Course
by Ralph Vincent Reynolds

LIFE OF CHRIST PART IV

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INTERNATIONAL ALPHA BIBLE COURSE

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Foreign Missions Division
United Pentecostal Church International
Hazelwood, Missouri 63042-2299

An OVERSEAS MINISTRIES Publication

Rv 200907

Lesson One

THE TRIUMPHANT ENTRY

Scriptural References: Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19

A. THE TRIUMPHANT ENTRY FULFILLED PROPHECY

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass” (Zechariah 9:9).

In the life of our Lord every Old Testament prophecy had to be literally fulfilled. The triumphant entry was no exception. Zechariah had foretold of this moment of triumph and public acclaim and had described exactly how He would ride into Jerusalem. In this prophecy, He was seen as a humble king, one whose interests lay in justice and salvation. His primary concern was peace rather than war. This prophecy stated Jesus would ride upon a colt, the foal of an ass. A horse was the symbol of war and victory; an ass was the symbol of peaceful royalty.

B. PREVIOUSLY, JESUS HAD REFUSED PUBLIC ACCLAMATION

“When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone” (John 6:15).

Up to this moment, Jesus had deliberately refused to head any popular movement. He forbade public proclamation of His messiahship and kept Himself from any entanglement in the contemporary political situation. Throughout His public ministry, Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that God’s Anointed should be a proclaimer of divine truth, not a violent agitator (Matthew 12:16-21) as were some false messiahs who had preceded Him. Pilate could testify, “I find no fault in this man.”

C. THE TRIUMPHANT ENTRY

The time had come for Jesus to make an open declaration of His claims as the Messiah. Because this proclamation had to be symbolic, Jesus deliberately planned the messianic demonstration which would take place. Jesus knew that He was riding to His death, but He still made preparations and received the homage of the people calmly and deliberately. He knew every crisis in His life was part of the divine plan.

Not far from Bethany was the village of Bethpage. As they neared Bethpage on

their way to Jerusalem, Jesus sent two of His disciples into the village to get the animal upon which He would ride into Jerusalem. He told them they would find an ass and colt tied in front of a house. They were to bring them both, and if the owner asked why they loosed the animals, they were to reply, "The Lord hath need of him." Since the ass was a symbol of peaceful royalty, this would show He was entering the city without any demonstration of force, but as the Prince of Peace.

A multitude of Galilean peasants who had already arrived in Jerusalem wanted to see Jesus and Lazarus and had set out for Bethany. These were joined by others who were convinced that Jesus would now establish His kingdom. They met Jesus and His disciples and escorted Him into the city. They cut off branches of palms and spread them in the road along with their garments. They waved palm branches and shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" This chorus resounded throughout the hills and attracted thousands of other pilgrims. Their enthusiasm mounted higher and higher as they drew near and entered the city.

The word *hosanna* means "save now." It originally was uttered as a supplication, but here in the triumphant entry it became a shout of welcome.

The Pharisees who had come to spy on Jesus were in despair. They tried to silence the chorus of praise, but were unable to do so. They had planned to have Him arrested before the Feast, but now the whole multitude was acclaiming Him and wildly cheering Him. In their desperation they appealed to Jesus, "Master, rebuke thy disciples." Jesus knew their hearts and answered, "I tell you that if these should hold their tongues, the very stones will cry out."

D. JESUS KNEW THAT JUDGMENT WAS INEVITABLE

This was a moment of great rejoicing for the disciples of our Lord. For three years they had looked forward to a time like this. Their hearts swelling with joy, they joined in the singing and cheering of the crowd. They eagerly anticipated their Master's coronation as king of Israel. However, Jesus was under no illusions. He knew this enthusiasm would soon pass and that within the week many who were now praising Him would be clamoring, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" He knew the nation had missed its day of opportunity and judgment was inevitable.

When the city came into full view, Jesus looked upon the magnificent view spread before Him. His eyes saw a city of desolation and the destruction that would take place in less than forty years when Titus would take the city with his Roman legions. Jesus broke out into a wailing lamentation. The voice of the multitude hushed, and much of their enthusiasm vanished as they listened to the pronouncement of judgment by the One whom they had acclaimed King.

"For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee

even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation” (Luke 19:43-44).

Lesson Two

PASSION WEEK

A. THE ACCOUNT OF PASSION WEEK IS VERY IMPORTANT

We may understand the importance of the events of this week if we examine the amount of material given by the writers of the four Gospels.

1. Mark: out of sixteen chapters, the account of Passion Week begins at chapter 11.
2. Matthew: out of twenty-eight chapters, the account of Passion Week begins at chapter 21.
3. Luke: out of twenty-four chapters, the account of Passion Week begins at chapter 19.
4. John: out of twenty-one chapters, the account of Passion Week begins at chapter 12.

Again, we may understand the importance given to this week by this fact: If the entire life of Jesus were as fully written as this week, it would require eighty volumes as large as the Bible to tell the complete story.

B. IT IS DIFFICULT TO GIVE THE EVENTS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

It would be very difficult to prove any definite chronological order of events for this week. However, from this study we will see that Jesus was crucified on either Wednesday or Thursday instead of Friday, the traditional day. In considering all the facts, it must be remembered that in the Jewish calendar, the day began at sunset, not at midnight. Let us study the Scriptures that give us information on the subject:

“For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matthew 12:40).

“And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (I Corinthians 15:4).

“Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead” (John 12:1).

“On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus” (John 12:12).

“After two days was the feast of the passover” (Mark 14:1).

“And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare” (Mark 14:12).

“And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath” (Mark 15:42).

“In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week” (Matthew 28:1).

There are other Scriptures which could be quoted, but these are sufficient to give the information needed. Before we attempt to give a chronological order of events let us consider some facts:

1. Jesus was in the tomb three days and three nights. It must be remembered, however, that Jesus arose the third day after His death, not the second or fourth day.
2. The Passover lamb was to be killed and eaten on the fourteenth day of the first month (Nisan) at evening. Thus, the Passover was always observed on the fourteenth day of Nisan.
3. The Feast of Unleavened Bread began on the fifteenth day of the first month, the first and last days of which were named Holy Convocations or Sabbaths.
4. Jesus was crucified and buried on a day before a Sabbath, which was not necessarily the seventh day of the week, but rather the Holy Convocation or the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Keeping all these Scriptures and facts in mind, let us attempt to give an order of events for passion week.

Friday	Jesus arrived at Bethany.
Friday evening	Supper took place in the home of Simon. Mary anointed His feet.
Sunday	The triumphant entry occurred.
Monday	Jesus cursed the fig tree. Jesus cleansed the Temple.
Tuesday	The fig tree withered away. The widow gave two mites. The Greeks sought Jesus. Jesus gave the discourse concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. The chief priests and Judas conspire.

Wednesday	Jesus and the disciples ate the Last Super. Jesus gave the farewell discourses. Jesus prayed in Gethsemane.
Thursday	Jesus is arrested and tried. Jesus is crucified and buried.
Sunday morning	Jesus is resurrected.

C. TWO MITES GIVEN BY A WIDOW

Scriptural References: Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4

The incident of the widow giving two mites took place after Jesus had delivered a withering denunciation against the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus left the Outer Court and came into the court called the treasury, alongside of which were thirteen chests where the Jews deposited their freewill offerings. Jesus noticed the arrogant and self-important air with which the wealthy approached the chests. They attracted attention to their giving by dropping their silver so it made a noise when it fell.

Then He noticed a woman, dressed in the garb of widowhood and poverty, approach one of the chests to deposit her offering of two mites. (Two mites were equal to one farthing.) Jesus drew the attention of His disciples to the woman's offering. "This poor widow hath cast in more, than all they which have cast into the treasury." The lesson Jesus taught here is that the amount we contribute is not measured by what we give, but by what we keep back for our own use.

D. THE APPEAL OF THE GREEK PROSELYTES

Scriptural Reference: John 12:20-50

At the birth of Jesus, Gentile wise men from the east came seeking Him. Now near the end of His life there were Gentiles who sought Him. These were Greek proselytes, not Grecian Jews. These Greeks were apparently from Galilee and knew Philip. They sought an interview with Jesus. It would seem that this created a problem of racial prejudice with Philip, for he consulted Andrew before approaching Jesus. These Greeks had repudiated their heathen gods and had accepted the Jehovah of the Jews. However, they had no conception of how an incarnate God could redeem the world through His death.

Jesus granted them an interview and gave them an explanation of how His suffering and death should save the world.

These Greeks were forerunners of the multitudes of Gentiles which would make up the church. Jesus knew that His death upon the cross was the only power that would remove racial barriers. He explained that a corn of wheat must fall into the

ground and die before it can bring forth.

At this moment of emotional conflict, Jesus cried out to be saved from this hour of death; but He immediately recovered, and a voice from Heaven bore witness for the third time during His life and ministry.

E. THREE QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Scriptural References: Matthew 22:15-40; Mark 12:13-35; Luke 20:19-39

In the following incidents, we have some questions asked by Jewish rulers. In every case, Jesus demonstrated wisdom as He replied.

1. Is it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar?

This question was asked by the Pharisees and Herodians, and was planned to trick Jesus. They could imagine only two replies. If He said it was unlawful, they would be able to accuse Him before the Roman government. If He said it was lawful, He would lose favor with many Jews. Jesus' reply, "Pay to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's," completely silenced them.

2. In the resurrection whose wife shall she be?

This question was asked by the Sadducees in an attempt to ridicule Jesus. They did not believe in the resurrection or in angels. They used an imaginary case of a woman with seven husbands, and thought they could confound Jesus and at the same time attack the Pharisees who believed in the resurrection. With His reply Jesus exposed the ignorance of the Sadducees and at the same time corrected a low idea of future life held by the Pharisees. "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Jesus did not mean there would be no recognition in heaven, but we would be on a much higher plain than here in this world.

3. What is the great commandment in the Law?

The Pharisees asked this question to tempt Jesus, and to entangle Him in the web of current theological, hair-splitting controversy. Jesus refused to walk into the trap. He asserted the supremacy of love to the *one* God and declared His monotheistic belief by quoting from the Old Testament.

After this, Jesus silenced His enemies by a counter-question about the lineage of the Messiah. They could not answer Him and did not dare ask Him any more questions (Matthew 22:46).

Lesson Three

THE LAST SUPPER

Scriptural References: Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-30; John 13:1-30

A. THE UPPER ROOM

When the disciples asked Jesus, “Where do you wish that we go and make ready that you may eat the Passover?” He quietly gave Peter and John detailed instructions. Judas had already plotted for the betrayal, and Jesus was quite aware of this act of treachery. Therefore, the meeting place for the celebration had to be kept secret.

Jesus told His disciples they would meet a man bearing a pitcher. It was very unusual for a man to bear a pitcher, for this was usually done by the women. They were to follow this man, and when they came to the house they were to say to the house ruler, “The master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?” They would be shown a large upper room already furnished with mats, table, couches, etc. Peter and John did as they were told and made ready for the Passover meal.

This upper room was undoubtedly in the home of a wealthy man, either the father of John Mark or Joseph of Arimathea.

B. THE PASSOVER MEAL

The Passover meal followed a definite routine:

1. A benediction
2. A cup of wine
3. The hands of the company washed, the master of the feast passing the basin, while reciting a prayer
4. Bitter herbs dipped in sauce and eaten
5. The lamb brought in with other portions of the meal
6. A benediction and second eating of bitter herbs
7. A second cup of wine with questions and answers as to the origin of the feast
8. Singing of the first part of the Hallel (Psalms 113, 114)
9. A benediction
10. The washing of the master’s hands and his making a sop by wrapping a bit of lamb with unleavened bread in bitter herbs and dipping it in the sauce for each one present in turn

11. Each eats as much as he likes, finishing with a piece of the lamb
12. The washing of hands
13. A third cup of wine
14. The singing of second part of Hallel (Psalms 115-118)
15. A fourth cup of wine.

The Passover meal was one of symbolism, and every part had religious significance.

C. JESUS WASHED THE FEET OF HIS DISCIPLES

We are not certain just when during the Passover meal this took place. It is quite probably Jesus substituted the foot-washing for the washing of hands.

The disciples were not in a condition to partake worthily of this last solemn meal with Jesus and to hear His last words. Judas had already agreed to betray Him. False ambition, pride, jealousy, and bitterness were found in the hearts of others. "And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest" (Luke 22:24).

It was customary for Jews on all occasions of feasting to have the feet washed before sitting down to eat, this service being performed by a servant. At this feast no servant was present, and no disciple had offered to wash the feet, for none of them wanted to be a servant. In washing their feet, Jesus administered a rebuke to them that they would never forget. This act gave a picture of Christ's redemptive work. His removing of the outer garments spoke of His laying aside His heavenly glory, and the girding with a towel spoke of His taking the place of a servant. His stooping to the feet of the disciples spoke of the humiliation of Calvary and the cleansing of the souls of sinners.

After He had finished, He gave them instructions regarding the future: "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you . . . If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:15-17).

D. JESUS DECLARED JUDAS AS THE TRAITOR

When Jesus came to the eating of bitter herbs dipped with bread in sauce and made into sop, He paused and made a solemn announcement which startled His disciples: "I tell you, one of you will betray me." They became anxious and suspicious and began to try to find out who might be the guilty one. To expose this traitorous act, each of the disciples asked in great agitation, "Lord, is it I?" The suspense was terrible, and Peter could endure it no longer. He begged John to discover the betrayer. In reply to John's question, Jesus confided, "It is he to whom I shall give the sop after dipping it." According to custom this would indicate special honor.

When Jesus did this, Satan took complete possession of Judas, and Judas knew that his act of betrayal was known. Jesus now said to him, "That thou doest, do quickly" (John 13:27). Judas went out immediately, and it was night. What a dark night it was for Judas! What a dark night it would also be for Jesus and the other eleven disciples!

E. JESUS INSTITUTES THE LORD'S SUPPER

Toward the end of the Passover supper, Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, which was to be observed as an ordinance of the church. This ordinance was to have much significance. Water baptism was an ordinance instituted to stand for the beginning of a Christian's life, death to sin, and resurrection to a new life. The Lord's Supper stands for the continuation of the Christian's spiritual life. It stands for the truth that the very life of Jesus must be appropriated in a constant process.

The Lord's Supper is a memorial of the redemptive death of Jesus. It also constantly points forward to the return of our Lord for His church.

In instituting the Supper, Jesus took a loaf, gave thanks, broke it, and gave to His disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." Then He took a cup containing the fruit of the vine and said, "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matthew 26:26-28).

F. THE LAST SUPPER CONCLUDED

After Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, Jesus gave His disciples His farewell message which was one of the most important discourses of His entire ministry. The next lesson in this Bible course deals with this farewell message.

The supper finally concluded with the singing of a hymn. They then left the upper room and went into the deserted street below toward the Garden of Gethsemane.

Lesson Four

THE FAREWELL MESSAGE

Scriptural Reference: John 13:35 - John 17:26

A. THE FAREWELL MESSAGE

“Little children, yet a little while I am with you . . . Whither I go, ye cannot come” (John 13:33).

The Lord’s announcement to the disciples of His departure to a place where they could not at present follow Him made their hearts sink. In order to encourage them, He gave them His farewell message which was concluded with His prayer.

This farewell message was spoken immediately after Judas left the room. Apparently there were promises spoken here that were not for Judas to hear, but were to be addressed to His faithful disciples only. We do not know exactly how long Jesus took in this sweet and tender communion with His disciples, but we do know that this was one of the most sacred times spent with His disciples in teaching. He opened His heart to the little band and gave them some intimate, precious truths that they were unable to fully understand until they received the Holy Ghost. We should note that He addressed them as “little children.” This farewell message contains some of the most well known and beloved passages of Scripture in the entire Bible.

B. THE NEW COMMANDMENT

The new commandment—also His last before His death and resurrection—was, “That ye love one another.” Love for one another, in contrast to the hatred and selfishness of the world, would be the true test and condition for discipleship.

The law of Moses had given them the precept, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” However, in the Old Testament they were wholly unable to keep this law. In the New Testament, after receiving the Holy Spirit, they would be able to prove their discipleship by loving one another.

C. LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED

The hearts of the disciples were made sorrowful by the word that Jesus would soon leave them. Here Jesus poured out His heart in consolation and reassurance. “Ye believe in God, believe also in me.” Jesus pleaded that they might have the same faith in Him as in God, thus putting Himself upon equality with deity. He assured them that He was going ahead to prepare lodging places for them. He

gave them a promise of personally returning and receiving them into that eternal home. To the question of Thomas concerning the way, our Lord replied, I am the way, the truth and the life.” Jesus is both the way of God and the way to God; He is the personification and the incarnation of truth; He is also life in its true essence.

D. SHOW US THE FATHER

Philip requested that Jesus show them the Father, and then they would be satisfied. What did Philip expect? Did he expect some blinding splendor in the skies? Philip had failed to comprehend that for three years he had been walking with God. He had failed to understand that he could not know more of God than that revealed by Jesus Christ.

Jesus seemed surprised that Philip had not understood. “Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” Explaining that His words and His works had only been possible by the presence of the Father, He proceeded to tell them of the coming of the Comforter. This passage of Scripture proves that Jesus Christ and the Father are one.

E. ANOTHER COMFORTER

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever” (John 14:16).

Jesus assured His disciples that He would not leave them comfortless. He promised to send them another Comforter. The adjective *another* has given many people difficulty and given apparent grounds for arguing in favor of the Trinity tradition. However, the word *another* does not mean another person, but rather a new ministry.

Jesus identifies the Comforter with Himself. He said that He dwelt with them, but would be in them. The positive statement, “I will come unto you,” places the whole question beyond any doubt. Actually, Jesus meant, “I will not leave you fatherless; I will come to you.”

F. THE MINISTRY OF THE COMFORTER

Throughout the last message Jesus referred to the ministry of the Comforter which we shall sum up here:

John 14:16	Abide with them for ever
John 14:17	Dwell with them and in them
John 14:26	Teach them all things
John 15:26	Testify of Christ
John 16:8	Reprove the world of sin, righteousness, and of judgment

John 16:13

Guide into all truth

G. FINAL EXHORTATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS

1. The Necessity of Bearing Fruit

Jesus compared Himself with a fruitful vine and the disciples as being the branches. He warned them that if they bore no fruit, they would be cut off. He reminded them that He would help them and empower them if they would keep related to Him as vitally as the branches are related to the vine. Without Him they would be powerless.

2. They Could Expect Persecution

Jesus told His disciples not to be surprised if the world should hate and persecute them. The world rejected Christ and they also could expect to be rejected.

3. The Disciples Would Do Greater Works.

In John 14:12 Jesus promised His disciples that they would do greater works—the same kind of works in quality, but greater in quantity.

In John 14:13 and John 16:23, Jesus promised that whatsoever they would ask in Jesus' name, it would be granted. This, of course, means more than just repeating the name of Jesus. To pray in His name, one must be identified with Him in consecration and devotion to God's kingdom. His name stands for obedience, humility, and compassion for lost humanity. To pray in His name, the Spirit of Christ must wholly direct in the purpose and utterance of the prayer.

H. THE LORD'S PRAYER (John 17)

This may truly be called the Lord's Prayer, for this certainly was His own. He uttered this prayer in the presence of His disciples.

The prayer may be divided into four petitions:

1. For Himself

He prayed that He might be glorified. This was actually a prayer that the divine plan and purpose of God might be fulfilled in Him.

2. For His Disciples

He prayed that they might be kept and sanctified.

3. For All Who Should Believe

He looked into the future and prayed for all who would be saved in the future through the ministry of His disciples, and that they might be unified and sanctified.

4. For All Disciples in Eternity

He prayed they might be with Him in the place He is going to prepare, and that they might see His divine glory.

Lesson Five

GETHSEMANE

Scriptural References: Matthew 26:30, 36-46; Mark 14:26, 32-42; Luke 22:39-46; John 18:1

A. GETHSEMANE

About one-half mile east of the walls of Jerusalem, at the foot of the Mount of Olives, was located the Garden of Gethsemane. This was an orchard or a small farm where olive, fig and pomegranate trees grew. Gethsemane was the place of the “olive press” where they crushed the olives and extracted the oil. To this place of the olive press Jesus came with His disciples that He might be crushed, and the blessing and virtue of His life flow forth.

The present Gethsemane is an enclosed garden containing eight ancient olive trees. It is claimed these olive trees are the ones under which Jesus suffered. However, this is not possible, for the Romans under Titus destroyed all the trees near the city in the siege of AD 70. Very likely the present trees were planted by Christians later in church history.

Jesus had frequently gone with His disciples to this garden to pray. They were all familiar with this beautiful place. After Jesus had prayed in the upper room and they had sung a hymn, He led the eleven disciples out of the city gate, down into the deep gorge to the brook Cedron over which He crossed on a little bridge and from thence to Gethsemane.

B. THE AGONY OF GETHSEMANE

“For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted” (Hebrews 2:18).

Jesus did not meet His greatest temptation in the wilderness, but in Gethsemane. He was crushed in the garden of the “olive press.” Here He fought His greatest battle, won His greatest victory Jesus said, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” We may picture Him there as in agony He dropped down and fell upon His face. His agony was so intense that great drops of sweat dropped to the ground like drops of blood.

After the temptation in the wilderness, Jesus was aided by an angelic visitation. Again in this struggle with Satan, an angel appeared from heaven and strengthened Him. The victory He won in Gethsemane helped Him to face His enemies and death on the cross calmly, confidently and victoriously.

C. THE CUP OF BITTERNESS

“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows . . . the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:4-6).

Three times Jesus prayed, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” What was this cup of bitterness? It was not the physical suffering of the cross. Jesus was no coward. As thousands of martyrs have faced death by cruel and savage means, Jesus certainly was able to face death upon the cross without flinching. In order to understand this cup of bitterness, we must remember that Jesus, who was sinless, became our scapegoat. The iniquity of us all was laid upon Him. “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin” (II Corinthians 5:21).

It was the awfulness of sin that caused the pure, sinless soul of our Lord to draw back from drinking of this cup of bitterness. The presence of sin would cause our Lord to taste of the terrible feeling of being forsaken by God. He drew back from the hiding of the Father’s face when He “was made a curse for us.”

D. TWO GARDENS CONTRASTED

It is profitable to draw a comparison with the Garden of Eden.

In both gardens Adam and Jesus entered sinless, but both left the respective gardens under the weight of sin. Adam carried a load of sin which he would pass on to every member of the human family with the one exception of Jesus Christ. Jesus left the Garden of Gethsemane under the load of sin of the whole human family, including Adam, which would be carried to Calvary. There the penalty for that sin would be fully paid.

Both Adam and Christ left the respective gardens facing death— Adam to die because of his own sin and to pass the penalty of death on to all who would be born thereafter; Jesus Christ to die for the sins of others and by so doing save men and women from the penalty of death.

The great difference between Adam and Jesus is brought out in their attitude towards the will of God. Jesus submitted Himself to the will of God and said, “Not my will, but thine be done.” Adam rebelled against the will of God, and by his act of disobedience said, “Not thy will, but mine be done.” Here lies the basic difference between our first parent and our Savior. By submission and obedience, Jesus won the victory; by rebellion and self-will, Adam suffered defeat.

By Adam’s self-will and disobedience in the Garden of Eden, Paradise was lost to the human family; by the obedience and humility of our Lord in the Garden of

Gethsemane, Paradise was regained to the redeemed.

E. THE FAILURE OF THE DISCIPLES

When Jesus entered Gethsemane, He left eight of His disciples just inside the gate with instructions to watch. He took Peter, James and John with Him farther into the garden. Apparently, he knew that He would need encouragement and strength, and wanted these three to help Him pray through to victory.

He entered the garden about a stone's throw farther and began His agony of prayer and travail. Three times He came to His disciples, and each time found them sleeping. The disciples were exhausted and extremely weary. They simply could not keep their eyes open. He exhorted them to keep awake and rebuked them for their sleeping. However, He excused them somewhat when He said, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

We may be quick to condemn the disciples for failing in this moment of great crisis. However, there are two facts which we must remember:

1. It had to be this way. Jesus had to suffer alone. There could be absolutely no one who could help Him in this hour of His greatest battle and suffering. Therefore, we could conclude that God had ordained that no one would be awake encouraging our Lord at this time.
2. The disciples were ignorant of the crisis of the moment. They did not and could not understand the battle that was being fought and won just a few yards away. If they had known even in a small way what was transpiring, they would have been wide awake. Slumber would have fled away.

Can it be that this is the reason why the church is so sleepy today? Few people are aware of the grave spiritual crisis in the world and the battle that is being fought. As a result, they are overcome with spiritual slumber.

Lesson Six

THE BETRAYAL

A. JUDAS ISCARIOT

Judas Iscariot was one of the twelve disciples. His father was Simon Iscariot. His motive in following Jesus would seem to be of a mercenary nature, expecting to gain a worldly advantage in the establishment of the kingdom.

When we study his character, we are quite surprised that he could have been one of the twelve:

1. He was greedy of gain and desirous of money (Matthew 26:14-15).
2. He was hypocritical (John 12:5-6).
3. He was a thief (John 12:6).
4. He was guilty of treachery (Mark 14:10; Luke 22:47-48).

In spite of the above characteristics, we must consider the fact that Judas felt genuine remorse (Matthew 27:3-4). This tells us that everything about Judas was not all bad.

Finally, we should consider his title as given by our Lord in speaking of Judas. "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled" (John 17:12). This title, "son of perdition," is also given to Antichrist, who is to be revealed (II Thessalonians 2:3). The meaning of this title is literally, "man destined to be lost in eternal damnation." It is quite significant that both Judas and the Antichrist are given this title, revealing the awful destiny of both of them which was ordained by God.

B. THE ACT OF BETRAYAL

Judas was full of criticism when Mary anointed the feet of Jesus with expensive perfume (John 12:1-8). He felt that what Mary did was a complete waste. Jesus defended Mary and rebuked Judas for his criticism. Undoubtedly, Judas had previously considered selling Jesus into the hands of His enemies for the furthering of his own ends. This rebuke from the Master apparently settled it. He would no longer postpone his dastardly act.

While the supper was in progress in the home of Simon, the Sanhedrin was gathered in the palace of Caiaphas, planning how they might kill Jesus. Judas left the supper and hastened to the palace, arriving just at the right moment. The hearts of these religious politicians were filled with wicked glee when they learned that one of the twelve would betray Jesus into their hands.

C. THE PRICE OF A SLAVE

Judas quickly came to an agreement with the Sanhedrin, although he undoubtedly was disappointed with what they offered him. Very likely his guilt and the knowledge of his treacherous act caused him to act in haste. The amount agreed upon was the price of a slave, thirty pieces of silver. After consulting two references on this matter, the writer has concluded that this amount would equal about twenty dollars (\$20) in present day currency. It is difficult to understand how Judas could be willing to sell our Lord for such a small sum.

D. THE ACT OF TREACHERY REVEALED

During the time between the supper at Bethany and the Last Supper, Judas appeared to have concealed his treachery. However, during the supper Jesus revealed the fact that He was aware of it by saying, "One of you shall betray me." Jesus showed that He knew who His betrayer was by handing a sop to Judas and telling him, "That thou doest, do quickly." It is impossible to hide any wrong act from our Lord. He knows every sin whether small or great.

"Satan entered into him" (John 13:27). Some have tried to prove by this statement that at this point Judas became the devil incarnate. However, this is very doubtful. It seems the meaning is that Satan took complete control. In a similar manner Satan enters into men today and takes complete control. The soul of Judas, who had been a disciple for three years, now became completely possessed to do the will of Satan.

E. BETRAYED BY A KISS

Judas knew the habits of our Lord. He knew that doubtless he would find Him in Gethsemane praying. This shows how low Judas had fallen that he would betray Jesus in the place of secret prayer. This was deliberately planned that He might be arrested in a quiet place in the middle of the night in order to avoid a tumult with the public.

Judas led the soldiers into the garden and then identified Him with a sign which had been prearranged. The sign was a kiss, which was probably the usual salutation of the disciples. This act of betrayal revealed once again how low Judas had fallen.

F. THE PRICE OF BETRAYAL

The true price of betrayal had not yet been paid. It was not the thirty pieces of silver, but rather the price that Judas had to pay. In the confusion of that night, we do not know what Judas did following the betrayal. However, soon came that awful

sense of guilt, remorse and shame that always follows such acts of wickedness and shame. Judas was overcome with a sense of condemnation. He repented and attempted to make restitution. He carried the silver back to the chief priests and confessed his sin. They refused to acknowledge any responsibility for his act, and Judas threw the money upon the pavement of the Temple. Judas then went out and committed suicide, hanging himself.

The priests purchased the potter's field with the money, which was a burial place outside the city for strangers. It is implied that the field was where Judas committed suicide, and therefore was a double memorial of the betrayal. It was called Aceldama or the field of blood (Matthew 27:3-10; Acts 1:18-19).

The following words sum up the tragic life of Judas with a fearful meaning: "That he might go to his own place" (Acts 1:25).

Lesson Seven

THE TRIAL

Scriptural References: Matthew 26:57 - 27:25; Mark 14:53 - 15:19; Luke 22:66 - 23:24; John 18:19 - 19:16

A. THE ECCLESIASTICAL TRIAL

After the arrest of Jesus in Gethsemane, the members of the Jewish council (Sanhedrin) were hastily assembled to pass the sentence they had already decided upon. Soldiers hurried Jesus through the hushed streets of the sleeping city to the palace of the High Priest, Joseph Caiaphas. He was as cunning as he was unprincipled, bigoted, and cruel. He was the son-in-law of Annas.

Annas had served as high priest from AD 6 to AD 15. Through astute politics, he had succeeded in securing from the Romans the succession of this office to his five sons and now his son-in-law, Caiaphas. Annas owned the famous Bazaars of Annas, which ran a monopoly of the sale of animals for sacrifices and the stalls of the money changers. He hated Jesus from the day of the first cleansing of the Temple and consistently sought ways to entrap Jesus in some word or work. Jesus was taken before this arch-enemy for a preliminary hearing. From this hearing before Annas, He was taken before Caiaphas and from there to the Sanhedrin.

The charges brought against our Lord were threefold:

1. Heresy

This was a change of teaching doctrine contrary to the Mosaic law. This was implied in His examination by Annas (John 18:19-24).

2. Sacrilege

He was accused of making the statement that He would destroy the Temple made with hands and build another made without hands. This was a perversion of His words recorded in John 2:19-21.

3. Blasphemy

On oath, Jesus claimed to be the Son of God. It was this admission that gave the council the opportunity they were looking for. He was instantly condemned to death.

B. THE DEATH SENTENCE

In the examination and trial before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, there was no mercy and no justice. At first there seemed to be no prosecuting witnesses. Finally

they secured two witnesses to testify that Jesus had said, "I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands." This was not enough to condemn Jesus, so in desperation Caiaphas began to question Jesus. "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God?" (Matthew 26:63). This was a strange question from the high priest to a bound, defenseless criminal.

In the days when the people wanted to claim Him as Messiah and King, Jesus had kept this fact in the background. Now, with death facing Him and His life depending upon His answer, He did not hesitate. The solemn answer was, "I am; and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven" (Mark 14:62). This answer sealed the fate of our Lord. Caiaphas tore his linen robes and cried, "Blasphemy! What further need have we of witnesses?" The verdict, guilty of death, was quickly pronounced.

C. THE CIVIL TRIAL

The power of inflicting the death penalty had been taken from the Jews; the rulers therefore appeared before Pilate, the Roman governor, to secure the execution of their sentence. It was possibly seven or eight o'clock in the morning when Jesus was led up the marble stairs to Pilate's palace.

Pilate hated the Jews and was fiercely cruel. When Jesus stood before Pilate, there could not be any more extreme opposites. Pilate lived in luxury, selfishness, sin, and arrogance. He took a cushioned seat and leaned back at ease. The prisoner stood; His wrists manacled.

The Jews did not enter the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled.

Pilate began to cross-question the prisoner and found Him innocent. His wife sent word concerning a dream she had and warned him.

The religious leaders had shrewdly changed the charge into a political one. They claimed the Lord had rebelled against Rome by claiming to be a king and by forbidding the people to pay tribute. They failed to convince Pilate, who sought to set Him free.

D. TAKEN BEFORE HEROD

Pilate hoped that some means might be found to save Jesus, and had Him sent to Herod. Herod Antipas was a man of great debauchery, and apparently our Lord had no respect for him, for He refused to answer even a syllable to Herod's questions. Herod was very happy to see Jesus. Undoubtedly his conscience had troubled him ever since he had had John the Baptist beheaded. He hoped to see some miracle that Jesus would do, but Jesus maintained a dignified silence.

When Herod could get nothing out of Jesus, he had Him arrayed in a brightly colored robe in mockery and sent Him back to Pilate with a letter of flattery. This healed an old feud between the two men.

E. THE FINAL TRIAL

Jesus was dragged through the thronged, narrow streets, amid the jeering, raging multitudes for the sixth and final trial which was the most agonizing phase of the terrible inquisition.

Pilate was quite determined to find some means of setting Jesus free. He had tried by sending Him to Herod. Now he attempted to take advantage of the custom of releasing a prisoner during a feast. He finally suggested the compromise of scourging Jesus, then releasing Him. However, the people demanded the death penalty. They finally broke down Pilate's resistance by threatening to report him to the emperor and ruin him politically.

Pilate tried to wash away his guilt by washing his hands and saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it." However, Pilate could not escape the responsibility of his decision. Later he paid the price by soon being banished to Gaul and there dying in suicide.

To satisfy the mob, Pilate released Barabbas, a robber, murderer, and leader of insurrection, and delivered Jesus to be crucified.

Lesson Eight

CALVARY

Scriptural References: Matthew 27:32-61; Mark 15:21-47; Luke 23:26-49; John 19:16-42

A. THE SCOURGING

Scourging was the ordinary preliminary to crucifixion. It was a punishment so truly horrible that the mind revolts at it. The sufferer was publicly stripped, tied by the hands in a bent position to a stake and then blows were inflicted with leathern thongs, weighted with jagged edges of bone and lead, on the tense, quivering nerves of the naked back. Each stroke cut into the flesh until veins were laid bare. Often the scourge struck the face and knocked out the eyes and teeth. The victim generally fainted and often died. When we study the awfulness of the Roman scourging, Peter's statement, "By whose stripes ye were healed" (I Peter 2:24), will have new meaning.

Instead of feeling pity for Jesus, the brutal soldiers dragged Him to the courtyard to make sport of Him. Their brutality was simply a savage delight in torturing. Over His lacerated body, they cast a purple robe and pressed down a plaited crown of thorns on His head. In His right hand, they placed a reed for a scepter and then made Him the subject of jesting, striking Him insultingly with rods on His thorn-crowned head. Bowing before Him they mockingly cried, "Hail, King of the Jews."

Their actions were fulfilling prophecy. He who wore the crown of thorns shall be King. He who held the reed shall exercise world dominion. One day every knee shall bow before Him whom they mocked.

B. BEARING THE CROSS

Condemned persons were required to carry their own crosses to the place of execution. Soldiers placed the cross upon Jesus, but weak and exhausted, He fell under it. They then forced a Jew of Cyrene, Simon, to carry the cross. Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus. Because of the place that these sons took in church history, it is thought that Simon came to the personal knowledge of a Savior.

On the way to the place of execution, some women broken into lamentations and bewailed Jesus' sad end. He turned to them and told them not to weep for Him but rather weep for themselves. He gave them warning of the destruction that would come within a generation in AD 70.

When He reached Calvary, He was offered a drink to ease His sufferings. This was prepared by women who had compassion upon those being executed. This drink consisted of wine mixed with narcotics. Our Lord refused this drink, for He would not suffer death for the world with a mind beclouded with drugs.

C. CALVARY

The word *Calvary* is derived from the Latin and means “skull.” It corresponds to the Aramaic word *Golgotha*. It was the place of execution and was located outside the gate of the city. It may have received its name because of its appearance—a bare, round scalp-like elevation.

D. CRUCIFIXION

The cross was the most disgraceful and one of the cruelest instruments of death ever invented. The Jews never used it as a means of execution. The Romans would not allow a Roman citizen to be crucified, but reserved crucifixion for slaves and foreigners. It was the death of the most extreme anguish.

The victim was first stripped naked. The upright was planted firmly in the ground. Then the victim was laid down with arms extended on the crossbar. A large iron nail was driven through the center of each open palm. Then the transom was raised to its position on the upright and nailed securely. Following this, the feet were nailed either through the instep separately, or both together with a single iron peg. There the body was left to hang, supported on four great wounds, until death took place sometimes two or three days later.

Death by crucifixion included all that pain and death can bring about: cramp, thirst, starvation, sleeplessness, fever, tetanus, shame, torment. As time passed, the torture and suffering grew more and more unbearable until the victims would beg to be put to death.

Death by crucifixion was abolished by Constantine.

E. CHRIST ON THE CROSS

Jesus was nailed to the cross at the third hour or nine o'clock in the morning. He died at three o'clock in the afternoon.

Among other prophecies that were fulfilled at Calvary were:

1. The soldiers cast lots for the Lord's garment because it was of one piece (Psalm 22:16-18).
2. “He was numbered with the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12). A thief was

crucified on each side of Jesus.

At the foot of the cross stood a small band of faithful followers who showed courage and devotion. The party consisted of five people: Mary, mother of Jesus; Salome; Mary, wife of Cleophas; Mary of Magdala; and John.

Since the day was a feast day, the Jews asked that the legs of Jesus and the thieves be broken in order to hasten death and their bodies be taken from the cross. When the soldiers came to Jesus, they found He was already dead. Therefore, they did not break His legs, again fulfilling Old Testament prophecy.

One of the soldiers, to make certain that He was dead, pierced His side with a spear and from His side came water and blood. It is claimed that blood and water coming from the body is evidence of a broken heart. Since Jesus died in six hours, we may conclude that His death was due, not to physical sufferings, but to spiritual anguish.

F. THE MIRACLES OF THE CROSS

1. Darkness

It was noon, the brightest moment of the day. Suddenly darkness fell like a heavy curtain over the scene of tragedy. This darkness was not due to an eclipse, because it was the time of the full moon of the Passover. It was a supernatural act of God, a miracle. It seemed that the sun could not look upon the horrors of that scene.

2. Rending of the Veil in the Temple

This veil was the thickness of a palm breadth, sixty feet long and thirty feet broad, and woven of tough fabric. It separated the Holy and Most Holy Places in the Temple. This was a miracle, for there can be no explanation how this could have happened. The veil was rent "from top to bottom" by God's hand, thus throwing open the Most Holy Place to all men.

3. Earthquake

The earthquake that took place was supernatural. The rocks were rent and tombs were shaken open. After His resurrection three days later, some of the Old Testament saints were raised and appeared to the disciples.

The centurion who had charge of the soldiers witnessed the earthquake and the darkness and cried out, "Truly this was the Son of God."

Lesson Nine

THE SEVEN LAST SAYINGS

The words Jesus spoke from the cross were very expressive and full of deep meaning. For this reason, we shall take this lesson to consider carefully and thoughtfully these last sayings of our Lord while in the agony of death.

A. “FATHER, FORGIVE THEM; FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO” (LUKE 23:34).

The moment when His agony was at its worst, Jesus sought excuses for the conduct of His enemies and tormentors. Victims of death by crucifixion generally shrieked, cursed, and spat at spectators and executioners. No evil word escaped the lips of Jesus, no word of complaint, no prayer for mercy. Jesus pitied His tormentors more than He was sorry for Himself. He thought not of His own suffering, but His heart was stirred and moved on behalf of the ones who were putting Him to death. “They know not what they do.” His great love could forgive and even pray for His enemies while He hung in extreme agony.

B. “TODAY SHALT THOU BE WITH ME IN PARADISE” (LUKE 23:43).

These words were spoken to the thief who repented and prayed, “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.” We know that this thief had repented, for he had confessed his guilt and acknowledged that he was being punished justly. “Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss” (Luke 23:40, 41). After he had made such a confession, he then confessed his faith in Jesus and requested to be remembered in His kingdom.

In the agony of death, Jesus was more than willing to listen to such a prayer. To forgive sins and justify a guilty sinner even upon the cross was a crowning act of God’s grace. This showed clearly that even in the moments facing death Jesus had not forgotten the purpose of His coming into the world “to save sinners.” He came not to minister unto Himself, but to others. This was true right to the end.

C. “WOMAN, BEHOLD THY SON . . . BEHOLD THY MOTHER” (JOHN 19:26-27).

No physical anguish could cause Jesus to forget the needs of His beloved mother. The agony of death could not cause Jesus to forget His responsibility. His relationship to Mary had been that of an obedient son. Apparently Joseph had died some years before this and Jesus, being the eldest son, had the responsibility of providing for His mother. He was unwilling to commit this responsibility to His unbelieving half-brothers. He knew who would look after her the most faithfully and

with tenderness and love—none other than John the Beloved.

John accepted the charge and took her to his home where she dwelt the rest of her life. Of course, before leaving for John's home in Galilee, she first received the Holy Ghost in the upper room on the Day of Pentecost.

D. “ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI? MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAS THOU FORSAKEN ME? (MATTHEW 27:46).

This bitter cry from the cross has been greatly misunderstood by many. Those who heard Him did not understand and thought He was calling for Elijah to help Him. People today still find it difficult to understand this cry. They feel it contradicts the fact of His deity.

To understand this we must read II Corinthians 5:21, “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.” He laid upon Himself the iniquity of us all. He became our scapegoat, carrying the awful load of sin and paying the price for sin. The humanity of Christ had to taste of this awfulness to the full. Sin separates from a holy God. Jesus Christ had to experience this terrible feeling of a separation from God. Actually God was there all the time, for the true nature of Christ did not change at any time. There was no moment when Jesus Christ was not God manifested in flesh. Certainly God had not actually forsaken Him.

Jesus had to feel the way a lost sinner feels without Himself having sinned. Jesus had to pay the price alone and taste death—spiritual death—for every man.

E. “I THIRST” (JOHN 19:28).

Dizzy, feverish—a world of distress is compressed in two words: “I thirst.” He who had made the world with rivers, lakes and fountains, now longed for a drop of water. When soldiers soaked a sponge in vinegar and pressed it against the lips of Christ, He accepted it. The vinegar was an insult, stinging acids for a dying Christ.

F. “IT IS FINISHED” (JOHN 19:30).

The first recorded words of our Lord were: “Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?” He had so lived that now upon the cross He could utter the victorious cry of full achievement, “It is finished!” The work of redemption, which was the purpose of His life and ministry, had been completed, and the plan of salvation had been established.

It is significant to compare this saying of our Lord upon the cross with the voice out of the temple saying, “It is done” (Revelation 16:17).

Those who refuse to accept the “It is finished” from Calvary's cross will be forced to accept the “It is done” of judgment.

G. “FATHER, INTO THY HANDS I COMMEND MY SPIRIT” (LUKE 23:46).

This final utterance of our Lord was a quotation from Psalm 31:5, “Into thine hand I commit my spirit.” It is claimed that this prayer was used in the time of our Lord as an evening devotion.

It should be remembered that Jesus had said, “I lay down my life, that I might take it again” (John 10:17). Jesus had the power to dismiss His Spirit and take it up again.

Lesson Ten

THE RESURRECTION

A. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESURRECTION

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is essential to our salvation. All is vain if Christ's body is not raised from the dead.

If Jesus had remained buried in the grave, the story of His life and death would have remained in the grave with Him. The resurrection does not grow out of the story of His life, but the beautiful story of Christ's life grew out of the fact of His resurrection. In other words, the resurrection of Christ's body from the tomb proves the deity of Jesus and the power of His blood to save sinners.

B. PROOF OF THE RESURRECTION

1. The Empty Tomb (John 20:6-7)

One of the greatest proofs of the resurrection is the message of the empty tomb.

Lazarus came forth from the tomb bound hand and foot with grave clothes. It was necessary to loose him from these by unwinding the grave clothes (John 11:44).

Peter and John found the grave clothes and napkin in their place untouched like they had been when the body of Jesus was there, but now the body was gone. Jesus simply came out of His grave clothes. Likewise, it was not necessary for the stone to be rolled away for Jesus to arise. The stone was rolled back to show the world the empty tomb.

2. The Number of Witnesses

A large number of witnesses testified to the fact of the resurrection.

- a. The angels (Matthew 28:5; Mark 16:6)
- b. The soldiers (Matthew 28:11-15)
- c. Peter, the twelve, about five hundred brethren, James, the apostles, Paul on the road to Damascus (I Corinthians 15).

C. THE APPEARANCES OF JESUS CHRIST

1. The women at the tomb saw the angels.

2. The women hurried to tell the disciples. Peter and John lived quite close; the other disciples were a greater distance away.
3. Peter and John ran to the tomb. John, being younger, outran Peter.
4. Mary followed, returning to the tomb to linger there, and saw Jesus.
5. Jesus appeared to the Emmaus disciples.
6. Jesus appeared to Peter.
7. Jesus appeared to the ten apostles with Thomas absent.
8. Jesus appeared to the apostles with Thomas present.
9. Jesus appeared to the multitude and the disciples on the mount.
10. Jesus appeared to the apostles on the shores of Lake Galilee.
11. Jesus appeared to James.
12. Jesus appeared to the apostles at the ascension.
13. Jesus appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus.

D. THE NATURE OF THE RESURRECTION

1. Jesus rose literally from the grave. He had the same body that had been placed in the tomb (John 20:27; Luke 24:37-40).
2. Jesus rose with a real body, not a ghost or phantom. It was composed of flesh and bones (Luke 24:36-43). His body could be touched (John 20:20).
3. His body bore the marks of His passion (John 20:24-29).
4. Jesus ate and drank in the presence of His disciples (Acts 10:41).
5. He could pass through barred doors and vanish (John 20:19).
6. Christ's body can no more taste of death (Romans 6:9-10).
7. Christ was the firstfruits of the resurrection (I Corinthians 15:20).

E. THE MEANING OF THE RESURRECTION

“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Romans 4:25).

This Scripture clearly states the significance of the resurrection in salvation. The resurrection actually validates the atonement. To understand this fully, we must look back to the Old Testament. People waited outside the Temple for the high priest to come out of the holy place, for they knew then that all their sins were borne away. Our High Priest came out of the grave, and by this we know that our sins are atoned for.

F. DOUBTING THOMAS

We shall not attempt to study in detail all the beautiful stories and lessons centered around the resurrection. However, let us look briefly at one or two of these appearances.

On one occasion Jesus suddenly appeared to His disciples while they were

eating an evening meal. To strengthen their faith, He called for meat and ate some broiled fish and honey. Thomas was not there, and when they told Him of this appearance, he boldly said he would not believe unless he could put his finger into the nail prints and thrust his hand into the pierced side.

Eight days later the disciples were together with Thomas present when Jesus suddenly appeared. Looking at Thomas, Jesus said, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believe" (John 20:27). With worshipful devotion and bursting joy, Thomas cried out, "My Lord and My God!" Thomas acknowledged Jesus as deity, and the Lord accepted His confession of faith. Another proof of the deity of Jesus!

G. THE APPEARANCE BESIDE THE SEA OF GALILEE

Scripture Reference: John 21:1-25

When Peter said, "I go a fishing," he was revealing just how discouraged and depressed he was. After fishing all night in vain, Jesus appeared to the disciples. He addressed His main remarks to Peter and questioned him three times regarding his love. He then gave him instructions to feed His sheep. Peter had denied the Lord three times. Now it was necessary to confess his love three times.

Lesson Eleven

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Scriptural References:

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14).

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20).

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47).

“Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained” (John 20:22-23).

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

A. THE FORTY DAYS

Jesus showed Himself to His disciples on various occasions during a period of forty days following His resurrection. During this period of time, His great concern apparently was that His disciples should obey His command in taking the gospel throughout the whole world. This was not just a request, but a definite clear command.

At the same time, He was concerned that they would not attempt to preach the gospel until they had received the Holy Ghost. Along with the commission itself, He commanded them to remain in Jerusalem until they be baptized with the Holy Ghost and be endued with power from on high (Acts 1:3-8). The last emphasis He placed on all His commands was concerning the greatest and all important qualification, the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

B. THE COMMISSION CONTAINED FIVE COMMANDS

There were five things contained in the commission which Jesus commanded

His disciples:

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. He commanded them to <i>go</i> . | Mark 16:15 |
| 2. He commanded them to <i>preach</i> . | Mark 16:15 |
| 3. He commanded them to <i>teach all nations</i> . | Matthew 28:19 |
| 4. He commanded them to <i>baptize in the name</i> . | Matthew 28:19 |
| 5. He commanded them to <i>observe all things</i> . | Matthew 28:20 |

C. JESUS GAVE THE COMMISSION ON THREE OCCASIONS

The commission was spoken on at least three occasions by our Lord to His disciples during the forty days between His resurrection and His ascension. It is recorded in all four Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles. The three occasions on which Jesus gave the commission were as follows:

1. While the disciples sat at meat in Jerusalem (Mark 16:14-18; John 20:22-23).
2. In a mountain in Galilee (Matthew 28:18-20).
3. On the Mount of Olives just before His ascension (Luke 24:45-51; Acts 1:6-9).

Because Jesus repeated this commission at least three times and it was recorded in each of the Gospels, we can understand just how important He considered the commission to be.

D. THE GREAT COMMISSION WAS A COMMAND

The Great Commission was an irrevocable command to the church which was not to be questioned, but was to be fully obeyed. Every phase of the gospel message calls for and demands complete and whole-hearted obedience. When Christ commands His church to go, He expects obedience; if He says, "Preach," He still expects obedience. The responsibility of the church is simply to believe and obey

E. THE COMMISSION IS THE CHURCH'S AUTHORITY.

Although the commission is a command, yet it is far more than a command. When a person is commissioned, he is given authority to act on behalf of another. The apostle Paul recognized this when he called himself an ambassador for Christ. He acted in Christ's stead (II Corinthians 5:20). Therefore, when a minister is called to preach the gospel, he has been given an order which he must obey. He also has received an appointment to act in Christ's stead. He need not expect any greater authority than this!

F. THERE WAS A PROMISE GIVEN WITH THE COMMISSION.

“And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20).

So great was the commission that Jesus promised to accompany those who dared to obey it. His promise was not for just one short period, but “alway, even unto the end of the world.” The phrase “end of the world” actually means unto the “consummation of the age.”

It is wonderful to note that when the disciples obeyed the commission, Jesus fulfilled this promise. Let us carefully note the closing verse of Mark’s Gospel: “And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following” (Mark 16:20). We must never forget this promise of our Lord. The Lord will work with us and confirm the Word with signs following.

Lesson Twelve

THE ASCENSION

A. THE MEANING OF THE ASCENSION

By the ascension we mean the act of overcoming the law of gravitation and rising bodily into Heaven. Jesus Christ ascended through His own power.

There are examples of others who were caught away and will be caught away by the same power (Christ's power):

1. Enoch was translated in the antediluvian age at the age of 365 years (Genesis 5:18-24; Hebrews 11:5).
2. Elijah was translated at Jericho (II Kings 2:9-13).
3. The church will be translated (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives after appearing to His disciples for forty days (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9-11).

B. DID JESUS ASCEND TWICE?

Did Jesus ascend twice? The first time to present His blood at the mercy seat; the second time to enter into His ministry as an intercessor. Many Bible students believe this is what happened. Let us examine carefully the following Scriptures:

“Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father” (John 20:17).

“Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing” (John 20:27).

“But by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Hebrews 9:12).

Jesus told Mary not to touch Him for He had not yet ascended, and later told Thomas to touch Him. This would seem to teach that in the intervening time He had ascended and returned. The purpose of this, of course, was to present His blood. The time factor would not offer any difficulty. He could have ascended and descended a number of times.

However, to this there is one difficulty we must consider. It distinctly states He entered into the holy place *once*. The writer of these notes will not offer any solid

conclusion, but he thought it worthwhile to introduce this thought here.

C. THE ASCENSION

Scriptural References: Mark 16:19; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-12

The ascension is recorded twice in the Gospels and in Acts. It took place on the Mount of Olives in sight of Bethany.

Jesus led them to the high point on the mount, a Sabbath Day's journey or two thousand cubits from the city. He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Suddenly, while He was blessing them, they saw that His feet were no longer touching the ground.

To describe this scene we shall quote a paragraph from *From Manger to Throne* by Rev. T. Dewitt Talmage:

Christ has given his last advice. He has offered His last sympathy. He has spoken His last word. His hands are spread apart as one is apt to do when he pronounces a benediction, when suddenly the strongest and most stupendous law of all words is shattered. It is the law which, since the worlds were created, holds them together. It is the law which holds everything to the earth, or, temporarily hurled from earth, returns to it, the law which keeps the planets whirling our sun, and our solar system whirling around other systems, and all the systems whirling around the throne of God—the law of gravitation . . . That law of gravitation must now give way to Him who made the law. It may hold the other stars, but it cannot hold the Morning Star of Redemption. It may hold the noonday sun, but it cannot hold the Son of Righteousness . . . The strongest law of nature which philosophers ever weighed or measured must at last give way. It will break between the rock of Olivet and the heel of Christ's foot. Watch it, all ye disciples! Watch it, all the earth! Watch it, all the heavens!

The disciples saw their Lord rising from the solid earth. Higher than the tops of the fig trees. Higher than the olive trees that shaded the mount. Higher, until He was within sight of Bethlehem, where He was born, and Jordan, where He was baptized, and Golgotha, where He was slain. Higher until He disappeared into fleecy clouds, into a sea of glory whose billowing splendors hid Him.

D. THE PROMISE OF HIS RETURN

As the disciples stood spellbound looking into the empty sky, they were suddenly aware of the presence of two shining figures who said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into

heaven” (Acts 1:11).

This promise of His return made the disciples very happy, and they returned to Jerusalem with great joy. They went to the temple and began to praise the Lord continually. “Returned to Jerusalem with great joy; And were continually in the temple praising and blessing God” (Luke 24:52-53).

E. CONCLUSION

This concludes our four units of study on the life of Christ. May it be clearly understood that this study merely introduces this tremendous subject. There is no limit on what may be written about the life and ministry of our Lord.

“If they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen” (John 21:25).

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Life of Christ IV

Lesson Two

1. How many chapters were given to the account of Passion Week by each of the Gospels?

2. Beginning at Friday, give the order of events over the weekend and throughout the week following up to the resurrection.

3. How did Jesus answer the following questions:

a. Whose wife shall she be in the resurrection?

b. Is it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar?

c. Which is the greatest commandment in the law?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Life of Christ IV

Lesson Four

1. Why was the New Commandment given?

2. In the farewell message, how did Jesus attempt to comfort His disciples?

3. In what ways does this message prove the oneness of God?

4. Give the four main petitions contained in His prayer as recorded in John 17.
 - a.

 - b.

 - c.

 - d.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Life of Christ IV

Lesson Seven

1. Jesus suffered six trials in all. Name them.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
 - f.

2. What were the three charges brought against Jesus before the Sanhedrin?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

3. What was the significance of our Lord's reply to the question of Caiaphas?

4. Write a short paragraph regarding Herod Antipas.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Life of Christ IV

Lesson Eight

1. Describe the Roman scourging that Jesus suffered.

2. Describe the cruel death by crucifixion.

3. Answer the following questions:
 - a. Who bore the cross of our Lord?

 - b. What does the word *Calvary* mean?

 - c. At what hour of the day did Jesus die?

4. Explain fully the meaning of the veil in the temple being rent.

5. Explain the significance of water and blood flowing from the side of our Lord.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Life of Christ IV

Lesson Nine

What spiritual significance is taught by each of our Lord's sayings on the cross?
Give the scriptural reference, then what lesson we might learn from each.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

