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**BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK**

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**STUDIES IN  
LUKE**

T. R. Applebury

Professor of New Testament

Pacific Christian College

Long Beach, California

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**College Press, Joplin, Missouri**

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## P R E F A C E

### TO THE READER

These studies are the result of years of research and teaching in the Bible college and in church classes. My object in presenting them is to encourage the program of Bible study and to help meet the needs of the general Bible reader.

*The analysis of each chapter* is both an outline and, in many cases, a paraphrase of the Bible text. It is intended to be of help to the general reader and also to the teacher who may be leading a study group. The analysis will enable the reader to have a comprehensive view of the Gospel of Luke at a glance.

*The printed text* is the American Standard Version of the New Testament. I urge you, however, to use your own Bible in these studies. The *comments* should be of help regardless of the version you may use. Under no circumstances should comments be placed above the Bible text in importance. In some instances there are recognized differences of opinion. In all such cases, I ask that you do not accept my opinions. I urge you to study your own Bible and to do your own thinking that your conclusion may be your own. Every student should seek to learn what the Bible actually says and what it means.

*The summary of each chapter* will help the student to review the material covered in the commentary. *The questions at the end of each chapter* are designed to point out the significant issues of the chapter. For best results, the student should write out the answers to each question.

I am indebted to Don DeWalt, editor of the BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK series, with whom I served on the faculty of the San Jose Bible College, for his encouragement and assistance in preparing this work for publication.

It is my prayer that you may search the Scriptures as the Bereans did and meditate on the meaning of God's Word day and night that you may translate it into life and share it with others.

Department of New Testament  
Pacific Christian College  
January, 1965



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## CHAPTER ONE

### *Outline*

- A. Luke writes to Theophilus (1-4).
  - 1. Why he is writing this story of Jesus (1-3a).
    - a) Many had undertaken to write about the things that had been accomplished among them.
    - b) Those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word had reported these things to Luke.
  - 2. His qualifications to undertake the task (3b).
    - a) He had followed the reports with care.
    - b) He had gone back to the beginning of the story.
  - 3. The nature of the account he is writing (3c-4).
    - a) He planned to write a connected account of these things.
    - b) He did so in order that Theophilus might know about the unshakable evidence that firmly supports the things about which he had been instructed.
- B. He began by telling about the promised birth of John (5-25).
  - 1. The angel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias bringing him this message. (5-12).
    - a) It was in the time of Herod the Great.
    - b) Zacharias was a priest, and his wife whose name was Elizabeth was a daughter of Aaron.
    - c) They were righteous people keeping all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly.
    - d) They were childless elderly people.
    - e) Zacharias was preparing to burn incense in the temple, and the people were outside praying.
    - f) Zacharias became frightened when he saw the angel of the Lord standing by the right side of the altar.
  - 2. The angel told Zacharias about the child (13-17).
    - a) His prayer had been heard; Elizabeth was to bear a son whose name was to be John.
    - b) Rejoicing would occur at his birth, for he was to be dedicated to the Lord from his birth.
    - c) His mission was to turn many to the Lord; he was to go forth in the spirit and power of Elijah.
  - 3. The angel gave Zacharias a sign that this would happen (18-22).
    - a) Zacharias asked how he would know this.

## STUDIES IN LUKE

- b) Gabriel said he would be unable to speak until the child was born.
- c) As he came out of the temple, the people became aware of his having seen a vision.
- 4. Zacharias and Elizabeth returned home to await the coming of the child (23-25).
- C. He told about the angel informing Mary that she was to bear a son and call his name Jesus (26-38).
  - 1. The angel was sent from God to inform Mary (26-29).
    - a) He was sent to Nazareth, a city in Galilee.
    - b) Mary was a virgin betrothed to Joseph of the family of David.
    - c) He told Mary that she was highly favored of the Lord.
    - d) Mary wondered what this might mean.
  - 2. The angel explained to Mary how the Lord would accomplish this.
    - a) Mary had found favor with God and was to conceive and bear a son and call his name JESUS.
    - b) He explained about the child.
      - (1) He was to be great and to be called the Son of the Most High.
      - (2) The Lord God would give him the throne of his father David.
      - (3) He was to reign over the house of Jacob forever; there would be no end to his kingdom.
    - c) He explained how this was to be accomplished.
      - (1) Mary asked how it could be since she did not know a man.
      - (2) The Holy Spirit and the power of the Most High would accomplish it.
      - (3) Because of this miracle of conception, "the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God."
      - (4) Elizabeth also was soon to bear a son for "no word from God shall be void of power."
      - (5) Mary responded: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."
- D. He told about Mary's visit to Elizabeth (39-40).
  - 1. She went in haste to the hill country to a city of Judah and

## CHAPTER ONE

- entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth (39-40).
2. Elizabeth responded in inspired words of praise (41-45).
    - a) Her unborn babe leaped, and she was filled with the Holy Spirit (41).
    - b) What she said to Mary (42-45).
      - (1) "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb."
      - (2) She asked, "Why is it that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"
      - (3) She told Mary that her own unborn babe had leaped for joy when Mary greeted her.
      - (4) She praised Mary for believing the promise of the Lord, for He would fulfill it.
  3. Mary's song of praise to God (46-55).
    - a) She praised God for blessing her in her humble estate.
    - b) She spoke of the might and holiness and mercy of God.
    - c) She told how He had put down the proud and exalted the humble.
    - d) She spoke of His help to Israel and His remembrance of His covenant with Abraham.
  4. Mary stayed with Elizabeth three months and then returned to her home (56).
- E. He told about the birth of John the Baptist (57-80).
1. Elizabeth gave birth to a son; her neighbors and relatives rejoiced with her (57-58).
  2. Her child was named at the time of his circumcision (59-63).
    - a) Some wanted him to be called Zacharias after his father, but Elizabeth said, "He shall be called John."
    - b) The relatives protested and appealed to Zacharias. He wrote, "His name is John."
    - c) All marvelled at this, but Zacharias was now able to speak after the period of silence imposed on him by the Lord.
    - d) The people throughout the hill country of Judea heard about the child and said, "What then shall this child be?"
  3. Zacharias prophesied under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (67-79).

- a) What God had done in the house of David (67-75).
  - (1) Redemption, salvation, and mercy had been shown to His people.
  - (2) He had remembered His covenant and promise to Abraham.
- b) What the child—John the Baptist—was to do (76-79).
  - (1) As the prophet of the Most High, he was to go before the face of the Lord to make ready His ways and give knowledge of salvation and remission of sins to the people (76-77).
  - (2) The mercy of God as shown in Christ was to guide those in darkness into the ways of peace (78-79).
- 4. The child grew and became strong in spirit and lived in the deserts until the beginning of his ministry to Israel (80).

### *Luke Writes to Theophilus*

#### *Scripture*

1:1-4 Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, 2 even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, 3 it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus; 4 that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed.

#### *Comments*

*Forasmuch as many.*—Many who had heard the words of Jesus and had seen the things He did had made a written record of them. Others had repeated them orally. In so doing, it is possible that variations in the wording, without change in thought, had taken place. Even the inspired writers—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—do not always use the same words, but in a very remarkable way they do express the same thoughts. Some of the written accounts were fragmentary. One person told about something he heard Jesus say; another described a miracle he had seen. Perhaps details were lacking in some cases. So we can see why God selected His inspired writers to give an accurate account of the things that Jesus did and taught.

Theophilus had been instructed in them, but Luke wanted him to have the complete and accurate account of these things.

*matters that have been fulfilled among us.*—In the Book of Acts which Luke also wrote to Theophilus, Luke gives his own statement about the content of the first letter. He says he had written about "all that Jesus began both to do and teach until the day in which he was received up, after that he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom he had chosen" (Acts 1:1-2). He recorded the historical facts after he had carefully researched the whole project.

*they delivered them to us.*—This is not a fictional story. Luke wrote an accurate account of things that were reported to him by those who saw and heard them. Of the four gospel writers, only Matthew and John were apostles who had seen and heard the things they wrote about. Mark could have heard them, but not Luke. That's why he checked every detail of this wonderful story. He wrote it because he was convinced that it was reliable history. More than that, he was certainly inspired by the Holy Spirit, for he had been with the apostle Paul and could easily have received this power through the laying on of the apostle's hands. See Acts 8:14-17; II Tim. 1:6.

*eyewitnesses and ministers.*—Luke rests his case on a solid foundation. The apostles were numbered among the eyewitnesses. See Acts 1:21-22; Heb. 2:3-4; I John 1:1-4. Paul was a witness of the risen Lord, although there is nothing to show that he witnessed the events of Jesus' ministry as the other apostles had done. See I Cor. 9:1. In writing about the resurrection (I Cor. 15:1-58) he did tell about the more than five hundred brethren—most of them were still alive—who had seen the risen Lord.

These eyewitnesses were ministers—servants who rendered faithful obedience to their Lord. See Paul's use of this word in I Cor. 4:1-2. He also calls the apostles stewards of the mysteries of God—that is, His revealed secret in the Word. See also I Tim. 6:20-21; II Tim. 2:1-2.

*from the beginning.*—How far back does this go? If we are to restrict it to the ministry of the apostles, then the beginning may well be the public ministry of Jesus. See Acts 1:21-22. But Luke must have talked with witnesses who had seen and heard the things with which he begins his story—the facts about the birth of John and of Jesus. It is significant that "the beloved physician" wrote the facts

about the birth of Jesus in this reliable record of things that actually happened.

*it seemed good to me also.*—The writer does not give his name. For that matter, neither do the writers of the other three gospels. We are left to external evidence for this information. There is, however, internal evidence that the Gospel According to Luke and The Acts were written by the same person. Both of them are written to Theophilus. See Acts 1:1.

Luke "the beloved physician" (Col. 4:14) was a traveling companion of the apostle Paul. References in Acts suggest that he joined Paul at Troas on his second missionary journey and went with him to Philippi. See Acts 16:10. Evidently, he was with Paul on the last part of the third journey which took them to Jerusalem (Acts 20:5 and 21:15). He was with him when he left Caesarea for Rome (Acts 27:1). Two remarkable statements bring the story of Acts to a climax; they also show that the author of the Book was with Paul when he entered Rome. See them in Acts 28:14 and 16.

Luke's association with Paul on these journeys sheds some light on the possible time during which he researched these important matters recorded in his gospel. The time they spent in Jerusalem and the long imprisonment of Paul in Caesarea (Acts 24:27) could have given him time to investigate the sources of the reports recounted by those who had actually seen and heard the things about which he was to write.

We do not know where he was when he wrote the gospel. It could have been at Caesarea or it could have been at Rome while Paul was there in prison. The closing words of Acts suggest that the outcome of Paul's trial was not known when Luke wrote the book. The closing words of the Gospel and the opening words of Acts suggest that Luke wrote them without any great lapse of time between the two. This tends to suggest that both were written at Rome. Luke was faithful to Paul to the last. When others for various reasons left him, Paul wrote to Timothy from Rome saying, "Only Luke is with me" (II Tim. 4:11).

*having traced the course of all things accurately.*—Many had written about some of the things in the life of Jesus. Luke carefully researched all the evidence in connection with the reports of the "eyewitnesses" of these things. What he wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is trustworthy.

*from the first.*—King James says, "from the very first," while R. S. V.

says, "for some time past." The Greek term is translated in various ways. It simply marks the starting point from which the action proceeds. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "except one be born anew—or from above—he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). We think of it as the new birth or being born again.

Luke researched this project to the point at which he began the written account, that is, to the birth of John the Baptist and the birth of Jesus.

Why didn't Luke begin at the same point from which Matthew presents his account of the life of the Messiah? For one thing, Matthew evidently wrote to the Jews who were proud of their birth records. They kept them with great care and traced their ancestry back to the original twelve tribes of Israel. They were also fond of the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. Matthew caught the attention of his readers immediately with the genealogical table that shows Jesus' legal right to the throne of David. He traces the royal line of Jesus from David and Abraham through Solomon to Joseph the "husband of Mary of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ." He proved his claim that Jesus is Messiah by showing how He fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament.

It is altogether likely that Luke was familiar with Matthew's account of the Gospel of Christ. But Luke wrote to Theophilus, a Gentile. His background was different; he may not have been familiar with these prophecies. Luke evidently thought it best to put the genealogy of Jesus after the account of the birth and baptism of Jesus. He gave Theophilus evidence that Jesus is the Son of God before tracing His line (the blood line) through Nathan the son of David to Adam, the son of God.

But why didn't he go all the way back to the point at which John begins his account of the Word who became flesh and revealed the Father (John 1:1, 18)? John's "in beginning" reached to eternity as man views the past. It helps to understand what he meant when he wrote, "The Word became flesh." This is John's way of presenting the virgin birth of Jesus. Matthew and Luke give the complete details. It was Luke's purpose to write about the things that had been reported by eyewitnesses and which he had carefully examined so that Theophilus could be fully assured that Jesus is Son of God and Son of Man—He really is God and He really is man.

*to write unto thee in order.*—Luke did not give a chronological

account of the life of Jesus or a geographical report of His journeys. He did write a logically connected account of the One whom he calls "Son of God" and "Son of Man." The arrangement of his materials differs in some cases from that of Matthew or Mark. This difference may be traced to the fact that Jesus repeated the things He taught on various occasions. For example, the Sermon on the Mount could have been delivered on many occasions. He could have changed the arrangement of the materials or the wording to suit the occasion. This may account for the differences between the report of Matthew in chapters five, six, and seven of his Gospel and what Luke says in chapter six of his account of the Life of Jesus. Luke's Gospel is an orderly, logically arranged account of the material he selected to give Theophilus something solid on which to base his belief in Jesus as the Son of God and the Son of Man.

Luke divides his materials into three sections. The first presents the evidence that shows Jesus to be the Son of God and the Son of Man (1:5-4:13). It begins with the birth narratives and continues through the accounts of Jesus' baptism and temptation. The second and largest section tells about Jesus' ministry of teaching and healing (4:14-21:38). It presents the Galilean ministry (4:14-9:50), the ministry of Jesus on the way to Jerusalem which included the Perea ministry (9:51-19:28), and the closing events of His ministry which occurred in Jerusalem (18:29-21:38). The third section centers around the crucifixion and resurrection (22:1-24:53). It tells about the arrest and trial (22:1-23:32), the crucifixion and burial (23:33-56), and His resurrection, appearances, and ascension (24:1-53).

*most excellent Theophilus.*—Who is Theophilus? His name suggests that he was a Gentile. It means friend of God or one whom God loved. The title "most excellent" suggests official rank; he was a man of some importance in his day. The fact that Luke says that he had been instructed in these matters about which he was writing suggests that he was a Christian, although some are in doubt about this point. When and where Luke first came in contact with him, we have no way of knowing. It is an interesting fact that about one-fourth of the New Testament—The Gospel of Luke and The Acts—was addressed to this man.



## CHAPTER ONE

### *The Promise of the Birth of John*

#### *Scripture*

1:5-25 There was in the days of Herod, king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abijah: and he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. 6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. 7 And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were *now* well stricken in years.

8 Now it came to pass, while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, 9 according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to enter into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. 10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the hour of incense. 11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12 And Zacharias was troubled when he saw *him*, and fear fell upon him. 13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: because thy supplication is heard, and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. 14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. 15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. 16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord their God. 17 And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient *to walk* in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared *for him*. 18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. 19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak unto thee, and to bring thee these good tidings. 20 And behold, thou shalt be silent and not able to speake, until the day that these things shall come to pass, because thou believedst not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. 21 And the people were waiting for Zacharias, and they marvelled while he tarried in the temple. 22 And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: and he continued making signs unto them, and remained dumb. 23 And

it came to pass, when the days of his ministration were fulfilled, he departed unto his house.

24 And after these days Elisabeth his wife conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, 25 Thus hath the Lord done unto me in the days wherein he looked upon *me*, to take away my reproach among men.

### *Comments*

*in the days of Herod.*—This is Herod the Great, king of Judea. He died shortly after the birth of Jesus. He was an Idumean, that is, a descendant of Esau. Luke also mentions Herod the king in Acts 12:1 without saying that he was the grandson of this one mentioned in Luke 1:5. Theophilus must have been aware of these details and did not need to have them pointed out to him. His full title was Herod Agrippa I. He was the father of King Agrippa before whom Paul made his defense. Another son of Herod the Great was Archelaus who ruled in Judea after the death of his father (Matt. 2:22). Herod the tetrarch, another son of Herod the Great, ruled in Galilee and figured in the trial of Jesus (Lk. 23:7-12). This whole family from the grandfather who slew the babes at the birth of Jesus to the king before whom Paul made his defense seems to be arrayed against Christ and His church.

Herodias was the daughter of Aristobulus, another son of Herod the Great. She married her uncle, Philip I, but left him to marry another uncle, Herod the tetrarch. John the Baptist was beheaded by this Herod at the request of Salome the daughter of Herodias, because he condemned the marriage.

*the course of Abijah.*—In the days of David the priests were organized into twenty-four groups, the eighth of which was that of Abijah. Each group in turn performed the functions of the priesthood. The arrangement was still in force in the days of Zacharias.

*Zacharias . . . Elizabeth.*—This childless old couple were descendants of Aaron. They were "righteous before God." Luke says that in God's sight they lived a blameless life in accord with all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. He doesn't say that they had never committed a sin, but they were not habitually sinning for they were blameless in the sight of the Lord.

John the Baptist had the good fortune to have parents who set the proper example for him. Every child has the right to have such

a background, but, unfortunately, very few do. Timothy, devoted servant of the Lord that he was, had two generations of faithful ones back of him (II Tim. 1:5). How we should thank the Lord for our godly parents! The return to God's standard for the home is one of the crying needs of this day.

It has been said repeatedly that no one could live up to the requirements of the law, but Luke affirms—and he had researched these reports so that he was sure of his ground—that the parents of John did. God has not required us to do the impossible, and all of us at all times should try to do all things He has told us in His Word to do. See James 1:18-25.

*his lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.*—the altar of incense stood before the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. While the priest was burning the incense, the people were outside praying. Some believe that a priest got to perform this task only once in a lifetime.

*there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord.*—Zacharias was greatly disturbed when he saw the angel standing at the right side of the altar. But the angel spoke reassuringly to him and told him that his prayer had been heard and that Elizabeth would bear a son and that he should name him John.

In the days of the fathers, God spoke on many occasions in many ways as He revealed His will to them. For example, the angel of the Lord spoke to Gideon in the days of the Judges (Judges 6:11-12). He does not speak to us in this manner, for at the end of these days of revelation He spoke with finality and completeness and authority in the One who bears the name Son (Heb. 1:1-2). We have that message—a message that is just as up-to-date now as it was when first spoken—in the Bible.

*he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit.*—What is said about John who was to be great in the sight of the Lord and drink no wine or strong drink reminds us of the Nazarite vow. The law of the Nazarite is given in Num. 6:1-8. Samson was a Nazarite; he was to be dedicated to the Lord all the days of his life (Judges 13:7). Hannah promised the Lord that she would give her son, Samuel, to the Lord all the days of his life and that no razor should touch his head (I Sam. 1:11). Apparently, John also conformed to this law, for he dedicated himself to the Lord all the days of his life.

This background sheds light on the meaning of the words about John's being filled with the Holy Spirit from the time of his birth.

Note the difference between this and what is said about Elizabeth's being filled with the Holy Spirit (1:41). She was given power by the Holy Spirit to speak words of praise. The same is true of Zacharias (1:67) and of the apostles and prophets (Acts 2:1-4; II Pet 1:21). But it cannot be said that John was inspired by the Holy Spirit to speak from the time of his birth. His inspiration as a prophet is accounted for in John 3:34. But John was filled with a spirit of dedication and consecration to the Lord from the time of his birth.

Luke says that Barnabas "was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" (Acts 11:24), but this does not indicate that he was inspired like Elizabeth or Zacharias. This may be the reason he went to Tarsus and found Saul—an inspired apostle—and brought him to Antioch where for a whole year they taught the people. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer, in all probability, implies not miraculous power but consecration to the Lord, for every baptized believer in the Lord is to live a life of dedication from the time of his new birth.

*in the spirit and power of Elijah.*—The prophecy of Elijah's coming is found in Mal. 4:5. When the Jews asked John, "Art thou Elijah?" he said, "I am not" for he was not literally Elijah. See John 1:21. But Jesus indicates that the prophecy of Malachi was fulfilled in John—that is, figuratively, he was Elijah. See Matt. 11:14 and 17:10-13. Luke says that John came in the spirit and power of Elijah and this explains why Jesus said he was Elijah. John was like Elijah in life and mission.

*turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.*—John's mission in preparing a people for the Lord involved turning the interest of the fathers to their children (Deut. 6:6-9) and the children to obey their parents (Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-4; Mal. 4:4-6). Many people were turned to the Lord by John's preaching.

*Whereby shall I know this?*—Zacharias is not the only one to ask for evidence on which to base his belief: Gideon did; Thomas did. See Judges 6:36-40 and John 20:24-29. But since Zacharias didn't believe the word of the angel Gabriel, he was given a sign that would not only establish it in his mind but also cause the people to see that something unusual had happened while he was in the temple. John was a man sent from God (John 1:6).

*The Promise of the Birth of Jesus**Scripture*

1:26-38 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord *is* with thee. 29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this might be. 30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. 31 And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. 34 And Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? 35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God. 36 And behold, Elizabeth thy kinswoman, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that was called barren. 37 For no word from God shall be void of power. 38 And Mary said, Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

*Comments*

*a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph.*—Matthew and Luke clearly indicate that Joseph was not the father of Jesus; he was the husband of Mary of whom was born Jesus the Christ (Matt. 1:16). Matthew and Luke present the evidence of the miraculous conception of Our Lord. Matthew, using the words of Isaiah 7:14, says, "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son." But Matthew indicates that after the birth of Jesus, Mary's firstborn son, children were born to Joseph and Mary. See Matt. 1:25. Their names are given in Matt. 13:55-56.

*of the house of David.*—Joseph was the descendant of David and Solomon. The legal right to the throne of David, it seems, belonged to him. As the husband of Mary, these rights would legally belong

to Jesus, Mary's firstborn son. But Mary was also the descendant of David, for Paul says that Jesus "was born of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom. 1:3).

*the virgin's name was Mary.*—The purity of Mary is beyond question. The sinlessness of Jesus, however, does not depend on the purity of His mother, but on the fact that He "hath been tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

*thou shalt conceive.*—The conception was a miracle. There is a difference between the birth of John and of Jesus. John was born as a result of a conception that was unusual but not miraculous, for he had a human father as well as a human mother. But the birth of Jesus was the result of the miracle of the Holy Spirit. Both Matthew and Luke explain it and John supports it (John 1:1, 14).

*shalt call his name JESUS.*—Jesus means savior, "for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). Immanuel means "God with us." Christ means Anointed and refers to Jesus' office as prophet, priest, and king. Messiah is the Hebrew term for Christ.

*the throne of his father David.*—Israel was constituted a theocracy at Sinai; God was the Supreme Ruler of the holy nation. In the days of Samuel, the people asked to have a king like the nations about them. Samuel assumed that they were rejecting him as their judge, but God told him that actually they were rejecting Him as king. See I Sam. 8:4-8. Later, God told Samuel to anoint David to be king over His people (I Sam. 16:1). Then God promised David that one of his descendants would reign on his throne forever. See Psa. 89:3-4. In the course of events, Solomon succeeded his father. In I Kings 2:12 it is stated that "Solomon sat upon the throne of his father David." But in I Chron. 29:23 which describes the same thing, it is stated that "Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord instead of David his father." David's throne, then, was actually the throne of the Lord. Therefore when the angel said to Mary that the Lord God would give Jesus the throne of His father David, he was referring to the throne of God. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter declared that God's promise to David had been fulfilled in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ to the right hand of the throne of God. See Acts 2:30-31.

His kingdom is spiritual. He refused to allow the people to make Him king after the feeding of the five thousand (John 6:14-15). He said to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36).

*of his kingdom there shall be no end.*—No other king will succeed Him. Paul says, "Then cometh the end when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God" (I Cor. 15:24). He did not contradict the angel, for he was speaking of the end of the earthly phase of the kingdom. See Peter's reference to "the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 1:11).

*I know not a man.*—Both Luke and Matthew attest the belief in the purity of Mary.

*the power of the Most High.*—The miracle of conception was accomplished by divine power exercised through the Holy Spirit.

The fact that the Holy Spirit is often spoken of as the One through whom God's power is exercised does not suggest that the Spirit is merely the power of God. All the attributes of deity and of personality that are assigned to the Father and to the Son by the Scriptures, are also assigned to the Holy Spirit.

*the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God.*—A clear reference to the deity of Jesus. Before His coming into the world, He is called the Word (John 1:1). Son of God is applied to Him (1) at the time of His birth when He became Son of God; (2) at the time of His baptism and transfiguration when He was acknowledged by the Father as His Son (Lk 3:22; 9:35); and (3) at the time of His resurrection when God had proved conclusively that He is the Son of God (Acts 13:33). See also Rom 1:3-4.

*For no word of God shall be void of power.*—God demonstrated that His word about the birth and resurrection of Jesus was true. This gives us reason to trust His promises about the victory of Christ and His church (II Tim. 1:12; Rev. 11:15).

### *Mary Visited Elisabeth*

#### *Scripture*

1:39-56 And Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah; 40 and entered into the house of Zacharias and saluted Elisabeth. 41 And it came to pass, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit; 42 and she lifted up her voice with a loud cry, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. 43 And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come unto me? 44 For behold, when the voice of thy salutation came into mine ears, the

babe leaped in my womb for joy. 45 And blessed is she that believed; for there shall be a fulfilment of the things which have been spoken to her from the Lord. 46 And Mary said,

- My soul doth magnify the Lord,  
 47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.  
 48 For he hath looked upon the low estate of his handmaid:  
 For behold, from hence forth all generation shall call me  
 blessed.  
 49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things;  
 And holy is his name.  
 50 And his mercy is unto generations and generations  
 On them that fear him.  
 51 He hath showed strength with his arm;  
 He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their heart.  
 52 He hath put down princes from *their* thrones,  
 And hath exalted them of low degree.  
 53 The hungry he hath filled with good things;  
 And the rich he hath sent empty away  
 54 He hath given help to Israel his servant,  
 That he might remember mercy  
 55 (As he spake unto our fathers)  
 Toward Abraham and his seed for ever.  
 56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned  
 unto her house.

### Comments

*into the hill country with haste.*—The angel had informed Mary that Elizabeth was to give birth to a son. Mary went in haste to visit her relative and remained with her for about three months. The home of Zacharias and Elizabeth was in a city of Judah in the hilly country south of Jerusalem. The name of the city is not given.

Upon her return to Nazareth, Joseph learned that she was "with child of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 1:18).

*Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.*—What she said was not an emotional outpouring of words, but words of truth spoken under the control of the Holy Spirit.

*Blessed art thou among women.*—Elizabeth and Zacharias knew that the child to be born to them would go before the Lord who would give remission of sins to His people. Elizabeth also knew that the child to be born to Mary would fulfill God's promise to redeem



man from the bondage to sin. She could properly call Mary "blessed" because she was to be the mother of Our Lord. In no other way is it suggested that she is to be elevated above other godly women. It is to her credit and that of others also that she was found in the company of believers after the resurrection of the Lord (Acts 1:14).

*And Mary said.*—The words of Mary—beautiful poetic words full of meaning to all believers in Christ—are the expression of the humble handmaid of the Lord. They exalt God Our Savior for His mercy and power and His remembrance of His promise to Abraham. There is no hint here that Mary was anything more than the pure, humble servant of the Lord.

*God my Savior.*—A reference to God, not Jesus. See also I Tim, 1:1; 2:3; Titus 3:4 which also refer to God as Savior. But see Titus 2:13 which, in all probability, refers to Jesus Christ as "the great God and Our Savior."

*all generations shall call me blessed.*—We can join with the saints of all the ages to thank God that Mary was able to serve the Lord as she did. And since Christ came, having been "born of woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law" (Gal 4:4), we may also join them who obey Him that they may have the rights of sonship bestowed on them by the heavenly Father.

*Toward Abraham.*—See Paul's explanation of the gospel promise to Abraham which was fulfilled through Christ (Gal. 3:8, 16, 29). Mary's understanding of this promise stands in bold contrast to that of many Jews who felt that being the literal descendants of Abraham was a guarantee of their right to enter the heavenly kingdom. See Matt. 3:9; 8:11-12; and John 8:31-46.

### *Elizabeth Gives Birth to a Son*

#### *Scripture*

1:57-80 Now Elizabeth's time was fulfilled that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. 58 And her neighbors and her kinsfolk heard that the Lord had magnified his mercy towards her; and they rejoiced with her. 59 And it came to pass on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. 60 And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. 61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called

by this name. 62 And they made signs to his father, what he would have him called. 63 And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all. 64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue *loosed*, and he spake, blessing God. 65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea. 66 And all that heard them laid them up in their heart, saying, What then shall this child be? For the hand of the Lord was with him.

67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying,

- 68 Blessed *be* the Lord, the God of Israel;  
 For he hath visited and wrought redemption for his people,  
 69 And hath raised up a horn of salvation for us  
 In the house of his servant David  
 70 (As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have  
 been from of old),  
 71 Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that  
 hate us;  
 72 To show mercy towards our fathers,  
 And to remember his holy covenant;  
 73 The oath which he sware unto Abraham our father,  
 74 To grant unto us that we being delivered out of the hand of  
 our enemies  
 Should serve him without fear,  
 75 In holiness and righteousness before him all our days.  
 76 Yea and thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most  
 High:  
 For thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to make ready his  
 ways;  
 77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people  
 In the remission of their sins,  
 78 Because of the tender mercy of our God,  
 Whereby the dayspring from on high shall visit us,  
 79 To shine upon them that sit in darkness and the shadow of  
 death;  
 To guide our feet into the way of peace.

80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel.

*Comments*

*the Lord had magnified his mercy.*—Zacharias and Elizabeth had been childless for a long time. The Lord showed mercy on them, and Elizabeth brought forth a son as the angel promised Zacharias. These godly parents considered it a privilege to rear a son to serve the Lord. Many parents feel the same way about it today. A revival of that wholesome attitude toward family life is needed in many instances today.

The angel of the Lord had instructed Zacharias to call him John. The name means "the Lord is gracious." It was to remind all who knew the facts about his birth that God's favor was soon to be made known through Christ, the One of whom John was to be the forerunner.

All who heard about these unusual things were filled with a sense of reverence for God. It was only natural that they should ask, "What then shall this child be?"

*prophesied.*—Zacharias was a devout man; but the expression "filled with the Spirit" refers to the fact that he was inspired by the Holy Spirit as he spoke about the mission of John and of Jesus.

He praised God who had provided redemption for His people. Redemption means release, and the New Testament it usually means release from the slavery of sin. Christ redeemed His people by His blood (Eph 1:7). He is also the "horn of our salvation," for it is by His power that salvation is brought to all who believe, whether Jew or Greek (Rom. 1:16). This horn of salvation was raised up in the house of God's servant David. The Bible repeatedly emphasizes this truth: Christ was born of the seed of David. See Psa. 89:3-4; Jer. 23:5; Rom. 1:3-4.

*prophet of the Most High.*—John was the last of the prophets who prophesied before Christ. Jesus, speaking about John, said that he was more than a prophet. He had the privilege of presenting Messiah to Israel. They had been waiting for Him so long (Lk 7:26; I Pet. 1:10-12). His coming was like the dawning of the new day. It brought light and life to those who sat in darkness—the darkness of sin and death.

*the child grew.*—The reference suggests the normal growth and development of the child. Nothing is known about his life or his parents during the period between his birth and his appearance to Israel. It is natural to suppose that the parents who were old when

he was born had died before he began his ministry. Perhaps his seclusion made his appearance in the wilderness as a prophet all the more startling to Israel.

### *Summary*

Luke was ready to write to Theophilus. His papyrus roll was on his writing table. Before him were the records of his investigation into the thrilling story of Jesus the Son of God and the Son of Man. Perhaps Mark's Gospel and maybe Matthew's too were there before him. He was eager to write the whole story, for he was convinced that it would give Theophilus the confidence he needed in these things in which he had already been instructed.

As he thought of all the things that might be written and looked at the one papyrus roll, he knew that it would never hold all that he wanted to say. He would have to write a second letter to Theophilus, but just now he would tell about all the things that Jesus began both to do and to teach and bring the story to a climax with the account of His crucifixion, the evidence of His resurrection, and the story of His ascension that took place just after He had told His disciples to preach the gospel to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. In the second letter he would tell how the apostles preached the gospel of Christ in Jerusalem, then Judea and Samaria, and finally how Paul and his companions of whom Luke was one brought the gospel to Rome.

His first problem was to determine the point at which to begin. He probably knew how Mark had plunged into the story of the ministry of Jesus without telling about the birth of John or the birth and childhood of Jesus. He may have known that Matthew began with the birth record of Jesus Christ the son of David and the son of Abraham. But as he thought of Theophilus, who like himself was a Greek, he decided to begin at the first of the story and tell about the birth of John and the birth of Jesus who, as he had become thoroughly convinced, was the Son of God and the Son of Man.

Theophilus would need to be fully assured that the birth of Jesus was the result of a miraculous conception. He made his point clear with the presentation of the facts about which he had made careful investigation. And to make this even clearer, he told about the birth of John. John's parents were a childless elderly couple, but God showed His mercy toward them and sent the angel to tell

## CHAPTER ONE

Zacharias that Elizabeth was to bear a son and that he was to name him John. But Jesus was born of the virgin Mary. The angel told her that although she knew no man, she would conceive and bear a Son and name Him Jesus. The power of God exercised by the Holy Spirit would accomplish this. For that reason, the child would be called the Son of God.

Luke wanted Theophilus to be able to read the words of praise spoken by Mary, the humble servant of the Lord, as she thought of God's mercy toward her and toward His people. Her words magnified the Lord. He also told about the words spoken by Zacharias the father of John. He praised God for His tender mercy and for the light that was to shine upon those who sat in darkness waiting for the new day.

### *Questions*

1. Why did Luke undertake the task of writing the Life of Christ?
2. How did he prepare for the task?
3. What was his aim in writing?
4. Who was Theophilus?
5. At what point did he begin his record of the Life of Christ?
6. Who was Herod?
7. What did Luke say about Zacharias and Elizabeth?
8. What was Zacharias doing when the angel appeared to him?
9. What did the angel say about the mission of John?
10. What is meant by "the spirit and power of Elijah"?
11. What effect would John's message have on the fathers?
12. What happened to Zacharias as a sign by which he knew that the promise of the angel would be fulfilled?
13. What evidence does Luke present to show his conviction that Jesus was born of the virgin Mary as the result of a miraculous conception?
14. What was Mary's relation, at the time of the angel's announcement, to Joseph?
15. Why, when, and how did Jesus receive the throne of David?
16. What was said about the duration of His kingdom?
17. Why was Jesus called the Son of God?
18. Where did Zacharias and Elizabeth live?
19. What did Luke mean when he said that Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit?
20. Why was Mary to be called blessed among women?

#### STUDIES IN LUKE

21. What did Luke say about Mary's response to the announcement of the angel?
22. What promise made to Abraham was fulfilled by the coming of Jesus?
23. How does Luke carefully distinguish between the facts about the birth of John and the facts about the birth of Jesus?
24. What did the people say when they learned about the birth of John?
25. How is their question answered by the words spoken by Zacharias as he was inspired by the Holy Spirit?
26. What is known about John from the time of his birth to the time of his appearing as a prophet to Israel?

## CHAPTER TWO

### *Outline*

- A. He told about the birth of Jesus (1-21).
  - 1. He began with the account of the trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem where the Child was to be born (1-7).
    - a) It was at the time of the enrollment ordered by Caesar Augustus when Quirinius was governor of Syria (1-3).
    - b) Joseph went from Nazareth to Bethlehem where the family of David had to go to be enrolled, taking with him Mary who was betrothed to him and who was soon to give birth to the Child (4-5).
    - c) While there she gave birth to her firstborn Son and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger (6-7).
    - d) There was no room for them in the inn (7).
  - 2. He told the story of the angels and the shepherds (8-20).
    - a) How the good news came to the shepherds (8-12).
      - (1) They were keeping watch over their flocks at night when the angel of the Lord appeared to them (8-9).
      - (2) The angel said, "I bring you good news of great joy for all the people, for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord."
      - (3) The angel gave them a sign by which they were to identify Him—they were to find the babe in swaddling clothes lying in a manger.
    - b) Then the heavenly host sang praises to God and peace to men (13-14).
    - c) The shepherds went to Bethlehem to confirm the angel's message (15-20).
      - (1) They found Joseph and Mary, and the Child lying in the manger.
      - (2) They told the amazing story of what they had learned about the Child.
      - (3) Mary kept these things in her heart and thought about their meaning.
      - (4) The shepherds went back to their flocks praising God that they had seen what the angel had told them.

## STUDIES IN LUKE

3. He told about the naming of the Child (21).
  - a) It was at the time of the circumcision on the eighth day.
  - b) His name was called JESUS.
  - c) This was the name the angel had told Mary to call Him.
- B. He told about the presentation of the Child to the Lord (22-40).
  1. Mary and Joseph brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord according to the law of Moses (22-24).
    - a) It was after the days of purification prescribed by the law of Moses.
    - b) They offered according to the law of the Lord a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.
  2. Simeon, inspired by the Holy Spirit, spoke about the Child (25-35).
    - a) Some things about Simeon (25-29).
      - (1) He was a righteous and devout man living in Jerusalem.
      - (2) He had been looking for the consolation of Israel.
      - (3) It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ.
      - (4) He was in the temple when the parents brought the Child Jesus.
    - b) What he said (28-35).
      - (1) About the Child.
        - (a) He was the fulfillment of the Lord's promise.
        - (b) This Child was a light for revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Israel.
      - (2) To the parents as they marvelled at the things he had said about the Child.
        - (a) He told Mary that the Child was set for the rising and falling of many in Israel and for a sign to be spoken against.
        - (b) He told Mary that a sword was to pierce her soul that thoughts out of many hearts might be revealed.
    3. Anna spoke about the Child (36-38).
      - a) Some things about Anna.



## CHAPTER TWO

- (1) She was a prophetess who spent her time in the temple worshipping, fasting, and praying.
- (2) She was the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher.
- (3) She was an elderly widow.
- b) She spoke about Jesus to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.
4. Following the presentation, they returned to Nazareth (39-40).
- C. He told about the trip to Jerusalem at the passover feast when Jesus was twelve years old (41-52).
  1. After the parents started home, Jesus remained in Jerusalem hearing the teachers and asking questions that amazed them.
  2. The parents had supposed that He was with friends and relatives who had accompanied them, but on discovering that He was not with them they returned to Jerusalem and found Him in the temple.
    - a) Mary said, "Son, why did you do this to us? Your father and I were looking for you, sorrowing."
    - b) Jesus said, "Why did you look for me? Didn't you know that I must be in my Father's house?"
    - c) They didn't understand what He meant.
  3. Jesus went with them back to Nazareth where He was subject to them, growing in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.

### *The Birth of Jesus*

#### *Scripture*

2:1-21 Now it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be enrolled. 2 This was the first enrolment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 And all went to enrol themselves, every one to his own city. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David; 5 to enrol himself with Mary, who was betrothed to him, being great with child. 6 And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her

firstborn son; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock. 9 And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. 10 And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: 11 for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this *is* the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest,

And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased. 15 And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. 16 And they came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. 17 And when they saw it, they made known concerning the saying which was spoken to them about this child. 18 And all that heard it wondered at the things which were spoken unto them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken unto them.

### *Comments*

*a decree from Caesar.*—By order of the Roman Emperor all the people of the world who came under his authority were to be enrolled. It was a combined census and assessment with taxation as an important part of it.

Augustus reigned from 30 B. C. to 14 A. D. Historians point out that his reign was characterized by peace that extended to almost all parts of the world. But the most significant event that occurred during his reign, which was little noticed by the Romans at the time, was the birth of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Luke shows himself as a reliable historian reporting two of the most important events of the first century, the life of Christ and the history of His church.

*to the city of David.*—The decree required each man to go to the city of his own family. In Joseph's case, it was necessary to go to Bethlehem, the city of David, for he was of the house and family of David.

The prophecy of Micah who lived some 700 years before the birth of Christ says that He was to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:5-6). Now the kingdom of Rome was only in its infancy when Micah prophesied. How could Micah foresee the day when the mighty Caesar would be able to issue a decree that would cause Joseph to leave his home in Nazareth and with Mary his wife go to Bethlehem that her child might be born in the city of David? The Holy Spirit spoke through the prophet!

Joseph was fully aware of the responsibility he had assumed under the direction of the Lord (Matt. 1:20-25). He took Mary with him because he was aware of the nearness of the birth of the Child.

*her firstborn son.*—Jesus was the first child born to Mary. "First-born" does not necessarily imply that she gave birth to other children, but Matthew's statement about the relation of Joseph and Mary after the birth of Jesus does indicate clearly that they had other children. The names of Jesus' brothers are given in Matt. 13:55-56. His sisters are referred to in the same passage. Paul mentions James the Lord's brother whom he visited in Jerusalem (Gal. 1:19).

*and laid him in a manger.*—In simple language, Luke related the humble circumstances of the birth of the Savior. There was no room for them in the inn. The crowded condition of the city at the time of the enrollment made it necessary for Joseph to find quarters wherever possible. The fact that there was no place in the inn for them does not suggest that Bethlehem was rejecting the Christ. They who were His own people did later by deliberate action reject Him before Pilate and cry out for Him to be crucified. God held them accountable for that terrible deed (Acts 2:22-24), but not for any discourtesy which some assume was shown by the innkeeper to Mary and Joseph.

*shepherds in the same country.*—Humble shepherds were the first to hear about the birth of the Savior. But later, as Matthew relates, wise men came to see the new-born King and to worship Him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

*an angel of the Lord.*—Angels announced the birth of the Lord to the shepherds. They ministered to Him after the temptation and in

the Garden of Gethsemane. They were present at His resurrection and ascension. They will be with Him when He comes again. They are ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of them who shall inherit salvation (Heb. 1:14), but they were never permitted to tell a sinner what to do to be saved. That message must be told by men.

*I bring you good tidings.*—The good news about the Savior is still the most thrilling message that can be given to the lost sinner. Luke is careful throughout his story of Jesus to set Him forth in His wonderful role as Savior.

*Christ the Lord.*—Christ or Messiah refers to His office as prophet, priest, and king. What does Lord mean? On the Day of Pentecost, Peter declared that God had made His both Lord and Christ, that is, this Jesus whom they had crucified and whom God had raised from the dead. Jews had long been used to pronouncing the word "Lord" when they read the word "Jehovah" (more properly YAHVEH) in the Old Testament Scriptures. When the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek about 250 B. C., this Hebrew word "Yahveh" was translated "Lord." Jews were familiar with that translation in the days of Jesus and the apostles. When they heard Peter say that Jesus is Lord, they must have understood him to say that Jesus is the eternal living God. Luke has presented evidence of His deity in the facts about His birth and does not hesitate to tell Theophilus that He is the Son of God as well as the Son of Man. His authority is upheld in the word "Christ" for He is not only prophet, and priest, but also KING.

*the sign unto you.*—The angel gave the shepherds the sign which they could investigate and know that the child they found in the manger was the Christ.

*on earth peace.*—This is not merely the cessation of wars among men. It refers primarily to the peace that should exist between men and God, for sinful man in reality is at war with God. Peace may be had only by accepting the terms dictated by the Prince of Peace. See Acts 10:36; 11:18; 2:36-39. Peace is possible through the blood of Christ. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom 5:1). "Much more then, being justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him. For it, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life" (Rom 5:9-10). Enmity was destroyed

and peace made possible at the cross (Eph. 2:15-16). God's peace that passes understanding guards the hearts and thoughts of those who have been reconciled to Him through Christ (Phil. 4:6-7). And this becomes the real foundation upon which peace between men on earth can be built (Isa. 2:2-4).

*men in whom he is well pleased.*—Commentators differ as to the meaning and rendering of this text. It probably should be rendered, "men of good will." But what does that mean? To say that it means men who are well disposed toward one another is to ignore the fact that the angels spoke of God's favor toward men in sending them the Savior, Christ the Lord. God is well disposed toward men, for although all have sinned and have fallen short of His approval He has provided the means of blotting out their sins and reconciling them to Himself. This in no way implies that He was pleased with their sins, but He was pleased to grant to them an opportunity to repent (Acts 11:18).

*and the babe lying in a manger.*—The shepherds went to Bethlehem on the day of His birth and found the babe lying in a manger. But when the wise men arrived in Bethlehem they "came into the house and saw the young child with Mary his mother" (Matt. 1:11). This suggests that their visit was at a later date and that Joseph had found a house for his family, for they were no longer in the temporary quarters which they occupied when there was no place for them in the inn.

*Mary kept all these things.*—The memories of Mary the mother of Jesus were filled with those things about Him. She remembered the words of the angel as he told of the Child who was to be born. At the time she thought about the meaning of the heavenly message. And when the shepherds came telling her of the angel who spoke of the birth of the Savior who is Christ the Lord, Mary kept these things in her heart pondering their significance. And the words He spoke to her when He was twelve years old were also added to the memories she had kept in her heart. In all probability she did not fully understand them until that day when she stood at the foot of His cross and heard Him say, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." At least, we know that she was with that little company of believers after the resurrection of Christ (Acts 1:14).

Did Luke learn of Mary's memories from her? He does not say. He could have—assuming that she was still alive when he was

checking every detail of this gospel story. They could have been given to him directly by the Holy Spirit.

*when eight days were fulfilled for circumcising him.*—Circumcision was given originally to Abraham and later to the Jews (John 7: 22). Since Jesus was born under the law, His parents complied with its requirements.

*His name was called JESUS.*—Both Mary and Joseph had been informed that they were to call His name JESUS. There was no problem about it as there had been with the relatives when John was named.

### *Presenting the Child to the Lord*

#### *Scripture*

2:22-40 And when the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were fulfilled, they brought him up to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord), 24 and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons. 25 And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 And it had been revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 And he came in the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, that they might do concerning him after the custom of the law, 28 then he received him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,

29 Now lettest thou thy servant depart, Lord,

According to thy word, in peace;

30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples;

32 A light for revelation to the Gentiles,

And the glory of thy people Israel.

33 And his father and his mother were marvelling at the things which were spoken concerning him; 34 and Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this *child* is set for the falling and the rising of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against; 35 yea and a sword shall pierce through thine own

soul; that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed. 36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher (she was of a great age, having lived with a husband seven years from her virginity, 37 and she had been a widow even unto fourscore and four years), who departed not from the temple, worshipping with fastings and supplications night and day. 38 And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks unto God, and spake of him to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. 39 And when they had accomplished all things that were according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

40 And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

### *Comments*

*purification according to the law of Moses.*—See Lev. 12:1-8 for this law of purification. It was a ceremonial purification in connection with the birth of a child. It had nothing to do with so-called "original sin." The reference to their cleansing does not suggest that Jesus had inherited the taint of Adams' sin. Adam's sin did involve all of his descendants in physical death (Rom. 5-12). But "as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15:22).

*holy to the Lord.*—All of the firstborn were to be dedicated to the Lord, because He had saved them from death during the plague in Egypt (Ex. 13:1-6). Later, the Lord took the tribe of Levi instead of the firstborn (Num. 3:11-12). The law of redemption of the firstborn of man is given in Num. 18:15.

*A pair of turtledoves.*—The law provided for those who could not afford a lamb. They were allowed to take a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons and offer them as a burnt offering and as a sin offering (Lev. 12:8). The fact that Mary and Joseph brought such an offering indicates something of their humble circumstances.

*the consolation of the Lord.*—Israel had been waiting for the coming of Messiah for a long time. They needed someone to help them in their weakness, someone to console them in their sorrow; they needed someone to save them from their sins.

Simeon had been told that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ, for He is the consolation of Israel and the Savior of His people. The Holy Spirit who revealed this to him gave him

the words he spoke to Mary and Joseph about the Child. He spoke of Him as salvation for the Lord's people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel.

Christ provided salvation for His people through His death on the cross. He gives light that reveals the way through the preaching of His Word even to Gentiles. He is the glory—the presence of God—to Israel.

*the falling and rising of many in Israel.*—Christ was a stone of stumbling. Just as one might stumble over a protruding rock in his pathway, some stumbled over Christ. They were the ones who had their own idea about what Messiah should do for them: overcome the Roman bondage and restore their national dignity. But many who had fallen by the wayside because of sin were to be raised up and set on the highway of holiness and dignity in the sight of the Lord.

*sign that is spoken against.*—Men ridiculed Jesus as He was dying on the cross, but the cross was a sign of God's love for the world and His power to save the believer (I Cor 1:18-25). His resurrection is the cornerstone of our faith (Rom. 10:9-10). It is because the apostles preached the resurrection of the Lord that they were persecuted (Acts 4:1-4).

*a sword shall pierce through thine own soul.*—These words refer to the cross and to the sorrow of Mary as she watched Him there (John 19:25). No other experience is mentioned in the Gospels that can fulfill this prophecy of her grief. What memories flooded her mind in that tragic hour! How her grief must have been intensified by them! But that sorrow was turned into gladness when she knew that He had been raised from the dead.

*looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.*—The majority of the people were looking for someone to release them from Roman bondage. Some were looking for the Savior who would redeem them from the bondage to sin. This is what Christ came to do, but the Roman bondage continued until it reached its awful climax in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D.

*to their own city Nazareth.*—Matthew says that they went back to Bethlehem and from Bethlehem they went to Egypt where they stayed until Herod was dead. Then they came back to Judea, but because Archelaus was ruling instead of his father, Joseph was warned in a dream to go to Galilee (Matt. 2:13-23). Both Luke and Matthew agree that they went to Nazareth, but Luke does not



tell of the trip to Egypt. Luke usually gives these interesting side-lights, but in this case did not choose to do so.

*At the Age of Twelve*

*Scripture*

2:41-52 And his parents went every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast; 43 and when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not; 44 but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance: 45 and when they found him not, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him. 46 And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions: 47 and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing. 49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house? 50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. 51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them; and his mother kept all *these* sayings in her heart.

52 And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

*Comments*

*the feast of the passover.*—This is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover when He passed over the firstborn in the houses of the people of Israel and did not slay them when all the firstborn of the Egyptians were slain. See Ex. 12:27. The law required the men of Israel to appear before the Lord three times a year; one of those times was at the passover. Ex. 34:22-24. The parents of Jesus observed this custom and every year went to Jerusalem for the passover feast.

God promised the people of Israel that their lands would be protected during these feasts when the men were away from home (Ex. 34:24). But it was at the passover time that the Romans besieged the city of Jerusalem and destroyed the temple and killed thousands

of those who had gone there to worship according to that ancient custom. That awful retribution came upon them because they had forfeited their right to claim God's protection; they had crucified His Son, and the Son had warned them in these words: "Behold your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 23:38).

*supposing him to be in the company.*—Joseph had always exercised watchful care over Mary and the Child Jesus. There is no indication that he was negligent at this time. It was perfectly normal to suppose that Jesus was with the relatives and friends as the group made their way homeward. Mary seems to blame herself, for she said to Jesus, "Your father and I sought for you, sorrowing." This is not a case of delinquent parents who never care for their children. Both Mary and Joseph knew that they could trust Jesus, for he was now twelve years old and had always been obedient to them.

The incident shows a brief glimpse of Him as the Son of God who was concerned about the things of His Father.

*all that heard him were amazed.*—Not just a precocious twelve year old boy! We know that when He was mature all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge were hidden in Him (Col. 2:3). We are inclined to look upon Him even at the age of twelve as the One who revealed the wisdom of God (I Cor. 1:30). It must be admitted, however, that this reference alone would not necessarily indicate supernatural wisdom.

*he was subject to them.*—The parents were obedient to the law of Moses and to the instruction of the Lord in caring for this Child who had been entrusted to them. Jesus was obedient to loving parents who had demonstrated before Him what it meant to obey.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and thy mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth" (Eph 6:1-3).

*And Jesus advanced.*—His development was normal for He grew intellectually, physically, spiritually, and socially.

### *Summary*

With boldness born of complete confidence that what he was about to write was the truth, Luke told about the birth of Jesus.

The decree of Caesar had gone out and it had affected even the people who were living in the land where once David had reigned as king. Joseph was required to leave Nazareth and go to Bethlehem,

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the city of David, to enroll himself with Mary his wife. And while they were there, Mary gave birth to her firstborn Son and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger, for there was no room for them in the inn.

Shepherds were watching their flocks by night, when suddenly a brilliant light shone about them and they were greatly frightened. The angel of the Lord was standing by them, and he said, "Be not afraid; I bring you good news of great joy for all the people, for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord." Then the choir of angels sang of glory to God in the highest and of peace on earth among men of good will.

Mary and Joseph, as the law of Moses required, presented the Child to the Lord in the temple at Jerusalem. There Simeon blessed God for permitting his eyes to see the One who is the salvation of all people, and Anna the prophetess spoke about Him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Luke had made careful investigation into all the reports and records of the things about Jesus and must have known about the flight into Egypt and return to Nazareth by way of Judea as Matthew reports it. But he was hurrying with his story and merely said that Mary and Joseph returned to Nazareth, for he wanted to tell Theophilus about another journey, the one that Jesus made with His parents to Jerusalem when He was twelve years old.

Jewish families must have made a great thing out of such occasions, especially those who would be on the road several days each way. Friends and relatives had gone with Mary and Joseph to the passover feast. When it was over, they all started home, but Jesus remained in Jerusalem. Sorrowing parents sought Him supposing He was with the group. But when they didn't find Him, they returned to Jerusalem. There they found Him in the temple sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; and the teachers were amazed at His understanding and His answers. To Mary's gentle rebuke—or was she blaming herself for what had happened?—Jesus said, "Why did you seek me? Didn't you know that I must be about my Father's business?" But Mary and Joseph didn't understand Him.

We do not know what rejoicing was theirs when they joined the group and journeyed on to their home. We do not know what resolutions they may have made to guard the trust the Lord had committed to them more carefully. Luke simply says that Jesus went

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with them to Nazareth and was obedient to them, and that Mary kept all these things in her heart. How precious were His mother's memories! In all probability, she is the one who shared them with Luke, and he with Theophilus, and we are blessed by the record that has been preserved for us.

### *Questions*

1. Why did Joseph take Mary and go to Bethlehem?
2. What had Micah prophesied about the birthplace of Messiah?
3. What is known about the power of Rome at the time of Micah?
4. From the Christian point of view, what are the two most important events in the reign of Augustus?
5. What do the Scriptures say about the children of Mary and Joseph who were born after Jesus?
6. Why is He called Mary's firstborn Son?
7. What can be said about the fact that there was no room for them in the inn?
8. How does the story of the angels and the shepherds add to the evidence that proves that Jesus is the Son of God and the Son of Man?
9. What good news did the angel of the Lord bring?
10. What, in all probability, did the people understand the word "Lord" to mean when applied to Jesus?
11. What is meant by "peace on earth"?
12. What is meant by "men in whom he is well pleased"?
13. What do Matthew and Luke say about the time of the visit of the shepherds and the wise men to Bethlehem?
14. What does Luke say about the things that Mary kept in her heart?
15. Why did the parents observe the law of circumcision and presentation of the Child to the Lord?
16. What does the fact that they brought an offering of turtledoves or pigeons suggest?
17. What is meant by the consolation of Israel?
18. Who was Simeon?
19. What had the Holy Spirit revealed to him?
20. What did the Holy Spirit reveal about the Child in the words spoken by Simeon?
21. In what way was He set for the falling and rising of many?
22. What is the sign that is spoken against?

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23. What is the sword that pierced Mary's heart?
24. Who was Anna?
25. What did she say about Jesus?
26. For what possible reason did Luke omit the account of the journey to Egypt?
27. What was the passover?
28. What was the custom of observing it in the days of Joseph?
29. What had the Lord promised the men of Israel who left their homes unguarded on these feast days?
30. Why, then, did the destruction of Jerusalem occur during their feast?
31. Why would Mary and Joseph suppose that Jesus was with the group when they started home?
32. Did they blame Jesus or themselves?
33. How explain Jesus' questions and answers before the teachers?
34. What lesson is there for parents in the experience of Mary and Joseph when Jesus was twelve years old?
35. What lesson for children?

## CHAPTER THREE

### *Outline*

- A. Luke gives a brief account of the ministry of John the Baptist (1-20).
  - 1. He told when it occurred in relation to the civil and the religious rulers (1-2).
    - a) He named the civil rulers of the time and gave their territories.
      - (1) It was in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberias Caesar.
      - (2) Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea.
      - (3) Herod was tetrarch of Galilee.
      - (4) Herod's brother Philip I was ruler of Iturea and Trachonitis.
      - (5) Lysanias was ruler of Abilene.
    - b) He named the two high priests of the Jews: Annas and Caiaphas.
    - c) He indicated the place of John's ministry—The word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.
  - 2. He told about John's message (3-9).
    - a) He preached the baptism of repentance for remission of sins.
    - b) In so doing, he fulfilled what Isaiah had written (Isa. 40:3-5).
      - (1) John's was the voice of one crying in the wilderness.
      - (2) That voice said:
        - (a) Make ready the way of the Lord.
        - (b) Make his paths straight.
      - (3) Obedience to that voice would cause:
        - (a) the valleys to be filled and the mountains to be brought low,
        - (b) and the crooked paths to be straightened and the rough places to be smoothed.
        - (c) And all people would see the salvation of God.
    - c) He rebuked the multitudes and warned them about the thing they were facing.
      - (1) He called them offspring of vipers and asked,

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- "Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"
- (2) He told them to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance.
  - (3) He warned them not to rely on the fact that they were descendants of Abraham, for he said, "God can make these stones into Abraham's children."
  - (4) He likened Israel to a fruitless tree that was about to be cut down and burned.
3. He told what John said when the multitudes asked, "What then shall we do?"
- a) To the multitudes, he said, "Let the one who has two coats or food share with the one who has none."
  - b) To the publicans, he said, "Collect no more tax than what is ordered."
  - c) To the soldiers, he said,
    - (1) "Don't force money out of anyone,"
    - (2) "Don't accuse anyone wrongfully,"
    - (3) "Be content with your wages."
4. He told how the people reacted to John's ministry (15-17).
- a) They were in a state of expectation, wondering if John were the Christ.
  - b) John explained his relation to Christ by telling about his baptism and the two baptisms Christ would administer.
    - (1) John, who acknowledged his inferiority to Christ, said, "I baptize in water."
    - (2) Christ would baptize in the Holy Spirit and in fire.
      - (a) He explained baptism in the Holy Spirit with the illustration of gathering the wheat into the granary.
      - (b) He explained baptism in fire as the burning up of the chaff.
5. He gave a brief statement of the further activity of John (18-20).
- a) "With many other exhortations he preached good tidings to the people."
  - b) He rebuked Herod for having married his brother's wife, and was imprisoned because of it.

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- B. Luke told about the baptism of Jesus (21-22).
1. He was baptized when all the people were coming to have John baptize them.
  2. He was praying during His baptism.
  3. The heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form, as a dove.
  4. A Voice from heaven said, "Thou art my beloved son; in thee I am well pleased."
- C. After having presented the evidence to prove that Jesus is the Son of God and the Son of Man, Luke gave the list of His ancestors (23-38).
1. Jesus was about thirty years old when He began His ministry.
  2. Those who didn't know the facts supposed that He was the son of Joseph.
  3. To overcome this erroneous supposition, Luke traced the ancestry of Jesus through Nathan to David and Adam, then added, "the son of God."

### *The Ministry of John the Baptist*

#### *Scripture*

3:1-20 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitus, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, 2 in the highpriesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. 3 And he came into all the region round about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins; 4 as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

- The voice of one crying in the wilderness,  
Make ye ready the way of the Lord,  
Make his paths straight.
- 5 Every valley shall be filled,  
And every mountain and hill shall be brought low;  
And the crooked shall become straight,  
And the rough ways smooth;
- 6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.
- 7 He said therefore to the multitudes that went out to be baptized



of him, Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin 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, 9 And even now the axe also lieth at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 10 And the multitudes asked him, saying, What then must we do? 11 And he answered and said unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath food, let him do likewise. 12 And there came also publicans to be baptized, and they said unto him, Teacher, what must we do? 13 And he said unto them, Extort no more than that which is appointed you. 14 And soldiers also asked him, saying, And we, what must we do? And he said unto them, Extort from no man by violence, neither accuse *any one* wrongfully; and be content with your wages.

15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether haply he were the Christ; 16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but there cometh he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and *in* fire: 17 whose fan is in his hand, thoroughly to cleanse his threshing-floor, and to gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.

18 With many other exhortations therefore preached he good tidings unto the people; 19 but Herod the tetrarch, being reprov'd by him for Herodias his brother's wife, and for all the evil things which Herod had done, 20 added this also to them all, that he shut up John in prison.

### *Comments*

*the reign of Tiberias Caesar.*—If the outstanding thing that happened in the reign of Caesar Augustus was the birth of Christ, we may safely say that the outstanding thing that happened in the reign of Tiberias was the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

Pontius Pilate was the governor of Judea during that eventful period of history. His claim to fame depends upon the fact that he presided over the trial of Jesus. Although he tried to wash his hands of responsibility in the case, he finally acceded to the demands of

those who clamored for His death and gave orders for Him to be crucified.

Herod, also known as Antipas, was tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. The kingdom of Herod the Great was divided after his death and Antipas became ruler of a fourth part of it. That's why he was sometimes called Herod the tetrarch (Matt. 14:1). Not only is he known for his infamous deed of having John the Baptist beheaded, but also for the fact that he had some small part in the trial of Jesus.

Lysanias, though not related to the Herods, was tetrarch of the territory that lay to the north of the Sea of Galilee and east of Mount Hermon.

*the highpriesthood of Annas and Caiphas.*—Actually there was only one office of high priest. But through Roman manipulation the high priesthood of Annas had been given to his son-in-law, Caiaphas, and both men were looked upon by Jews as high priest. This is not the first time that the Mosaic law of succession had been set aside. According to that law, at the death of the high priest the oldest son was to be consecrated to the office. Evidently some did not accept the idea of having another appointed high priest during the lifetime of one whom they had recognized as their high priest. It may be that it was for that reason that the Jews led Jesus first to Annas when they brought Him to trial before their court (John 18:13). But before they took the case to the Roman governor, they met with Caiphas and then decided on the course of action in presenting their case to Pilate.

*the word of God came to John.*—John is acknowledged in every way as a prophet of God. God's word came to the prophet while he was in the wilderness. The same formula is used to describe the Old Testament prophets, for it is said that the word of the Lord came to them, that is, their message was not their own, it was from the Lord.

Luke had to use a very cumbersome method to affix a date to the birth of Christ and to the ministry of John. He began with the Caesar, then told of the local rulers and finally gave the names of those who were filling the office of high priest of the Jews. Now a simple number that recalls the year of Our Lord significantly takes the place of the system Luke used.

*baptism of repentance unto remission of sins.*—Repentance is the decision that leads to a change of conduct. Through the preaching

of John, the people were convinced that they needed to change their way of life and came to John to be baptized for the remission of their sins.

*Isaiah the prophet.*—The prophecy of Isaiah introduces the ministry of John the Baptist, and another word from the same prophet introduces the ministry of Jesus (Isa. 40:3-6; 61:1-2). While Matthew gives especial attention to the fulfillment of prophecy by Jesus, Mark and Luke do not neglect the matter. Paul also shows how the gospel is rooted in the Old Testament Scriptures, that is, "the gospel of God which he promised afore through his prophets in the holy scriptures concerning his Son" (Rom. 1:2-3).

*The voice.*—When the Jews sent a deputation from Jerusalem to John to ask, "Who are you?" he replied, "I am not the Christ." They asked, "Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." They tried again, "Are you the prophet?" He said, "No." With no success with the suggestions they had made, they said, "Who are you, that we may give answer to those who sent us?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as the prophet Isaiah said." See John 1:19-23.

Their questions were based on Deut. 18:15; Psalms 89:3-4; and Mal. 4:5. John answered them by quoting Isaiah, because it was his message and not his person that was of importance. In this he differs from Jesus, for who He was and what He taught were of great importance. A little later, John explained this to his disciples by saying, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

*Make ready the way of the Lord.*—John's task was to get the people to prepare themselves for the coming of the Lord. In the figure of Isaiah, this was like making a straight path for the Lord. Let the valleys be filled and the mountains be leveled and the curves straightened and the rough places smoothed. They would have to repent of their ways and be baptized for the remission of their sins.

*All flesh shall see the salvation of God.*—All peoples, not just the Jews, were to see the salvation God sent to them in the person of His Son. When Theophilus read this, he must have been deeply grateful that the grace of God had extended to the Gentiles too. Luke stressed the point again as he closed the letter by saying "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Lk 24:47).

*the multitudes that went out to be baptized.*—The size of the crowds

might have flattered some preachers, but not John. He greeted them with words intended to shock them into action. Repent! Make ready the way of the Lord! Generation of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? You are a tree that has not been producing fruit; and like that tree, you are about to be cut down. Change your minds about your sinful ways and start producing righteous fruit.

*We have Abraham to our father.*—Since they were the descendants of Abraham, it was easy for them to assume that they were children of God. When they argued the same way with Jesus, He plainly told them that they were not Abraham's children because their attitude toward the Son of God proved that they were children of the devil. See John 8:31-44.

*God is able of these stones.*—Why didn't God turn the stones into Abraham's children? Why didn't He create people who were incapable of anything except faith and obedience? Evidently God wants those to be His children who will be like Abraham in faith and obedience because of their love for God. This, of course, calls for sinners to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins and as an indication of their love for the Lord to conduct themselves as intelligent people who want to glorify the heavenly Father by living a life of faith and purity.

*the axe also lieth at the root of the trees.*—God was ready to destroy the fruitless trees. Sinners who were not producing the fruit of righteousness to the glory of God were facing certain doom unless they changed their minds about the issue of sin. Jesus also likens the nation of Israel to a tree that failed to produce fruit (Lk. 13:6-9). He also called on the people to repent. Jesus pronounced judgment on a tree that had no fruit on it although it did have leaves (Mark 11:12-25). The miracle seems to be a portent of what was about to happen to a nation that was getting ready to crucify the Son of God.

*When then must we do?*—John was an effective prophet. Little good is accomplished by telling people what to do before they are in a frame of mind to be advised. John's stern warning brought the people to the point where they wanted to do something to avoid the destruction that awaited them. The same thing happened on the day of Pentecost. Peter produced the evidence that let the people know that they were guilty of having crucified the Son of God. Because they were pricked to the heart by his message, they said to

Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Acts 2:37.

John was ready with the answer to the multitudes. He said, "He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and do likewise with food." This was not to encourage laziness, but rather to encourage concern for those who are really in need. The progress of the gospel is hindered today, not because God has not provided food for all the people of the world, but because we lack the ability and perhaps the willingness to properly distribute it. Christianity prompted the early Christians to share with any who had need (Acts 2:45) and even to feed a hungry enemy (Rom. 12:20).

*publicans to be baptized.*—The tax collectors were usually classed as sinners because of the common practice of taking advantage of their office by collecting more than authorized. But they were not all like that. The apostle Matthew reminds us that he was a publican (Matt. 10:3). Zacchaeus, a chief publican, is known for his desire to see Jesus (Lk 19:1-10). There is no indication that Matthew ever abused his office, but Zachaeus seems quite willing to admit that he may have been guilty of doing so. John gave the general order to the publicans: "Extort no more than that which is appointed you."

*And soldiers also asked him.*—There is no way of knowing whether these soldiers were in the service of some local government or of the Roman emperor. We do not know whether they were Jews or Romans. But John's message was so striking that these military men came to ask what they were to do.

Luke gives the account of at least three other military men who were attracted by Christ and His gospel: (1) the centurion who asked Jesus to heal his servant (Lk 7:2); (2) the centurion who commanded the soldiers who carried out Pilate's order to crucify Jesus (Lk 23:47); (3) Cornelius, the centurion to whom Peter preached the gospel (Acts 10:1).

John's instructions to the soldiers were directed toward things that were common problems of soldiers of that day. They were not to use violence for the sake of getting money; they were not to become informers with intent to injure the innocent or to gain personally from such activity; they were to be content with their wages. The soldier who was content with his wages wouldn't be trying to force people to give him money or informing on others for the same purpose.

*the people were in expectation.*—It had been a long time since Israel had a prophet living in their midst. When John came, there was a strange stirring in their hearts, wondering if this could be the Messiah. They had been taught about the days of David and the glory of the reign of Solomon. Perhaps they were now dreaming of a Messiah who would free them from the Roman yoke. It is possible, on the other hand, that some were tired of their sins and were wondering if John could be Christ who would lead them back to the glory their nation had once known. But John pointed them to Jesus and the salvation with which He would satisfy the longing of those who wanted to do the will of God.

*I indeed baptize you with water.*—John baptized in water, not with it. He immersed the people in the Jordan river. To translate "with water" is to suggest the action of sprinkling or pouring, neither of which are suggested by the word baptize.

This immersion in water was for the remission of sins. "John came, who baptized in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins" (Mark 1:4). Repentance preceded the baptism, and without it baptism was meaningless. The same thought is suggested in Matthew's account: "I indeed baptize you in water unto repentance" (Matt. 3:11). This does not say that they were baptized so that they could repent, but that they were baptized with regard to repentance, that is, the repentance that John had demanded of them.

John was sent from God (John 1:6) and we may assume that the baptism he preached was commanded by God. It was for the remission of sins, but like all other provisions under the Old Covenant for remission of sins, it anticipated the sacrifice of Christ that actually blotted out sin (Heb. 9:15; Rom 3:25-26). We may safely assume that the Jews whom John baptized continued to offer the sacrifices required by the law of Moses.

Of the three thousand who were baptized on the day of Pentecost under the New Covenant, no doubt, many had been already baptized into John's baptism. On that day they were baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of sins in order to be in the body of Christ (Acts 2:38; Gal 3:27). Apparently, after the day of Pentecost, all who had been baptized by John were also required to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. See Acts 19:1-7.

*he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire.*—John baptized in water; Christ would baptize in two elements: (1) the Holy

Spirit, that is, in the power of the Holy Spirit; and (2) in fire.

John explained this with the illustration of the threshing floor. The gathering of the wheat into the grannery is like the thing that would be accomplished by those baptized in the Holy Spirit. The burning of the chaff is like the baptism in fire—the destruction of the wicked in hell (II Thes. 1:8-9).

Jesus also explained the baptism in the Holy Spirit when He spoke to the apostles just before His ascension (Acts 1:4-5, 8). They were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and as a result of it they were able to tell the people what to do to be saved (Acts 2:1-4; and 2:37-38).

The "tongues parting asunder, like as of fire" which appeared in connection with the baptism of the apostles in the Holy Spirit should not be confused with the baptism in fire. That phenomenon, together with the sound like the rushing of a great wind, attracted the attention of the people. Then the apostles who were all filled with the Holy Spirit spoke to them in the people's own native languages.

*With many other exhortations.*—One papyrus roll was not enough to tell all that John said or did. Luke was saving space for those events in the ministry of Jesus that he wanted to tell Theophilus about. See how he made use of this expression in reporting the events of the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:40).

*Herod the tetrarch.*—This wicked son of a wicked father—he had slain the babes at the time of the birth of Jesus—was reproved by John for the evil things he had done including his marriage to the wife of his half brother, Philip I. For this, John was shut up in prison and before long was beheaded.

### *The Baptism of Jesus*

#### *Scripture*

3:21-22 Now it came to pass, when all the people were baptized, that, Jesus also having been baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form, as a dove, upon him, and a voice came out of heaven, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

#### *Comments*

*when all the people were baptized.*—For the purpose of this baptism, see comment on 3:16.

*Jesus also having been baptized.*—It is important to notice the distinction between the purpose of the baptism of the people and the purpose of the baptism of Jesus by John. Jesus said His was "to fulfill all righteousness"—that is, to do all things that meet the approval of God. See Matt. 3:15. John suggests two more reasons why Jesus was baptized. He had been told that the one upon whom he would see the Holy Spirit descending would be the one who would baptize in the Holy Spirit. Although John knew Jesus—he said, "I have need to be baptized by you"—he needed this evidence that came at the time of Jesus baptism to be able to reveal Him to the people as the Son of God. See John 1:29-34.

*and praying.*—Only Luke tells us that Jesus was praying when He was baptized. He also records a good many other things about the prayer life of Jesus.

*the Holy Spirit descended.*—This was the sign to John that Jesus was the One who would baptize in the Holy Spirit. Peter also refers to the fact that "God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power and that He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" (Acts 10:38).

*a voice from heaven.*—The One who was designated Son of God at the time of His conception is now publically recognized by the Father. The Voice of God was heard three times during the ministry of Jesus: (1) at His baptism; (2) when He prayed after the Greeks came to see Him (John 12:28); and (3) at the time of His transfiguration (Luke 9:35).

### *The List of Jesus' Ancestors*

#### *Scripture*

3:23-38 And Jesus himself, when he began to teach, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, 24 the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, 25 the son of Matathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, 26 the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, 27 the son of Joanan, Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, 29 the son of Jesus, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, 30 the son of Symeon, the son of Judas, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, 31 the son of Melea, the



*son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, 32 the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon, 33 the son of Amminadab, the son of Arni, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, 34 the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, 35 the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, 36 the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, 37 the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan, 38 the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.*

### *Comments*

*And Jesus himself.*—Luke has presented strong evidence in support of his claim that Jesus is the Son of God. The climax of that evidence is the report of God's public acknowledgment of His Son when He said, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." He is now ready to tell Theophilus about the ancestors of Jesus who is also the Son of Man. Matthew began the birth record with David and Abraham and traced it to Joseph, the husband of Mary of whom was born the Christ. But Luke—this is much more meaningful to a Gentile—began with Jesus and traced His lineage through Nathan to David and finally to Adam and then adds the final note, "the son of God."

*as was supposed.*—Two interesting items open the paragraph: (1) Jesus was about thirty years old when He began to teach; (2) It was assumed by those who didn't know the facts that He was the son of Joseph.

Why did He wait until He was thirty? Our impatience makes us wonder why He didn't begin much sooner. But God had waited until the "fulness of time" to bring His Son into the world. There are many things involved in that statement, but one thing is clear, the world was ready for Him; the Jewish people were in expectation; even Gentiles were glad when they heard the news of salvation through Him. The simple answer, of course, to the question is that Jews expected their teachers to have some maturity when they began. This does not bar a younger man who is prepared to undertake a ministry for the Lord today.

It was only natural for those who did not know the facts to suppose that Jesus was the son of Joseph. He grew up in Joseph's home and was obedient to Mary and Joseph. Of course, Mary and Joseph knew that He was the Son of God—how well they understood it may be a question—but there was no good way to tell others about it until after His ministry where He demonstrated it and His resurrection that proved it beyond a doubt. Even the Lord's brothers were not aware of the truth that He is Lord and Christ until after they had become convinced of it by the force of the evidence of the resurrection.

*the son of Heli.*—The names in this list differ somewhat from those given in Matt. 1:1-16. But both Matthew and Luke and Paul make it clear that Jesus, "according to flesh" was born of the seed of David (Rom. 1:3). Both Matthew and Luke make it clear that Joseph was not Jesus' father; the conception was a miracle and Paul affirms that the resurrection designated Him as Son of God. The difference in the two lists may be explained by assuming—we have no way of proving it—that Luke gives Mary's genealogy and Matthew gives Joseph's.

*of Nathan, the son of David.*—Matthew traced the line through Solomon, suggesting that Joseph was the legal heir to David's throne. Luke traces it through Nathan, suggesting the blood line of Mary of whom was born Jesus the Christ.

*the son of Adam.*—Adam was the head of the human race; Christ is the head of the new creation (I Cor 15:45-49). Adam was created by God and so was the son of God. But Jesus' relation to God is unique, for, as John says, "He was God" (John 1:1) and "became flesh" (1:14). Therefore, He can rightly be called "the only begotten Son of God" (John 1:18).

### Summary

With this chapter Luke completes the evidence—with the exception of the account of the Temptation—that presents Jesus as the Son of God and the Son of Man who is ready to begin His ministry. He begins with a brief account of the ministry of John, then tells of the baptism of Jesus, and closes the chapter with the genealogy of Jesus.

John came with his stirring message at a time when all the people were in expectation, wondering if he could be the Messiah.

### CHAPTER THREE

But he was not the Christ; he was the prophet of God sent to tell the people to make ready for the coming of the Lord. He had a harsh message, for they were sinners. They were like valleys that had to be filled, mountains that had to be leveled, and curves that had to be straightened so that their lives might be suitable for the Lord. They were a fruitless tree that was about to be cut down. He commanded them to repent; he baptized them in the Jordan for the remission of their sins.

John's message bore fruit. Crowds flocked to hear him from Jerusalem and the surrounding country. He baptized them as he saw that they were heeding his command to repent. Tax collectors came asking what they should do; soldiers wanted to know what to do. His answer was simple and direct: Repent and let your lives show that you have changed from your evil ways.

But John directed them to Jesus. He said, "I baptize you in water, but the One who is coming after me will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire." By the baptism in the Holy Spirit He was to enable the apostles to tell men what to do to be saved and like wheat be gathered into the granary. But those who will not respond to their message will, like chaff that is burned up, be destroyed when Christ comes again.

Luke gave only a summary of what John did and taught. Among the many things which he did, John reproved Herod the tetrarch for the evil he had done, including his marriage to the wife of his brother. And for this, John was put in prison.

The climax of the evidence that presents Jesus as Son of God and Son of Man ready to begin His public ministry, came at the time of His baptism. John baptized Jesus because He said it was right to do the thing that God approves, and also that he might see the sign that shows Him as Son of God. At the baptism of Jesus, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him and the Father said to Him, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."

Not until this evidence had been presented was Luke ready to tell about the ancestry of Jesus. He traced the line from Jesus all the way to Adam and to God.

One more incident belongs to this section of Luke's story and that is the account of the temptation of Jesus which is in chapter four. It shows that Satan was unable to shake the evidence that proves that Jesus is the Son of God and the Son of Man.

## STUDIES IN LUKE

### *Questions*

1. What was the most important event, from the Christian's point of view, in the reign of Caesar Augustus?
2. For what things do we remember Herod the tetrarch?
3. How did it happen that both Annas and Caiaphas were high priests at the same time?
4. What is the significance of the statement that "the word of God came to John"?
5. What is meant by "baptism of repentance"?
6. What was the purpose of John's baptism?
7. How does Isaiah's prophecy fit the condition of John's time?
8. Why is John called "the voice of one crying in the wilderness"?
9. What Scriptures did the Jews have in mind when they asked if John was the prophet or Elijah?
10. How was John to prepare for the Lord?
11. What is there in the prophecy of Isaiah that indicates that the Gentiles were to share in the salvation through Christ?
12. What was John's attitude toward the multitudes who came to hear him?
13. Why did he liken them to a tree about to be cut down?
14. What did he mean by saying that "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham"?
15. What did John tell the crowds to do? the publicans? the soldiers?
16. What does Luke say about the attitude of the people at the time of John's appearing in the wilderness?
17. Why should we say that John baptized "in" water rather than "with" water?
18. How could John's baptism be "for remission of sins"?
19. Into what two elements was Jesus to baptize?
20. What was the purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit?
21. What is the baptism in fire?
22. With what illustration did John explain the two baptisms?
23. Why was John imprisoned?
24. Why was Jesus baptized?
25. What did the descent of the Spirit on Jesus mean to John?
26. What was Jesus doing when He was being baptized?

### CHAPTER THREE

27. What is the significance of the fact that the Voice of God spoke at the baptism of Jesus?
28. Why did Luke wait until this point in his narrative to give the genealogy of Jesus?
29. How are we to understand the statement that Jesus was the son of Joseph (as was supposed)?
30. How account for the difference between Luke's list and Matthew's?
31. Why did Luke trace the genealogy to Adam?
32. What is the connection between the temptation of Jesus and what was said about Him at the time of His baptism?

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *Outline*

- A. Luke told about Christ's victory over the devil's temptations (1-13).
1. The circumstances under which the temptations were presented (1-2).
    - a) Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan. He had just been baptized; the Spirit had descended upon Him; and God had said, "This is my Son."
    - b) He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness during forty days.
    - c) He was tempted by the devil.
    - d) He ate nothing during the forty days and was hungry at the end of the period.
  2. The three temptations (3-12).
    - a) The temptation to change the stone into bread (3-4).
      - (1) The devil's challenge: "If you are the Son of God."
      - (2) The devil's proposition: "Command the stone to become bread."
      - (3) Jesus' answer based on what is written in the Word of God, "Man shall not live by bread alone."
    - b) The temptation to worship the devil (5-8).
      - (1) The devil's offer: He showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and offered their authority and glory to Him.
      - (2) The devil's terms: "If thou wilt worship before me, it shall all be thine."
      - (3) Jesus' answer: "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."
    - c) The temptation to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple (9-12).
      - (1) The devil's challenge: "If you are the son of God."
        - (a) The devil had led Him to Jerusalem and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple.
        - (b) The devil quoted from the Psalms about the care exercised by the angels (Psa. 91:11-12).
      - (2) The devil's proposition: "Cast yourself down."

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- (3) Jesus' answer: "It is said, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God."
3. The devil's activity after Jesus' victory over him (13).
- a) He had completed every temptation.
  - b) He departed from Jesus for a season.
- B. Luke told about the beginning of Jesus ministry in Galilee (14-30).
- 1. A general statement about the Galilean ministry (14-15).
    - a) He returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit.
    - b) His fame spread throughout the whole region.
    - c) He taught in the synagogues and was glorified by all.
  - 2. The rejection at Nazareth (16-30).
    - a) Jesus went to the synagogue at Nazareth (16).
      - (1) He had been reared at Nazareth.
      - (2) His custom was to go to the synagogue on the sabbath.
      - (3) He stood up and read from the book of Isaiah.
    - b) It was the passage that told about His ministry (17-19).
      - (1) The Spirit of the Lord was upon Him.
      - (2) The Lord had anointed Him to preach good tidings to the poor.
    - (3) He had sent Him to:
      - (a) Proclaim release to the captives.
      - (b) Recovering of sight to the blind.
      - (c) Set at liberty them that are bruised.
      - (d) Proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.
    - c) He explained that the prophecy was fulfilled that day in their hearing (20-21).
    - d) He answered their objections (22-27).
      - (1) They wondered at His words and asked, "Is not this Joseph's son?"
      - (2) His answer:
        - (a) Physician, heal thyself—referring to what had been done in Capernaum.
        - (b) No prophet is acceptable in His own country.
          - i) He reminded them of Elijah and the widow at Zarephath.
          - ii) He reminded them of Elisha and the healing of Naaman the Syrian.

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- e) He escaped from the mob that tried to kill Him (28-30).
  - (1) They were filled with anger at His words.
  - (2) They led Him to the brow of the hill, intending to cast Him down to His death.
  - (3) Luke says, "But he passing through the midst of them went his way."
- C. Luke told about His ministry in Capernaum and other parts of Galilee (31-44).
  - 1. A general statement about Jesus going down to Capernaum (31-32).
    - a) Capernaum was a city of Galilee.
    - b) Jesus taught the people on the sabbath day.
    - c) They were astonished at the authority with which He taught them.
  - 2. Healing the man with the spirit of an unclean demon (33-37).
    - a) The demon possessed man said:
      - (1) What have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Nazarene?
      - (2) Are you come to destroy us?
      - (3) I know who you are, the Holy One of God.
    - b) Jesus commanded the demon to come out of him.
    - c) People were amazed at what happened, and the report of Jesus' work spread to all the region.
  - 3. The healing of Simon's mother-in-law (38-39).
  - 4. The healing of many sick and demon possessed people as the sun was setting at the close of the sabbath day (40-41).
  - 5. The plea of the people for Him to remain with them (42-44).
    - a) Jesus had gone to a desert place; the crowds came and asked Him to remain with them.
    - b) He explained that He had been sent to preach good tidings of the kingdom of God to other cities also.
    - c) He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.



*Victory of Jesus Over Temptation**Scripture*

4:1-13 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led in the Spirit in the wilderness 2 during forty days, being tempted of the devil. And he did eat nothing in those days: and when they were completed, he hungered. 3 And the devil said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command this stone that it become bread. 4 And Jesus answered unto him, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone. 5 And he led him up, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said unto him, To thee will I give all this authority, and the glory of them: for it hath been delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. 7 If thou therefore wilt worship before me, it shall all be thine. 8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 9 And he led him to Jerusalem, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: 10 for it is written,

He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, to guard thee:

11 and,

On their hands they shall bear thee up,

Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.

12 And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God.

13 And when the devil had completed every temptation, he departed from him for a season.

*Comments*

*full of the Holy Spirit.*—John was also said to be full of the Holy Spirit, meaning dedication to the service of the Lord. See 1:15. It probably means the same when referring to Jesus, for He was also dedicated to His Father's business. John as a prophet was also inspired by the Holy Spirit (John 3:34). Jesus was the Prophet; what He said and did were by the power of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:2; Matt. 12:28.

*led in the Spirit.*—God through the Holy Spirit led Him from the baptism where He acknowledged Him as Son to the wilderness where the devil tempted Him because He was also Son of Man.

*tempted of the devil.*—He was tempted by the devil. Temptation is

a trial that presents an opportunity to choose between good and evil, between God and the devil. Man was tempted in the Garden because God said he was not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, but the devil said that it was good and would make man wise. To do what the devil says is to break the law of God, and that is sin. The temptation in itself is not sin; it is the submission to the devil's proposition that is sin. The submission need not go as far as the actual committing of the act; the longing desire for the evil thing is also sin. James says, "Each man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust—longing desire for evil—and enticed." James 1:14. Jesus said the same thing. "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 5:27-28).

When Jesus was tempted by the devil, He did not hesitate one fleeting moment to reject the evil suggestion.

*he hungered.*—He had been without food for forty days; He was really hungry; thought of food presented a challenge. The devil wouldn't try to tempt a man with the thought of food just after he had eaten. He always strikes at the weakest place. Judas' love for money made the thought of "thirty pieces of silver" a real temptation and it became his downfall.

Paul said, "Let him who thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall" (I Cor 10:12). Remember that Peter denied His Lord in a few short hours after boasting that he would be true even if all the other disciples should fail.

*If you are the Son of God.*—Jesus was tempted as man; He could not be tempted as God, for God cannot be tempted of evil (James 1:13). He also met temptation as man and overcame it as a man. He said, "Man shall not live by bread alone," quoting what God had caused to be written for man's direction (Deut. 8:3).

Why then did the devil say, "If you are the Son of God"? He knew He was; God had just acknowledged Him from heaven saying, "You are my beloved Son; in you I am well pleased." The devil's proposition to change a stone into bread that a hungry man might eat was real because as Son of God He could have done it. Otherwise there would have been no temptation at all. Then why didn't He do it? Because it would have violated what God had said, and that would have been sin!

The writer of Hebrews says that He was tempted in all points

like we are, yet without sin. Heb. 4:15. Then let no one when he is tempted say that he must submit because he is just human; rather, let him use the same weapon that Jesus used, the Word of God, and with it overcome the devil.

*command this stone that it become bread.*—The devil presented three temptations in the Garden: (1) The tree was good for food; (2) it was a delight to the eyes; (3) it was to be desired to make one wise, like God. The same three temptations are seen in the propositions which the devil presented to Jesus: (1) food; (2) the sight of the worlds with their glory and authority; (3) be like God and defy God's law for man. John mentions the same three issues when he writes about "all that is in the world" of sin: (1) the lust of the flesh; (2) the lust of the eyes; (3) and the vainglory of life—man's reckless disregard for God. See I John 2:15-16.

The devil's ability to tempt man is limited. Man's ability to withstand temptation depends on doing what God had commanded (I Cor. 10:13). The victory of Jesus proves it, Paul said to put on the whole armor of God in order to withstand the devil. Take the shield of faith, for with it you can quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. Eph. 6:10-18.

*To thee I will give all this authority.*—The devil said it had been given to him to give to whomsoever he would. But he lied in the Garden, and Jesus said he is a liar and the father of liars (John 8:44). Why should anyone believe him? Jesus certainly didn't for He answered, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

*the pinnacle of the temple.*—Some high point on the temple in Jerusalem. The devil suggested that Jesus use His divine power for self-glory and disregard God's law for man. He even attempted to use Scripture to support his evil suggestion. He seems to say, "Just jump off; you won't fall. God will take care of you." How many foolish things men have attempted to do because they have not considered all that God has said! But Jesus was not caught unawares, for He knew the whole Word of God. He said, "It is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God."

*when the devil had completed every temptation.*—This may refer to the three temptations which he had just presented to Jesus, or it may mean that every temptation of the devil can be put into these three categories.

*he departed from him for a season.*—The devil had been defeated in

in each attempt to lead Jesus to sin. He left Him for a season, but returned again and again in many situations that presented temptations.

Matthew says that when the devil left Jesus, "angels came and ministered unto him" (Matt. 4:11).

*The Beginning of Jesus' Ministry in Galilee*

*Scripture*

4:14-30 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and a fame went out concerning him through all the region round about. 15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read. 17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written,

18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:  
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,  
And recovering of sight to the blind,  
To set at liberty them that are bruised,

19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down: and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 And he began to say unto them, To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears. 22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth: and they said, Is not this Joseph's son? 23 And he said unto them, Doubtless ye will say unto me this parable, hysican, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done at Capernaum, do also here in thine own country. 24 And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is acceptable in his own country. 25 But of a truth I say unto you, There were man widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land; 26 and unto none of them was Elijah sent, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. 27 And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was

cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian. 28 And they were all filled with wrath in the synagogue, as they heard these things; 29 and they rose up, and cast him forth out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, and they might throw him down headlong. 30 But he passing through the midst of them went his way.

### Comments

*And Jesus returned.*—Up to this point Luke has been concerned with the evidence that presents Jesus as the Son of God and the Son of Man. Now he begins to tell about His ministry in which both His deity and His humanity will continue to be emphasized.

Luke told about the baptism and temptation without mentioning other details of Jesus early Judean ministry. See John 4:45.

Jesus returned to Galilee after He heard that John had been put in prison. Matt. 4:12.

*in the power of the Spirit.*—When He returned to Galilee, He began His ministry of teaching and healing in that district. He performed miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit. These miracles were His credentials as Son of God. They were performed to help people believe His message. See John 20:30-31; Acts 10:38.

Peter said that God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power and that He went about doing good and healing those who were oppressed of the devil. See Acts 10:38. His first miracle was at Cana of Galilee, but He also performed miracles when He was in Jerusalem at the passover (John 2:13, and 23).

*a fame went out concerning him.*—It was only natural the distressed people should come to Him when they heard about all the things he was doing. See 4:40-41. This gave Him the opportunity to tell them about the kingdom of God.

*he taught in their synagogues.*—Everywhere the Jews had built their synagogues where they could gather for religious instruction. See Acts 15:21. Both Jesus and the apostles went to the synagogues where Jews were gathered on the sabbath day, and being Jews, they spoke, to those assembled, the gospel message that fulfilled the law of Moses and the prophets. Rom 3:21. Luke describes the order of service in 4:16-21 and also in Acts 13:14-43. It consisted in reading from the law and the prophets and the explanation of them for the benefit of the people.

*Nazareth, where he had been brought up.*—Nathanael had raised the question with Philip, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" John 1:46. But in this humble village Jesus had grown to manhood and was known to the neighbors as Joseph's son. In such a place, everyone would know just about everything about the rest of the people. Undoubtedly no one in the synagogue that day when they handed Him the book of Isaiah had the slightest notion that He was the Son of God and the Son of Man, the One who fulfilled what the prophet had written about the Messiah.

*as his custom was.*—The synagogue was the center of the religious life of the community. Jesus had made it a habit to go to the synagogue on the sabbath day. He lived under the Old Covenant and kept the customs of the people who were under the Mosaic law. But Paul, whose ministry was of the New Covenant, went to the synagogue on the sabbath because there he found an audience that needed the gospel of Jesus the Savior.

*stood up to read.*—Jesus stood while reading the Scriptures and sat down to teach. Paul, at Antioch, sat down while the Scriptures were being read and stood up when he addressed the audience. Apparently there was no fixed rule in the matter. Matthew says that Jesus sat down when He delivered the Sermon on the Mount to the disciples and the multitudes, but Luke says that He stood on a level place when He spoke similar words—perhaps, on another occasion at another place. All these little sidelights tend to mark the genuineness of the sacred records.

*the book of the prophet Isaiah.*—Isaiah had prophesied about the ministry of John the Baptist. Isaiah's prophecy about the Messiah is an outline of Jesus' ministry.

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.*—The ministry of Jesus was under the direction of God through the Spirit. The prophets and priests of the Old Testament were consecrated to their office by the ceremony of anointing with oil. Jesus, as Prophet, Priest and King, was anointed with the Holy Spirit as He began His ministry. That ministry consisted in preaching good tidings to the poor, proclaiming release to the captives, giving sight to the blind, and liberty to those broken in heart and body. His ministry that fulfilled this prophecy marked Him as the Messiah. See Lk 7:22.

*the acceptable year of the Lord.*—that is, the season during which God's approval is given to those who accept the deliverance which Christ brought.

*the eyes of all the synagogue.*—Every eye was fixed on Him. He read the Scriptures with meaning that was genuine, for He was the fulfillment of the words He read. But they were not quite ready to accept it when He said, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

*the words of grace.*—The words of Isaiah and the words of Jesus, as He explained that He was fulfilling them, were words about the grace of God that brought relief to the oppressed. Jesus spoke them with gracious concern for all who heard Him.

*Is not this Joseph's son?*—They didn't know the facts about Jesus' birth. What if Mary had tried to tell them? Who would have believed her then? But after the resurrection when God demonstrated that Jesus is His Son, the facts of His birth can be told as the only reasonable explanation of this One who is the Son of God and the Son of Man.

*Physician heal thyself.*—Jesus recognized the problem and suggested this to them, for this is what they were thinking. They had probably heard of the miracle of healing the nobleman's son at Capernaum while Jesus was at Cana (John 4:46). Why not do in His own home town what—according to reports—had been done elsewhere? But, of course, they didn't believe that He had performed such a cure. He answered, "No prophet is acceptable in his own country." That's why He had come back to Galilee (John 4:44). In Judea there was a rising storm of opposition because they knew He was a prophet (John 3:2). But in Galilee, they thought He was just "Joseph's son" and were not too concerned about His activities, even though the crowds followed Him wherever He went. In the end, He was to journey back to Jerusalem, for it was there that He was to suffer for the sins of the people (Lk 9:51; 13:33-35).

*widows in Israel in the days of Elijah.*—See I Kings 17:8-24. The one miracle that Elijah performed was sufficient to convince this Gentile woman, for she said, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord that is in your mouth is true." The implied conclusion is that the one miracle Jesus had performed in Capernaum should have caused these who were Jews to believe Him.

*lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha.*—See II Kings 5:1-27. This one miracle in Elisha's time was sufficient to establish the fact that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel and that Elisha was His prophet. Again the implied conclusion is that Jesus' one miracle

should have caused them to believe in Him instead of asking, "Is not this Joseph's son?"

*they were filled with wrath.*—What made them so angry? They had been defeated in the debate by this One who had been reared in their midst whom they had been accustomed to call "the carpenter's son." But more than that, He had drawn an unfavorable comparison between them and the two Gentiles who believed Elijah and Elisha. This was the unforgivable offense. Rather than consider the force of His argument, they determined to destroy Him.

*led him to the brow of the hill.*—It was mob violence with intent to kill; no doubt about it. This nearby precipice met their need as a place of execution. It would be swift; and in their madness they no doubt thought it would be easy.

*he passing through their midst.*—Instead of permitting them to cast Him headlong to His death, He simply passed through their midst and went on His way. Was it a miracle that delivered Him? Or was it the strength of this Person who, although He had grown up in their city, was beginning His ministry as the Lord's anointed? We cannot answer the question. I prefer to believe that, although He could have used divine power, He walked through that mob as a Man dedicated to His God. He was surely one of the most forceful persons every to walk on this earth.

### *His Ministry in Capernaum*

#### *Scripture*

4:31-44 And he came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the sabbath day: 32 and they were astonished at his teaching; for his word was with authority. 33 And in the synagogue there was a man, that had a spirit of an unclean demon; and he cried out with a loud voice, 34 Ah! what have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Nazarene? are thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. 35 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the demon had thrown him down in the midst, he came out of him, having done him no hurt. 36 And amazement came upon all, and they spake together, one with another, saying, What is this word? for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out. 37 And there went forth a rumor concerning him into every place of the region round about.



38 And he rose up from the synagogue, and entered into the house of Simon. And Simon's wife's mother was holden with a great fever; and they besought him for her. 39 And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she rose up and ministered unto them.

40 And when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them. 41 And demons also came out from many, crying out, and saying, Thou art the Son of God. And rebuking them, he suffered them not to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.

42 And when it was day, he came out and went into a desert place; and the multitudes sought after him, and came unto him, and would have stayed him, that he should not go from them. 43 But said unto them, I must preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for therefore was I sent.

44 And he was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.

#### *Comments*

*And he came down to Capernaum.*—Capernaum became the center of Jesus' ministry in Galilee (John 2:12). It was located on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. It was thus situated more than six hundred feet below sea level; that's why Luke says He came down to Capernaum. Jesus taught in the synagogues of Capernaum and performed miracles there. It became the object of His wrath because of the stubborn rejection of the evidence that should have led to repentance. He said, "And thou Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? thou shalt go down unto Hades: for if the mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in thee, it would have remained unto this day" (Matt. 11:23). See also Lk 10:13.

*astonished at his teaching.*—Matthew calls attention to this same reaction after the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 7:28-29). Jesus was unlike other teachers who had to rely on other sources for their authority; He spoke from His own authority, for He spoke the words of God.

*a spirit of an unclean demon.*—Demons are spiritual beings without bodies. They have all the attributes of personality. They are under the control of Beelzebub, the prince of demons (Lk 11:15). They are unclean. They have a desire to be in a body and did actually take

up residence in the bodies of living people. On one occasion, when driven out of the human body, they were permitted to enter the bodies of swine. They are thought by some to be evil angels, and by others, the spirits of the wicked dead.

Demon possession was manifested in at least three forms in biblical times: (1) extreme mental illness (Lk. 8:26-27); (2) physical illness such as blindness, inability to speak, epilepsy (Matt. 17:14-18); and (3) soothsaying powers (Acts 16:16-18).

If there is such a thing as demon possession today, it cannot be claimed with real assurance, for no one is equipped to accurately diagnose such a case. Jesus, of course, was able to distinguish between the effects of demon possession and the symptoms of physical or mental illness. It is worthwhile to note the difference between His technique in handling cases of demon possession and in miraculous cures of those who were physically or mentally ill.

*he cried out with a loud voice.*—This may suggest fear or a desire to be let alone. Coupled with the loud voice, this expression may indicate a symptom of mental illness, but there is insufficient evidence in this case of demon possession to classify it accurately.

*what have we to do with thee?*—These spirits or demons knew that they had nothing in common with the Lord, for their prince was the devil. The plural "we" may suggest that more than one demon was using the speech organs of the possessed man. See 8:30.

*I know thee.*—Demons recognized Jesus of Nazareth. They knew that He, in contrast to their prince, was the Holy One of God. They knew that they were destined for destruction. They knew that Jesus is the Son of God and they knew that He was the Christ (4:41). It is not strange that there is no record of a demon possessed person confessing that He is the Christ, for that would mean that the demon was acknowledging Him as Lord whereas the prince of demons is the devil.

*Jesus rebuked him.*—He rebuked the demon by saying, "Be quiet and come out of him." This is an order given to a being capable of understanding and obeying. When Luke says that He rebuked the fever (4:39), there is no suggestion that he considered the fever in the same light. It was, of course, by miraculous power that he instantly stopped the fever and caused the temperature to return to normal. But in the case of casting out the demon, He ordered the unclean spirit or demon to leave and it did.

*demon had thrown him down.*—Such convulsions seem to be com-

mon effects of demon possession (Lk. 9:42). By the order from Christ, the demon came out, having done the man no injury.

*amazement came upon all.*—The use of such divine power was intended to point out the deity of Jesus. In this case, Luke reminds us that those who witnessed the handling of the demon possessed man were amazed at what they saw. It also shows Jesus' concern for those unfortunate sufferers.

There is no indication that any demon possessed person was responsible for his condition. There was no word of condemnation for this man after the demon left him.

*with authority and power.*—Jesus had defeated Satan in the wilderness temptation by using the Word of God. But by the exercise of His divine power and authority, He defeated Satan's efforts to use demon possessed people to discredit Him before the crowds.

*there went forth a rumor.*—The story of Jesus' power and authority to heal was repeatedly heard throughout the whole region. This explains why the people brought all their sick and demon possessed to Him to be healed (4:41).

*Simon's wife's mother.*—Peter's mother-in-law was sick with a very high fever. By placing this account immediately after the miracle of casting out the demon, Luke shows the distinction between a miracle of healing and one dealing with demon possession.

*immediately she rose up.*—Luke was a trained physician. He had investigated these accounts and did not hesitate to show that a genuine miracle had taken place. She was able to minister to those present immediately after Jesus healed her.

*when the sun was setting.*—This was at the close of the sabbath day, and the people were free to bring their sick for Him to heal. But, of course, healing the sick on the sabbath was not breaking the sabbath as Jesus later proved (John 7:23).

*he suffered them not to speak.*—Jesus did not permit the demons to speak for Him. That was what the devil wanted them to do in order to make people believe that Jesus was in league with Satan, and thus discredit Him in their eyes. See Paul's attitude in a similar situation (Acts 16:17-18).

*the multitudes sought after him.*—No wonder they followed Him into the lonely place where He had gone to rest and pray. In their distress, they begged Him to stay with them. But it was necessary that He preach the gospel in other cities also. The purpose of His ministry was to prepare for the kingdom of God.

*And he was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.*—These providentially prepared places of meeting enabled Jesus to carry on His ministry of preaching the gospel of the kingdom. Luke did not have enough room on one papyrus roll to give all the details of all these incidents, but the ones he does tell about are sufficient to let us see what an important place preaching held in the ministry of Jesus.

### *Summary*

The chapter begins with the account of the complete victory of Jesus over the devil. With it, Luke completes the first part of his Life of Christ. In it he gives sufficient evidence to prove that Jesus is the Son of God and the Son of Man. Not even the devil with his three-fold temptation could destroy this evidence.

The temptations presented a choice between God's instructions and the propositions of the devil. Jesus could have turned the stone into bread, but without hesitation He said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone."

When the devil had completed every temptation, he left Jesus for a season. But it is quite evident that he returned many times during Jesus' ministry to renew his efforts to defeat Him. One such instance may be seen in the effort of the people to make Him king after the feeding of the five thousand.

God had led Jesus through the Holy Spirit into the wilderness where He was tempted. Then Jesus returned to Nazareth to begin His public ministry in the little village where He grew up. He came with power performing miracles through the Holy Spirit to prove that His message came from God.

In the synagogue at Nazareth, He read from the prophet Isaiah the passage that outlined the ministry He was to undertake. When He finished reading, He said to the people, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled before you." But they said, "This is Joseph's son," for they didn't know the facts in the case. It was for people like them that Luke made a careful research of the facts and reported them to Theophilus that no one may ever need to fall into that error again.

The irate people of Nazareth would not let this One, whom they had known since He was a boy, compare them unfavorably with Gentiles. They took Him to the cliff at the edge of the city to hurl Him down to His death. But He walked through that mob as one would swim through a turbulent stream and went on His way.

Jesus went down to Capernaum which became the center of His

## CHAPTER FOUR

activity for the greater part of His ministry. There He taught the people. They were astonished at the authority of His words. There He healed a demon possessed man. The report of His work spread throughout the whole district. He healed Peter's wife's mother. The people brought their demon possessed and sick to Him and He healed them all.

He withdrew to a lonely place, but the crowds followed and begged Him to stay with them. But He said, "I must preach good tidings of the kingdom of God to other cities also, for it was for that purpose that I was sent." He continued preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.

### *Questions*

1. What is meant by "full of the Holy Spirit" when it refers to John? to Jesus?
2. What is meant by "led in the Spirit"?
3. What is temptation?
4. What is the difference between temptation and sin?
5. What did Jesus say about the longing desire for the thing God has forbidden?
6. Why was changing a stone into bread a temptation to Jesus?
7. Why did the devil say, "If you are the Son of God"?
8. What proof is given to show that Jesus overcame temptations as a man?
9. What did He use to defeat the devil?
10. How is the Christian equipped to defeat the devil?
11. Were other temptations presented to Jesus later?
12. What does John say about "all that is in the world"?
13. What are the three temptations in the wilderness?
14. What does Matthew say about the ministry of angels after the temptation of Jesus?
15. What is the significance of the fact that the temptation followed immediately after the baptism of Jesus?
16. What is the significance of the evidence presented in the first section of Luke's Gospel?
17. What is meant by "in the power of the Spirit" as it relates to Jesus' ministry?
18. What does Luke say about the fame of Jesus at this point?
19. Why did Jesus and the apostles preach in the synagogues?
20. What was the order of service in the synagogue?

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21. Why did He read from Isaiah?
22. What was the response of the people to His reading? to His explanation?
23. Why did they say, "This is Joseph's son?"
24. Why did they try to kill Him?
25. How did He escape from the violence of the mob?
26. What place did Capernaum have in the ministry of Jesus?
27. What was the response of the people of Capernaum?
28. What is a demon?
29. What distinction does Luke show between the technique used by Jesus in casting out a demon and in healing a sick person?
30. What forms did demon possession take?
31. Is there demon possession today?
32. Why is there no record of a demon possessed person confessing that Jesus is the Christ?
33. What was the response of the people to the reports of His healing ministry?
34. Why did Jesus withdraw to a lonely place?
35. What did He say when the people begged Him to stay with them?

## CHAPTER FIVE

### *Outline*

- A. Luke told about two more incidents that happened in Galilee (1-16).
1. The miraculous catch of fish (1-11).
    - a) It happened at the lake of Gennesaret (1-2).
      - (1) The crowd was pressing upon Jesus in order to hear the word of God.
      - (2) Jesus was standing on the shore of the lake.
      - (3) He saw two boats by the shore.
      - (4) The fishermen had left them and were washing their nets.
    - b) Jesus taught the people from one of the boats (3).
      - (1) He got into Simon's boat and asked him to row it a little way from the shore.
      - (2) He sat down and taught the people from the boat.
    - c) By miraculous power, Jesus enabled the disciples to catch a "multitude of fish" (4-7).
      - (1) He told Simon to put out into the deep and let down the nets for the catch.
      - (2) Simon protested, "Master we toiled all night and caught nothing, but at your word we will let down the nets."
      - (3) The miraculous catch of fish—so many that the nets were breaking and the filled boats were about to sink.
    - d) The effect of the miracle on Simon Peter (8-10a).
      - (1) He fell down at Jesus' knees and said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."
      - (2) His partners, James and John, were also amazed.
    - e) The lesson drawn from the miracle (10b-11).
      - (1) Jesus said, "Fear not; from henceforth you will catch men."
      - (2) The disciples brought their boats to land and, leaving all, followed Him.
  2. The healing of a leper (12-16).
    - a) The man was "full of leprosy."
    - b) When he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and said, "If you will, you can make me clean."

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- c) Jesus touched him and said, "I will; be clean." And the leprosy left him.
  - d) Jesus told him to tell no one, but to show himself to the priest as Moses had commanded.
  - e) The effect of the miracle.
    - (1) The report of it went everywhere.
    - (2) The crowds came to hear and to be healed.
    - (3) Jesus withdrew where He could be alone to pray.
- B. He told of the beginning of the complaints against Jesus (17-39).
- 1. The complaint about healing a paralytic (17-26).
    - a) The circumstances of the miracle (17-20).
      - (1) Jesus was teaching.
      - (2) Pharisees and doctors of the law were present.
      - (3) The power of the Lord was with Him to heal.
      - (4) A paralytic was let down through the roof into the presence of Jesus.
      - (5) Jesus said, "Man, your sins are forgiven."
    - b) Jesus answered the complaint of the Pharisees (21-24).
      - (1) They asked, "Who is this that speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God?"
      - (2) Jesus answered them.
        - (a) He asked, "Why reason ye in your minds?"
        - (b) He gave them something to think about: "Which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise and walk?"
        - (c) He had performed the miracle to show that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.
        - (d) Then He gave His command of authority, "Arise, take up your bed and go to your house."
    - c) The effect of the miracle (25-26).
      - (1) The man arose and departed glorifying God.
      - (2) Amazement seized all, and they glorified God.
      - (3) They were filled with fear and said, "We have seen strange things today."
  - 2. The complaint about associating with publicans (27-32).
    - a) The circumstances (27-29).



## CHAPTER FIVE

- (1) Jesus saw Levi the publican and said to him, "Follow me."
- (2) Levi, whose other name was Matthew, arose and followed Him.
- (3) Levi gave a great reception for Jesus and invited a crowd of publicans and others.
- b) Jesus answered the complaint of the Pharisees (30-32).
  - (1) The Pharisees and their scribes, muttering complaints, said to the disciples of Jesus, "Why do you eat and drink with publicans and sinners?"
  - (2) Jesus answered them.
    - (a) "They that are in health have no need of a physician; but they that are sick."
    - (b) "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."
3. The complaint about fasting (33-39).
  - a) The circumstances (33).
    - (1) The Pharisees and scribes said, "John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast and pray."
    - (2) Their complaint: "Your disciples eat and drink."
  - b) Jesus answered them (34-39).
    - (1) By reference to weddings: Men do not fast while the bridegroom is with them; but, when he is taken away.
    - (2) By reference to a patch on a garment: Putting a new patch on an old garment or new wine into old wine skins—this is not done.
    - (3) Those who have drunk the old wine will say that it is good—they do not want to see any change in the time-honored custom of fasting!

### *Fishers of Men*

#### *Scripture*

5:1-11 Now it came to pass, while the multitude pressed upon him and heard the word of God, that he was standing by the lake of Genesaret; 2 and he saw two boats standing by the lake: but the fishermen had gone out of them, and were washing their nets. 3 And he entered into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught

the multitudes out of the boat. 4 And when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. 5 And Simon answered and said, Master, we toiled all night, and took nothing: but at thy word I will let down the nets. 6 And when they had done this, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes; and their nets were breaking; 7 and they beckoned unto their partners in the other boat, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. 8 But Simon Peter, when he saw it, fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. 9 For he was amazed, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken; 10 and so were also James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men. 11 And when they had brought their boats to land, they left all, and followed him.

### Comments

*multitudes pressed upon him.*—The crowds, in their eagerness to hear Jesus, followed Him everywhere. He felt the pressure of the multitudes as they crowded around Him. The people of Nazareth marveled at the words of grace that came from His lips, but they were unable to accept them because they thought of Him only as Joseph's son. Elsewhere the eager multitudes listened to Him until the jealous Pharisees and their scribes planted doubt in their minds. This persistent opposition came to a climax at the trial of Jesus. The very people whom Jesus had so often befriended were stirred up by the leaders and led to cry out, "Let Him be crucified."

*standing by the lake of Gennesaret.*—Jesus often taught in the formal setting of the synagogue; but, for the most part, He taught in informal situations like this one. He was standing by the lake when the crowds came up to Him and urged Him to speak the word of God to them.

Luke uses "Lake Gennesaret" for "Sea of Galilee." Accuracy is a characteristic of his writings. "Gennesaret" is derived from the name of the plain that drains into the Sea of Galilee. It is probably a corrupted form of the name "Chinnereth." Another name was "Sea of Tiberias" (John 21:1), derived from the city of Tiberias which Herod Antipas built in honor of Tiberias Caesar. It was located on the southwest shore of the Sea. Its Old Testament name was "Chinnereth"—perhaps because the shape of the lake reminded people

of a harp (Num. 34:11), or it may have come from the ancient city of the same name (Josh. 19:35).

*he saw two boats.*—Matthew reminds us that Peter and Andrew were casting their nets when Jesus first spoke to them (Matt. 4:18).

Luke takes up the account after they had left the boats and continues it as they washed the nets. Each writer emphasizes the point that is necessary for the purpose of his writing.

Some assume from the differences in the accounts that there were two different events. If there were, it does not affect the lesson presented in the Gospel record. Jesus used the miracle as an occasion to teach His disciples about becoming fishers of men. "From henceforth," He said, "You shall catch men."

*Put out into the deep.*—Peter knew that Jesus had the right to issue such a command, for Andrew had introduced him to Jesus the Messiah (John 1:40-43). He had seen the miracle when Jesus healed his wife's mother. And now, although it was against his experience and judgment as a fisherman, he was willing to obey the order.

*Master.*—Jesus is often called Lord, Teacher, Rabbi; but Luke adds another term, "Master." It is similar in meaning to Rabbi or teacher, but it adds to that title the right to command. They were in Peter's boat, but he recognized Jesus' right to give the orders.

*I will let down the nets.*—A remarkable demonstration of confidence in Jesus! But Jesus was not just interested in their catching fish; He was preparing them for the lesson He was about to teach about their becoming fishers of men.

*Depart from me.*—Simon was so impressed by the miracle that he fell down at Jesus' knees and said to Him, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Just how clear his understanding of the deity of Jesus was at this point, we are not able to tell. But there was something in the miracle, together with all that he had seen done by Jesus before this time, that made him recognize his own sinfulness and the exalted position of the One whom he had just called "Master." Now he addresses Him as Lord.

Peter should have asked the Lord to forgive his sin; but it may be that he was not aware of this possibility at the time. Such mistakes are bound to occur when men attempt to tell the Lord what to do instead of following the example of Saul of Tarsus who said, "What shall I do, Lord?" (Acts 22:10).

*For he was amazed.*—Astonishment seized Peter and the others with

him when they saw the miracle take place before their eyes. They had caught so many fish that their nets were breaking; being fishermen, they knew that a miracle had taken place. At the close of Jesus' ministry, a similar miracle occurred to prove that He had risen from the dead. Peter at that time also spoke out and said to the others, "It is the Lord" (John 21:7).

*partners.*—James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were partners with Simon. When they saw the miracle, Peter and those in the boat with him beckoned to their partners to come and help them. The word for "partner" suggests sharing with others in a common task. This partnership is something in which all who are engaged in winning men to Christ can share.

*thou shalt catch men.*—The word catch suggests "taking alive"; but this is not the thing stressed in Jesus' remark. He was contrasting catching fish with catching men, that is, preaching the gospel by which men are taken for Christ. The net is the captivating message of good news of salvation through Christ, and the place of operation is the world. The resurrection of Christ is a basic issue of that message (Rom 10:9-10). The miraculous catch of fish at Tiberias convinced the apostles that the Lord had risen. It ought to help those who now seek evidence on which to base their faith.

*they left all and followed him.*—It was no part-time task to which Jesus called them. They were to leave all and give all that they might be ready to go into all the world as fishers of men.

### *Jesus Heals a Leper*

#### *Scripture*

5:12-16 And it came to pass, while he was in one of the cities, behold, a man full of leprosy: and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. 13 And he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou made clean. And straightway the leprosy departed from him. 14 And he charged him to tell no man: but go thy way, and show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. 15 But so much the more went abroad the report concerning him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed of their infirmities. 16 But he withdrew himself in the deserts, and prayed.

*Comments*

*a man full of leprosy.*—Leprosy was one of the most dreaded diseases of Bible times. Medical science has made great progress in relieving the suffering of lepers, but in Bible times there was no cure for leprosy except a miracle of God. For the laws pertaining to leprosy see Lev. 13:1-14:47.

There are many parallels between leprosy and sin. Both are small in beginning, but deadly in the end. Sin, of course, can be overcome by the divine remedy only. Only the blood of Christ can blot out sin.

Priests were appointed to diagnose cases of leprosy and to pass on the cure. This accounts for the fact that Jesus, after healing a leper, directed him to the priest as the Law of Moses required.

At least three persons in Old Testament times were stricken with leprosy because of their sin: (1) Mirriam (Num. 12:9-15); (2) Gehazi (II Kings 5:25-27); and (3) Uzziah (II Chron. 26:16-21). This does not suggest that all lepers were being punished because of their sins.

*full of leprosy.*—The law required the leper to separate himself from the camp of the Israelites and to warn others who might approach him (Lk 17:12-13). This man, however, came into the presence of Jesus, for he was full of leprosy. Just what that meant is not known. There was a regulation in the Law for one whose whole body was covered with leprosy (Lev. 13:12-13). Such a person was "clean," but the leper who came to Jesus, quite evidently, was not. We can be sure of two things: (1) the dreadful plight of the leper, and (2) the gentle response of the merciful Master who touched him and said, "I will; be thou made clean."

*And he charged him to tell no man.*—Jesus did not come into the world for the primary purpose of healing lepers. "It is appointed unto man once to die" (Heb. 9:27). Jesus did heal many lepers and others who were sick. Even so, disease and death remain in this world; but in heaven, "death shall be no more" (Rev. 21:14).

Why did Jesus forbid him to tell about his cure? Such news would bring so many that He would not be able to go from city to city to preach the Kingdom of God, and that is what He came to do (4:43).

*But so much the more went abroad the report.*—More than once people disregarded the wishes of Jesus. There is no indication that

He blamed them, for when they brought their sick to Him He healed them.

*a great multitude came together to hear, and to be healed.*—See Matt. 4:23-24. Their cries for help were heard; and when He had healed their sick, He withdrew into a quiet place to pray.

*and prayed.*—Prayer for Jesus was just as natural as for a son to talk to his father. He was Son of God, but He was also Son of Man. As a man, He talked to His heavenly Father. He often deliberately slipped away from the crowds when the pressures of His ministry were heaviest in order to have time to talk to the Father. When He prayed, He spoke to the Father with reverence. He put the Kingdom of God first in His prayers. He didn't hesitate to tell the Father of His own needs. His trust in God leads others to trust Him. His thanksgiving for the blessings of God sets an example for all to follow when they pray. "Thy will be done" is basic in all His petitions, and should be in ours too.

### *Jesus Heals a Paralytic*

#### *Scripture*

5:17-26 And it came to pass on one of those days, that he was teaching; and there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, who were come out of every village of Galilee and Judaea and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was with him to heal. 18 And behold, men bring on a bed a man that was palsied: and they sought to bring him in, and to lay him before him. 19 And not finding by what *way* they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went up to the housetop, and let him down through the tiles with his couch into the midst before Jesus. 20 And seeing their faith, he said, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee. 21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this that speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? 22 But Jesus perceiving their reasoning, answered and said unto them, Why reason ye in your hearts? 23 Which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk? 24 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (he said unto him that was palsied), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thy house. 25 And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his house, glorifying God. 26 And

amazement took hold on all, and they glorified God; and they were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day.

*Comments*

*And it came to pass.*—We lose something of the vividness of Luke's descriptions. He had studied these events of the ministry of Jesus until they seemed to be taking place before his eyes as he wrote. By diligent study of the record he left for us to read, we can make these incidents come to life in our minds too.

This incident is the first in a series of five in which Luke records the complaints of the Pharisees against Jesus because He helped the people in their needs (5:17-6:11).

*that he was teaching.*—The ministry of Jesus was one of teaching and healing; the miracles demonstrated to His hearers that His message was from God. His message, confirmed by His miracles, is the basis of our faith in Him. See Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:3-4; John 20:30-31.

Jesus taught in the synagogues; He taught by the sea; He taught wherever crowds were gathered together or where a single individual was ready to listen. He always taught with authority (Matt. 7:28-29).

The ministry of the apostles followed the same pattern. They taught the people on Pentecost. They continued to teach although they were threatened with death (Acts 4:18-20; 5:42). Paul taught in Ephesus, both publically and from house to house (Acts 20:20). He wrote to Timothy: "Till I come, give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching" (I Tim. 4:12). And again, "The things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Tim. 2:2). The gospel message must be taught (Matt. 28:18-20). *and there were Pharisees.*—They were separatists, possibly implying separation from everything unclean. Paul said that they were the straightest sect of the Jew's religion (Acts 26:5). They believed in the resurrection and angels and spirits, but the Sadducees rejected all this (Acts 23:8).

The Pharisees led the opposition to Jesus, constantly complaining that He had broken the Law and that He was guilty of blasphemy. But they were never able to prove their charges.

*and doctors of the law.*—These law-teachers are called scribes by

Matthew and Mark (Matt. 9:3; Mk. 2:6). For an example of the work of the scribes see Ezra 7:6; 10:1; Heb. 8:1-8.

Various functions were performed by them in the time of Jesus. They were best known for their work of guarding and teaching the Law. But both scribes and Pharisees were condemned by Jesus for their hypocrisy in applying the law. They taught it, but failed to live by it (Matt. 23:1-36). But they were not all like that; for an example of a scribe who had a better understanding of the Law, see Mark 12:28-34. And think of Nicodemus a Pharisee who dared to defend Jesus before the counsel and to identify himself with Jesus although He had been put to death on the cross—the Roman instrument of execution of criminals. See John 7:50-52; 19:39.

*out of every village.*—This incident took place in Capernaum (Mark 2:1). John suggests that the Pharisees had already begun the opposition to Jesus in Jerusalem (John 4:1). For that reason, He left Judea and came again into Galilee where the opposition was not so great. He said, "A prophet hath no honor in his own country" (John 4:43-45). In Galilee He was less likely to have difficulty with the leaders. There He could carry on His work of preparing the disciples to take the gospel into all the world (Lk. 24:46-47). They were not content, however, to let Him carry on a ministry in Galilee without keeping close watch on its progress lest His influence with the people become too great. Later, they complained that if they should leave Him alone, all men would believe in Him and the Romans would come and take away their place and their nation (John 11:47-48).

*And seeing their faith.*—Faith that is put into action can be seen. The friends of the sick man believed that Jesus had the power to heal him. The multitudes were blocking the entrance to the house where He was, but the men found a way to let him down through the roof into the presence of Jesus.

*Man, thy sins are forgiven.*—In this dramatic way, Jesus pointed out that His mission was to forgive the sinner and save the lost. He knew that the man had been put in His presence because they wanted Him to heal him. He exercised the power of the Lord that was with Him to heal in order to prove that the Son of Man had authority on earth to forgive sins.

*Who is this that speaketh blasphemies?*—It would have been blasphemy for a man to assume the prerogative of God and presume to forgive sins. They were correct in saying, "Who can forgive sins,



but God alone?" They failed to see that the Son of Man was also the Son of God. He was not guilty of blasphemy, for He spoke with the authority from God. Nevertheless, the Jews kept up their complaint, and in the end condemned Him to death because they said He was guilty of blasphemy (Mark 14:64).

*Why reason ye in your hearts?*—Only God can forgive sins, and only God can look into the hearts of men and know their secrets. On the Day of Judgment, He will judge the secrets of mens hearts (Rom 2:16; Heb. 4:13). With the heart, man thinks (Matt. 9:4), reasons (Mark 2:8), believes (Rom 10:9-10), and understands (Matt. 13:5). The Scriptural heart is the intellect on which the facts of the gospel make impact that results in belief (Rom. 10:9-10). It is the emotions that respond to the love of God (Rom. 5:8; I John 4:19). It is the will, for with the heart man purposes and determines (II Cor. 9:7; I Cor. 7:37). The consideration of the goodness of God (Rom. 2:4) and godly sorrow for sin (II Cor. 7:10) and the knowledge of the coming judgment (Acts 17:30-31) lead the sinner to change his will and decide to serve Christ. That is repentance. The heart condemns, for it is the conscience. The blood of Christ can cleanse the conscience by blotting out the sin that otherwise would constantly remind the sinner of his guilt (Heb. 10:22; 9:14). Baptism, which Peter declares saves us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is the act of obedience by which the sinner asks God for a good conscience, one that commends rather than condemns (I Pet. 3:21).

*Which is easier?*—Jesus implies that it is just as easy to say, "Thy sins are forgiven" as to say—and actually cause it to be done—"Arise and walk." The power of the Lord was with Him to heal. Why didn't he heal the man first? Forgiveness of sins is of first importance! The miracle was to prove that the Son of Man had authority on earth to forgive sins.

*the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins.*—In their reasoning, the Jews had linked this authority with God. "Son of Man" does not imply that He was merely human; He was also Son of God. Note the force of His argument in the trial before the Jews where they understood His reference to "Son of Man" to imply that He is also Son of God (Lk. 22:67-70).

*glorifying God.*—At the command of Jesus the paralyzed man immediately arose and went to his home glorifying God. It was a genuine miracle. Luke, the beloved physician, was convinced that

the power of the Lord was with Him to heal. Those who say that Jesus was merely a master of psychology who relieved this man of psychosomatic symptoms disregard Luke's statement about the power of the Lord and the technique of Jesus in dealing with the case. The people also glorified God, for they had seen strange things, that is, things not based on normal experience.

### *Jesus Called Levi the Publican*

#### *Scripture*

5:27-32 And after these things he went forth, and beheld a publican, named Levi, sitting at the place of toll, and said unto him, Follow me. 28 And he forsook all, and rose up and followed him.

29 And Levi made him a great feast in his house: and there was a great multitude of publicans and of others that were sitting at meat with them. 30 And the Pharisees and their scribes murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with the publicans and sinners? 31 And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are in health have no need of a physician; but they that are sick. 32 I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

#### *Comments*

*a publican, named Levi.*—His other name was Matthew (Matt. 9:9). In His public ministry, Jesus came into contact with all classes of people, including Pharisees and their scribes, and publicans. Tax collectors and sinners were usually classed together, for as a group the publicans abused their offices. There is no indication that Matthew did. Jesus evidently selected men to be apostles because of their ability to carry out the task He had for them. Matthew, as one used to keeping records, had the talent and training that could be put to use as the Holy Spirit used him to write the Gospel According to Matthew. He must have been a man of influence, for a great crowd of publicans and others attended the feast he gave in honor of Jesus.

Others such as Roman and Jewish rulers, officers of the Roman army, Gentiles, Samaritans, rich and poor were attracted to Jesus. He came to save the lost, and they were found among all classes.

*Follow me.*—Levi's immediate response leaves us wondering if he had known Jesus before this time. We have no way of knowing

many things that would be of interest, although not necessary to the understanding of the gospel story. It is possible that this was the very first time he had seen Jesus. If so, it indicates the remarkable power of Jesus to influence men. But through the ages men have been willing to leave all and follow Him.

*And Levi made him a great feast.*—Luke says that a great multitude of publicans and others were present. Matthew says that many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and His disciples (Matt. 9:10). Luke also shows that the Pharisees asked the disciples this question: "Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?"

Levi used the occasion as an opportunity to present Jesus to his associates. Every follower of Jesus would do well to follow this example. Every member of the church is to be an evangelist and help in the total work of the church by seeking to save the lost.

*And Jesus answering.*—Jesus had the answer for His critics. The healthy need no physician. Of course, the complainers looked upon themselves as spiritually healthy—righteous. But they were wrong about themselves and wrong about condemning the Great Physician who ministered to the sick in soul as well as body. Jesus said, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Some of them were the worst sort of sinners, but as long as they thought of themselves as righteous, nothing could be done for them.

### *The Complaint About Fasting*

#### *Scripture*

5:33-39 And they said unto him, The disciples of John fast often, and make supplications; likewise also the *disciples* of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink. 34 And Jesus said unto them, Can ye make the sons of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? 35 But the days will come; and when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, then will they fast in those days. 36 And he spake also a parable unto them: No man rendeth a piece from a new garment and putteth it upon an old garment; else he will rend the new, and also the piece from the new will not agree with the old. 37 And no man putteth new wine into old wine-skins; else the new wine will burst the skins, and itself will be spilled, and the skins will perish. 38 But new wine must be put

into fresh wineskins. 39 And no man having drunk old *wine* desireth new; for he saith, The old is good.

### Comments

*They said unto him.*—According to Matthew 9:14, it was the disciples of John who raised the question about fasting. The Pharisees took up the issue and asked, "Why do your disciples eat and drink? John's didn't and the Pharisees' didn't." They implied that Jesus and His disciples were doing wrong by eating and drinking with the publicans and sinners.

*while the bridegroom is with them?*—Jesus answered the complainers with the illustration of the wedding feast. It wouldn't be fitting to hold a fast at a wedding; even John's disciples would see the correctness of His position. The time for fasting would be when the bridegroom was taken away. Jesus is the Bridegroom, His disciples are the attendants. After the crucifixion, He was to ascend to the Father. It is appropriate for the disciples to fast while awaiting His return (Acts 13:2).

*a piece from a new garment.*—A second illustration enforces His argument. Fasting while Jesus was with them was just as much out of place as putting a piece from a new garment on an old garment. There is a tendency for people to resist change. Jesus said, "No man having drunk old wine desireth new." Jesus understood why they didn't want to see the time-honored custom of fasting set aside even while He was with them.

### Summary

The chapter begins with the account of two dramatic incidents in Jesus' Galilean ministry of healing and teaching. It continues with the account of the beginnings of the tide of complaint against Him that reached its crest at Calvary.

On the shores of Lake Genessaret, a crowd had gathered to hear Jesus speak the word of God. He sat in Simon Peter's boat and taught the people. When He finished speaking, He said to Peter, "Put out into the deep and let down the nets for a catch." Peter, experienced fisherman that he was, said, "We toiled all night and took nothing, but if you say so we will let down the nets again." They did and the miracle took place! So many fish were caught that the nets were breaking and the boats were beginning to sink.

## CHAPTER FIVE

When Peter saw it, he fell on his knees before Jesus and said, "Depart from me Lord, for I am a sinful man." But Jesus said, "From now on you shall catch men." Then the disciples left all and followed Him.

A man who was full of leprosy came up to Jesus and said, "If you will, you can make me clean." Jesus said, "I will; be clean." And again a miracle happened; his leprosy was gone!

Jesus told him to tell no one, but go and show himself to the priest. Instead, he told everybody what happened, and crowds came to hear Jesus and to be healed. Then Jesus withdrew into a lonely place to pray.

The great popularity of Jesus was bound to arouse the opposition of the leaders of the Jews. He healed a paralytic after He had forgiven his sins, but they complained that He was speaking blasphemies. They reasoned that only God could forgive sins, but they were unaware of the deity of Jesus and that the Son of Man had authority on earth to forgive sins.

They complained about His association with publicans, but Jesus answered, "Those who are in good health do not need a physician, but the sick do." They complained that He did not observe the time-honored custom of fasting, but He answered by showing that fasting was out of place while He, the bridegroom, was present. The time would come, however, when fasting would be appropriate. He implied that He would not be with them always, for He was going to the Father.

His answers to the complaints were clear and adequate, but the enemy was interested only in destroying any confidence the people might have in Him. They kept it up until the people were persuaded at His trial to cry out, "Away with him; let Him be crucified."

### *Questions*

1. Under what circumstances did Jesus teach the lesson about becoming fishers of men?
2. Where did Jesus do most of His teaching?
3. What are the other names for the Sea of Galilee?
4. What name did Luke use.
5. How did Jesus use the miracle of catching fish to teach the lesson about fishers of men?

## STUDIES IN LUKE

6. Why did Peter protest when Jesus said, "Put out into the deep and let down the nets for a catch"?
7. What is the meaning of the word "master" which Peter used in addressing Jesus?
8. How does it differ in meaning from "Lord"?
9. How did Peter show his confidence in Jesus?
10. What did Peter say when he saw that a miracle had happened?
11. What basic mistake did he make?
12. What proof is there that it was a genuine miracle?
13. When did Jesus perform another miracle like it?
14. What was Peter's response at that time?
15. Who were the sons of Zebedee? What were they to Peter?
16. Although the word "catch" literally means "take alive," what point did Jesus make in using it?
17. What did the disciples do after they witnessed the miracle?
18. What are the facts about the cure of leprosy in Bible times?
19. In what ways is the disease of leprosy like sin?
20. What were the O. T. regulations about leprosy and its cure?
21. Who are the three O. T. characters who were stricken with leprosy because of their acts of sin?
22. What did the leper say to Jesus?
23. Why did Jesus forbid him to tell about his healing?
24. Why did he disobey?
25. Why do some disobey the gospel command to tell the good news to all the world?
26. What was Jesus' attitude toward all the sick who were brought to Him?
27. Why did He withdraw to a quiet place?
28. How was Luke able to write such vivid accounts of the ministry of Jesus?
29. What are some of the facts about Jesus' prayers?
30. How can the story of Jesus become a living reality to us?
31. What was the primary purpose of Jesus miracles?
32. Why did Jesus and the apostles teach in the synagogues of the Jews?
33. Who were the Pharisees?
34. What are the beliefs of the Pharisees and the Sadducees?
35. Who were the scribes? What was their work?
36. Where was the principal opposition to Jesus located?

## CHAPTER FIVE

37. Why did Jesus carry on the greater part of His ministry in Galilee?
38. What is meant by "seeing their faith"?
39. Why did Jesus forgive the sins of the paralytic before He healed him?
40. Explain the reasoning of those who said that Jesus had spoken blasphemies.
41. What is meant by the heart as the term is used in Scripture?
42. How does the gospel act upon the heart?
43. Which was easier for Jesus to say, "Your sins are forgiven" or "Arise and walk"?
44. Why did Jesus say to the paralytic, "Arise and walk"?
45. What was the reaction of the people to the miracle of healing the paralytic?
46. Who was Levi? What was his other name?
47. What did Levi do after becoming a follower of Jesus?
48. What was the attitude of the Pharisees when they saw Jesus at Levi's feast?
49. How did Jesus answer their complaint?
50. How did Jesus answer the complaint about fasting?
51. What was implied by His remark?
52. What does the Bible say about fasting on the part of Christians?

## CHAPTER SIX

### *Outline*

- A. Luke completed the account of a series of five complaints against Jesus (1-11).
1. The complaint about plucking grain of the sabbath (1-4).
    - a) The circumstances.
      - (1) The disciples of Jesus plucked and ate the grain.
      - (2) They rubbed the heads of grain in their hands.
      - (3) The Pharisees, assuming that this was work, asked, "Why do ye do that which is not lawful on the sabbath?"
    - b) Jesus answered the complaint.
      - (1) He asked, "Haven't you ever read about what David did?"
      - (2) David took the showbread and ate it and gave it also to his men.
      - (3) This was not lawful except for priests.
    - c) Jesus reminded them that "the Son of Man is lord of the sabbath."
  2. The complaint about healing on the sabbath (6-11).
    - a) The circumstances.
      - (1) It was on another sabbath.
      - (2) Jesus was teaching in the synagogue.
      - (3) A man was there with a withered hand.
    - b) The attitude of the scribes and Pharisees.
      - (1) They were watching to see what He would do.
      - (2) They were looking for an excuse to accuse Him.
    - c) Jesus' bold action.
      - (1) Knowing what they were thinking, He said to the man, "Get up and stand in the midst"—that is, where he could be seen by all.
      - (2) He asked, "Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good or to do harm?"
      - (3) He looked around the room at all of them, then said to the man, "Stretch forth your hand."
    - d) The miracle: "His hand was restored."
    - e) The effect of the miracle on the accusers of Jesus.
      - (1) They were filled with senseless fury.
      - (2) They talked over their problem: "What are we to do with Jesus?"



## CHAPTER SIX

- B. Luke told about Jesus selecting the twelve apostles (12-16).
1. The circumstances (12-13).
    - a) Jesus had gone into the mountain to pray.
    - b) He continued in prayer throughout the night.
    - c) When it was day, He called His disciples and chose twelve of them whom He called apostles.
  2. The twelve whom He selected (14-16).
    - a) Simon and Andrew.
      - (1) Simon was also called Peter.
      - (2) Andrew was the brother of Peter.
    - b) James and John.
    - c) Philip and Bartholomew.
    - d) Matthew and Thomas.
    - e) James and Simon.
      - (1) James is the son of Alphaeus.
      - (2) Simon was called the Zealot.
    - f) Judas and Judas.
      - (1) The first of these having the same name was the son of James.
      - (2) The second is Judas Iscariot, who became the traitor.
- C. He told about Jesus teaching a large crowd of His disciples (17-49).
1. The occasion (17-19).
    - a) After choosing the twelve, Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place.
    - b) The large crowd of His disciples.
      - (1) They were from Judea and Jerusalem and from the coast of Tyre and Sidon.
      - (2) They had come to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases.
    - c) The healing of the multitudes.
      - (1) Those who were troubled with unclean spirits were healed.
      - (2) All the multitude sought to touch Him, for power came forth from Him, and He healed them all.
  2. A summary of what Jesus taught (20-49).
    - a) The Beatitudes and the Woes (20-26).
      - (1) The four classes included in the Beatitudes.
        - (a) Those who were poor.

- (b) Those who hunger now.
- (c) Those who weep now.
- (d) Those who are hated for the sake of the Son of Man.
- (2) The four classes included in the Woes.
  - (a) Those who are rich now.
  - (b) Those who are full now.
  - (c) Those who laugh now.
  - (d) Those of whom all men speak well.
- b) Regulations for proper conduct (27-38).
  - (1) Toward enemies (27-35).
  - (2) Toward others in general (36-38).
- c) Some concise statements of truth (29-45).
  - (1) Blind guides of the blind.
  - (2) Disciple and his teacher.
  - (3) Mote and beam.
  - (4) Good and corrupt.
- d) The necessity of obedience (46-49).
  - (1) "Why call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
  - (2) The lesson illustrated by house built on the rock and the house built on sand.

### *Plucking Grain on the Sabbath*

#### *Scripture*

6:1-5 Now it came to pass on a sabbath, that he was going through the grainfields; and his disciples plucked the ears, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands. 2 But certain of the Pharisees said, Why do ye that which it is not lawful to do on the sabbath day? 3 And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read even this, what David did, when he was hungry, he, and they that were with him; 4 how he entered into the house of God, and took and ate the showbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat save for the priests alone? 5 And he said unto them, The Son of man is lord of the sabbath.

#### *Comments*

*Now it came to pass on a sabbath day.*—Many of the incidents described in the Gospel record occurred on a sabbath day. It was

natural for the writers to tell about those occasions when the people gathered together for their regular synagogue services. But there was more than this to it. The enemies of Jesus frequently attacked Him for doing what they said was unlawful on the sabbath. They, of course, were never able to prove Him guilty on this charge. On one occasion, Jesus challenged them by asking, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" John 8:46. Although they tried hard, they were never able to convict Him, for He was the sinless Son of God and Son of Man.

*rubbing them in their hands.*—This constituted work, in the minds of His accusers. It was not lawful on the sabbath, so they said.

Originally, no work was done on the sabbath. But Jesus reminded them that the Jews did many things on the sabbath which they did not consider work. They led their animals to water on the sabbath; they pulled the ox out of the ditch on the sabbath. But they considered this to be necessary, and not work.

*Have you not read even this, what David did.*—Jesus' answer to the charge of sabbath breaking carried a double thrust: First, they were ignorant of the Word, because they had not been reading it; second, they had neglected to read about Davids' taking the show-bread and giving it to his hungry men. Who were they to sit in judgment over the Son of Man and His disciples? Before condemning the innocent, these self-appointed leaders should read their own law.

The incident to which Jesus referred is found in I Sam. 21:1-7. David was fleeing from Saul. He came to Abimelech the priest and asked for anything he might have on hand. But there was no bread except the loaves that were used in the worship of the Lord. After David had assured the priest of the purity of his men, he was given the bread that only priests ate. As Jesus put it, "It was not lawful to eat save for the priests alone." Evidently, such sacred regulations could be superseded by greater needs. Saving the lives of David and his men was, in the sight of God, more important than allowing only priests to use the bread. According to Matthew, Jesus added this important point, "If ye had known what this meaneth, I desire mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless" (Matt. 12:7).

*The Son of man is lord of the sabbath.*—He who had ordained the Law at Sinai had authority over it, not the critics of Jesus. And that ended the discussion for a time.

*Healing on the Sabbath**Scripture*

6:6-11 And it came to pass on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man there, and his right hand was withered. 7 And the scribes and the Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath; that they might find how to accuse him. 8 But he knew their thoughts; and he said to the man that had his hand withered, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth. 9 And Jesus said unto them, I ask you, Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good, or to do harm? to save a life, or to destroy it? 10 And he looked round about on them all, and said unto him, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored. 11 But they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

*Comments*

*and there was a man there, and his right hand was withered.*—The setting is the familiar sabbath-synagogue scene. But this is different. All the elements of a trap baited with a sick man are present. Those who considered themselves to be the rightful teachers were jealous of Jesus popularity. They were ready to spring their trap. Let this "Teacher" dare to perform a work of healing on the sacred sabbath, and they would destroy Him!

It is characteristic of Luke to mention the fact that it was the man's *right* hand that was withered. The beloved physician would be interested in such details.

*that they might find how to accuse him.*—Their purpose was clear: They were interested in destroying the influence of Jesus with the people. Make them believe that He was breaking the sabbath, and they would return to their former teachers, the scribes and Pharisees. *But he knew their thoughts.*—Perhaps human intelligence could have seen through their trap. His enemies certainly thought of Him only as a man. But He was the Son of God, and God knows the reasoning of man's heart. Jesus knew what was in man (John 2: 25). The Pharisees had not said anything up to this point, and were not aware that Jesus knew what they were plotting. They were soon to find out both the strength and the courage of the One whom they were seeking to destroy.

According to Matt. 12:10, the Phaisees asked, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath?" It is difficult to say at what point their question was asked, but probably not before He had asked them, "Is it lawful to do good or harm on the sabbath?"

*Rise up and stand forth in the midst.*—One can't help wondering what effect this order from Jesus had on those who had planned to trap Him. Were they delighted that their scheme was going so well? Did they in the least suspect that He was aware of their evil purpose? Were they surprised by His courage as He accepted the challenge to heal the man?

What did the people think? Were they aware of what was going on? Were they glorying in the wisdom and courage and mercy of the Prophet who had arisen in their midst?

Let those who picture Jesus as a weakling ponder the boldness of His action. He could have avoided the clash with the time-honored leaders; He could have waited until the crowd was gone; but He didn't. He said, "Stand here in the midst." He wanted all to see exactly what He was doing. Everything was out in the open. What a contrast to the secret conniving of the Pharisees who were bent on destroying the Son of God!

*And he arose and stood in the midst.*—It is highly improbable that the man had the slightest idea of what was about to happen to him. It is also highly improbable that he knew anything of the plot of the Pharisees to use him to get rid of Jesus. A physical handicap like that may have made him timid, but at the command of the Teacher, he stood up where all could see him.

*Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good, or to do harm?*—Jesus was in complete command of the situation. He knew what His opponents had in mind; He knew what He was going to do. He wanted all who present on that sabbath day to see through the evil plot of the Pharisees.

He asked, "Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good, or to do harm?" There could be but one answer to the question: "To do good, not harm, on the sabbath." His enemies were planning the most evil deed: to kill the Son of God!

"To save a life, or destroy," that was the real issue before them. The people must have been moved by the logic of Jesus and by His mercy. In their hearts they must have answered, "Save a life."

But the second part of the question, "or destroy it?" Whose life?

That of the man with the withered hand? Or was it His own life, for He knew that they desperately wanted to destroy Him.

*He looked round about on them all.*—Jesus had upset their trap; He was now ready to expose their wicked plot. He knew what they were thinking; did they see what He was about to do? Mark 3:5 says, He looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts.

John describes Him in Rev. 1:14 as the one whose eyes were as a "flame of fire." Did something of that flame show in His eyes that sabbath day in the synagogue while wicked men dared Him to heal the man with the withered hand? Did they dare look Him full in the face? Did the people see the wrath of the Righteous Judge as Jesus stood by the man He was about to heal? Or did they see in His face the mellow light of mercy for all who turn to Him?

*Stretch forth thy hand.*—The man did so, and his hand was restored. It was as simple as that. Instantly, this one who had not been able to use his withered right hand—we do not know for how long—stretched it forth in demonstration of the power of Jesus to do good on the sabbath, to save a life, not destroy it.

*they were filled with madness.*—Their fury knew no bounds. Their cleverly arranged trap had been turned against them. They couldn't answer the logic of Jesus, for before their very eyes stood the man whose withered hand had been restored.

There was but one thing left: They would destroy Jesus. They talked the matter over among themselves. Their only question was, "What shall we do with him?" "They took counsel against him, how they might destroy him" (Matt. 12:14).

### *Jesus Selects the Twelve Apostles*

#### *Scripture*

6:12-16 And it came to pass in these days, that he went out into the mountain to pray; and he continued all night in prayer to God. 13 And when it was day, he called his disciples; and he chose from them twelve, whom also he named apostles: 14 Simon, whom he also named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip and Bartholomew, 15 and Matthew and Thomas, and James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot,

16 and Judas *the son* of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

*he went into the mountain to pray.*—In His prayer life, Jesus presents an example for His disciples to follow. He prayed before choosing the twelve; He prayed after the feeding of the five thousand; He prayed during His baptism. He prayed publically; He prayed alone. His private prayers sometimes lasted all night long; invariably, His public prayers were brief.

He prayed all night to God just before choosing the twelve. We are not told what He said. We only know something of the significance of the issues involved. On the shoulders of these men was to rest the responsibility of carrying on the work of preaching the gospel in all the world. The success of His earthly mission would depend on them. Some of them were weak. One would deny that he had ever known such a person as Jesus. Another would betray Him into the hands of His enemies. What better way to ponder the problems of preaching the gospel in all the world than to pray to God? Did that night seem long to Him, or did the morning light find Him still grateful for the privilege of talking to His heavenly Father? This we do know, when the night was over He was ready for the great decision.

*he called His disciples; and he chose from them twelve.*—Some of these men had been following Jesus from the beginning. John tells the story of Andrew bringing his brother Simon to Jesus. Luke has already mentioned their becoming fishers of men. Now they are to be formally selected from the many disciples and designated apostles.

An apostle is one who is sent on a mission. The apostles of Christ were selected by Him and sent by Him to carry the gospel into all the world. Later, He chose Paul to be an apostle also. See Acts 9:3-6; 22:7-21; 26:12-18. Matthias was chosen by the Lord to take the place from which Judas fell away (Acts 1:24-26).

The apostles were equipped to carry out their worldwide mission by being baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5, 8; 2:1-4). Paul also had all the rights of an apostle, although he was not of the original twelve (II Cor. 12:12).

Others such as Barnabas and James the Lord's brother were referred to as apostles because of having been sent out by the church (Acts 13:1-3). They, of course, were not baptized in the Holy Spirit, for that was limited to the twelve on the Day of Pentecost.

The writer of Hebrew says, "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, even Jesus" (Heb. 3:1). He can be called "apostle" because the Father sent Him. Understanding the use of the term depends on the one doing the sending. Christ sent the twelve and Paul; the church sent out some for special duties; God sent the Christ.

*Simon, whom he also named Peter.*—Peter is named first in all four of the lists of apostles (Matt. 10:2-4; Mk. 3:16-18; Lk. 6:14-16; Acts 1:13). The fact that he is mentioned first has led some to assume that he is head of the apostolic group. No such idea is presented in the Scriptures, for prominence is not preeminence. Exactly the same authority was given to all the apostles that was given to Peter (Matt. 16:19; 18:18). Jesus said to all of His apostles that in the regeneration—this Christian age when men are being made new creatures through obedience to the Word—the apostles were to sit on *twelve* thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28).

For the account of changing Simon's name to Peter, see John 1:42. But Jesus continued to address him as Simon. See Matt. 16:17; Lk. 22:31; John 21:15.

Among the outstanding things for which Peter is remembered are: (1) the good confession (Matt. 16:16); (2) the tragic denial (Lk. 22:54-62; and (3) the powerful sermon on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-40). He wrote two epistles to strengthen his brethren in Christ.

*and Andrew his brother.*—Andrew was one of the two disciples of John the Baptist who heard him speak of Jesus saying, "Behold the Lamb of God." John 1:35-42. The first thing he did after becoming convinced of the truth of John's statement was to find his own brother Simon and say, "We have found the Messiah." He will always be remembered for the fact that he brought his own brother to Jesus. In his quiet way, Andrew must be considered as an effective worker for Christ even though the prominence of his brother sometimes overshadows him.

When Philip was confronted with the problem of the Greeks who wanted to see Jesus, he sought the help of Andrew, not Peter, in deciding what to do. John adds the significant statement: "Andrew cometh, and Philip, and they tell Jesus" (John 12:22).

*James and John.*—Mark says that Jesus nicknamed these sons of Zebedee "Boanerges" which means "Sons of thunder" (Mark 3:



17). Their wanting to call fire from heaven to burn up a Samaritan village might suggest a reason for this name. See Lk. 9:54. They were selfishly ambitious and often made the other disciples jealous. See Matt. 20:20-28. At one time they actually sent their mother to ask Jesus to let her two sons sit one on the right hand and one on the left hand in His kingdom—evidently thinking of His kingdom as an earthly one like that of David or Solomon.

There is some reason to believe that James and John were cousins of Jesus. A comparison of the names of the women who were present at the crucifixion of Jesus suggests this possibility. See McGarvey and Pendleton, *The Fourfold Gospel*, page 225. If they were cousins of Jesus, their request for special consideration in His kingdom becomes a little more understandable even if less admirable.

These two and Peter formed what is sometimes called "the inner circle" of Jesus' disciples. He often took them with Him while leaving the others behind. They were with Him at the raising of Jairus' daughter (Lk. 8:51); the Transfiguration (Lk. 9:28); and in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:37). But it is possible that He kept them closer because they needed to be watched more than the others.

James was the first of the apostles to suffer martyrdom (Acts 12:1-2). For a reference to John's death, see John 21:21-23.

John was prominent in the work of the church in Jerusalem. See Acts 3:1; 4:13. He wrote the Gospel of John, the three epistles, and the Revelation. (Some do not accept this view of the authorship of the books commonly believed to have been written by John the apostle).

*Philip and Bartholomew.*—Except for their place in the list of the Twelve and, in Philip's case, the mention made in John 12:22, little is known about the work of these disciples. See also John 1:43 and 6:5-7.

*Matthew and Thomas.*—As to Matthew, see comments on Lk. 5:27-32. Thomas who was called Dydimys—the name means "Twin"—is generally thought of as "doubting" Thomas, a charge that cannot be supported by the recorded facts. He was, in fact, a great believer. But he was not one to accept evidence until he had investigated it. When Jesus told him to put his finger in the print of the nail in His hand, Thomas said, "My Lord and my God." John 20:24-29.

*James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot.*—James is sometimes identified with James the less (Mk. 15:40).

Simon whom Luke calls the Zealot is called the Cananean by both Matthew and Luke.

*Judas the son of James and Judas Iscariot.*—Such names as Judas, Simon, and James were quite common. It is difficult to clearly identify some of those who bore these names. But Judas Iscariot forever bears the stigma of the one who betrayed his Lord.

### *Jesus Teaching the Crowds*

#### *Scripture*

6:17-19 And he came down with them, and stood on a level place, and a great multitude of his disciples, and a great number of the people from all Judaea and Jerusalem, and the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases; 18 and they that were troubled with unclean spirits were healed. 19 And all the multitude sought to touch him; for power came forth from him, and healed them all.

#### *Comments*

*and he came down with them.*—Matthew describes a similar incident, but clearly states that when Jesus saw the multitudes He went up into the mountain and sat down. Then His disciples came to Him and He taught them (Matt. 5:1-2). Is Luke just giving another version of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-6-7)? The similarities are many and striking, but the differences must be accounted for. Luke says that Jesus came down to a level place (perhaps on the mountain), but Matthew says that He went up into the mountain. Matthew presents eight beatitudes; Luke gives four beatitudes and four woes. And there are other differences.

While it is possible to view these as two accounts of the same incident, it seems more likely that Luke tells about another occasion when Jesus taught the multitudes using much of the material He had used before. This would account for the differences. What of the similarities? Surely Jesus repeated these basic truths many times in the course of His teaching ministry. It is natural to suppose that He would change the message to suit the needs of the audience. While these matters are interesting, we should not become so involved in trying to answer the problems that we lose sight of the lessons taught.

*and a great number of people.*—The report about Jesus' activity

spread throughout the whole country from Judea to Tyre and Sidon (Matt. 4:24-25).

*to hear him and to be healed.*—People came to hear Jesus and to be healed of their diseases. The demon possessed were healed also, *all the multitudes sought to touch him.*—He could have spoken the word and they would have been healed, but the touch of His hand gave them added assurance. The power went forth from Him and healed them all.

### *The Beatitudes and the Woes*

#### *Scripture*

6:20-26 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed are ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. 21 Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. 22 Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. 23 Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy: for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for in the same manner did their fathers unto the prophets. 24 But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. 25 Woe unto you, ye that are full now! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you, ye that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. 26 Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for in the same manner did their fathers to the false prophets.

#### *Comments*

*he lifted up his eyes.*—A speaker normally looks at his audience, but Luke seems to suggest something more when he says that Jesus lifted up His eyes on the disciples. He saw them as men who needed the lesson He was about to give. There were blessings for some but woes for others. All of them must have been aware of the importance of what He was about to say as He swept the audience with His eyes.

*Blessed.*—Only from the context can the rich meaning of the word be grasped. See it in Psa. 1:1 "Blessed is the man"—and there follows the description of the fortunate man who meditates on the Word of God day and night. Jesus spoke of those who were so fortunate as to cause others to long for the same blessed state.

"Happy" seems very limited as a word to carry all that is implied by the word Jesus used.

*ye poor.*—What did the poor of His audience think when He congratulated them and called them fortunate? Usually the poor are to be pitied. "Poor in spirit" seems to refer to humble people. But Jesus said, according to Luke, "blessed are ye poor." It is possible that He intended to speak to those who were literally poor. It was a common thing for the poor to be mistreated by the rich. See James 2:6. Jesus came to preach good tidings to the poor (Lk. 4: 18). It can mean the poor in spirit and also the poor in material goods. The principles of the gospel if applied would banish poverty from this world. See Paul's word to the poverty stricken Macedonians in II Cor. 8:1-9.

*ye that hunger now.*—In the fourth beatitude as Matthew reports it, Jesus spoke of those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Are we to read this concept into Luke's account? Is it possible that Jesus was speaking to those who were actually feeling the pangs of hunger? We do know that He was aware of the physical needs of His people also, for He fed them on loaves and fishes. But more than that, He provided for their spiritual sustenance by giving them the Bread of Life. See James' word about those who lack daily food (James 2:15). So often those who lack daily food also lack the food that satisfies the soul.

*for yours is the kingdom of God.*—The poor are to be comforted in that they may have a rich blessing for their souls in this life. But in addition to that, the kingdom of God—heaven itself—belongs to them. There will be no poverty there, even though "the poor ye have with you always" in this world.

Wherever the Word of Christ has been fully accepted, the hungry are filled both literally and figuratively. The answer to the needs of the world is not the doctrine of materialism but the gospel of Christ. The gospel in the hearts of men will cause them to share the produce of the world with the needy and also the Bread of Life that will abolish spiritual poverty. See II Cor. 9:10-15.

*that weep now: for ye shall laugh.*—According to Matthew, Jesus said, "they that mourn shall be comforted." Is this a reference to the grief of this life or to those whose godly sorrow leads to repentance? Luke seems to place emphasis on the issue of the present first and the future last. Those who weep now shall laugh in heaven, for there will be no tears there.

*when men shall hate you.*—Peter and John gave an example of the proper attitude for Christians under persecution. They preferred the approval of God rather than men. See Acts 4:19-21.

*your reward is great in heaven.*—It is possible that all these rewards are heavenly. Jesus said, "In this world ye have tribulations: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world (John 16:33). See also Phil. 3:20-21; II Pet. 3:11-13; Rev. 21:4-5.

*But woe unto you that are rich.*—Not the possession, but the misuse of riches is condemned. The one who worships gold rather than God justly comes under this condemnation. See James 1:9-11 for the correct view that puts the riches of heaven above the temporary riches of this life.

*ye have received your consolation.*—Some men prayed to be seen of men, and when men saw them and spoke of them as religious people, they were paid in full. When one makes riches his goal, he must settle for the consolation that riches bring, but he should remember what the Lord said about the time when riches fail. See Lk. 12:20-21; 16:11.

*full now.*—The emphasis is on "now." Some people are perfectly satisfied with physical food and have no thought for the food of the soul. Many who ate the loaves and fishes merely wanted more of the same and were not interested in the Bread of Life. "Ye shall hunger" seems to look to the time when those who have contented themselves with material riches will realize that they should have given some attention to the spiritual life.

*that laugh now.*—The laughter of the wicked will become the cries of the lost. James says, "Clean your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts ye doubleminded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into heaviness" (James 4:8-9).

Neither Jesus nor James prohibit Christian joy and laughter. There is no record of Jesus having laughed, but He did join in the festive occasions of the people. If He did laugh, it certainly was not at some filthy joke. Much of what passes for humor today illustrates what Jesus was talking about. The "jesting" which Paul forbids is of the same sort—a well turned phrase that suggests evil and causes some to laugh at the filth of the world. Christian people ought not to be guilty of such a thing.

*when all men speak well of you.*—We are not to assume that a good reputation was not to be desired, for God's people are "to take

thought for things honorable in the sight of all men" (Rom. 12: 17). But Jesus was speaking of those who flattered the false prophets in order to be in their favor. The fathers of the Jews had been guilty of this very thing. But Jesus was not influenced by the flattery of men. For example, He wasn't moved by their efforts to make Him their 'king. Those who prefer the approval of Christ to that of men will find that they may have to pay dearly for their loyalty to the Lord (II Tim. 3:12).

### *Regulations for Conduct*

#### *Scripture*

6:27-38 But I say unto you that hear, Love your enemies do good to them that hate you, 28 bless them that curse you, pray for them that spitefully use you. 29 To him that smiteth thee on the *one* cheek offer also the other; and from him that taketh away thy cloak withhold not thy coat also. 30 Give to every one that asketh thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. 31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. 32 And if ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for even sinners love those that love them. 33 And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? for even sinners do the same. 34 And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? even sinners lend to sinners, to receive again as much. 35 But love your enemies, and do *them* good, and lend, never despairing; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be sons of the Most High: for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil. 36 Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful. 37 And judge not, and ye shall not be judged: and condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: release, and ye shall be released: 38 give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.

#### *Comments*

*Love your enemies.*—Some of the things that Jesus said must have seemed difficult if not impossible. "Love your enemies." But they hate you and curse you and spitefully use you! They strike you on the cheek and even take away your property. How can you love them? The answer lies in the meaning of "love." Jesus did not say

"Have the same feeling toward an enemy as you have for a friend." Love, according to this context, requires one to bless one's enemies and pray for them and do good to them. Turn the other cheek, when one strikes you. If he takes your garment—it could be done by law Ex. 22:26—give also the one that he could not legally take.

These directives are difficult, but not impossible to comply with. In essence, they suggest God's love for the world, and Jesus' attitude toward those who mistreated Him. On the cross He prayed, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

Paul defines love in I Cor. 13:4-8. Love suffers long and is kind. We can be kind to an enemy. And strangely, an act of kindness may sometimes change an enemy into a friend.

*as ye would that men should do to you.*—This suggests that it might be easier to be kind to an enemy—love him—if we would put ourselves in his place. An honest effort to understand the other person's viewpoint might help to remove the enmity. This rule was based on the law and the prophets (Matt. 7:12). Jesus went a step farther in His teaching to the apostles when He said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you." See John 13:34. Peter also said, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently" (I Pet. 1:22).

*and ye shall be sons of the Most High.*—Jesus illustrated the issue of love for enemies by the fact that God sends the rain on the good and the bad alike (Matt. 5:43-48). Then He said, "Ye therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." Men say, "That's a worthy goal, but impossible of attainment." But did Jesus give a command that can't be obeyed? What does "be perfect" mean? In this context it means complete or mature. Just as the Father sent the rain on the good and the bad—there are no others—so His children are to love their friends and their enemies; and that is perfect in the sense of completeness, for there are no others.

Jesus did not mean "sinless" when He said, "Be perfect." As long as we live, we can—although we ought not to—commit sin (I Cor. 10:12).

The sermon that Luke reported was slightly different from the one Matthew reported. According to Luke, Jesus said, "Ye shall be sons of the Most High, for He is kind toward the unthankful and

evil." Then Jesus said, "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful."

*And judge not.*—This is expanded in verses 41-45 and in Matt. 7:1-5. Jesus was speaking of hypocritical judging. But He also said that you can tell false prophets by their fruits. On another occasion He said, "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgments" (John 7:24).

And why not judge? "For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again."

#### *Four Concise Statements*

##### *Scripture*

6:39-45 And he spake also a parable unto them, Can the blind guide the blind? shall they not both fall into a pit? 40 The disciple is not above his teacher: but every one when he is perfected shall be as his teacher. 41 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 42 Or how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me cast out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye. 43 For there is no good tree that bringeth forth corrupt fruit; nor again a corrupt tree that bringeth forth good fruit. 44 For each tree is known by its own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. 45 The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil *man* out of the evil *treasure* bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

##### *Comments*

*Can the blind guide the blind?*—A solemn warning not to follow blindly those who are not qualified to lead. Jesus applied this to the Pharisees (Matt. 15:12-14; 23:16).

*The disciple is not above his teacher.*—As long as one is following his teacher, he will not get beyond the teacher. When he is fully taught—knows all the teacher can impart to him—he will be as his teacher.

Jesus was speaking of the people who were being corrupted by



the teachers they were following. They could scarcely be expected to rise above their leaders—scribes and Pharisees.

It is different when it comes to Jesus, the Teacher. He taught the truth. What a goal for a disciple of His to be fully taught and to be like Him!

*Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam that is in thine own eye.*—Jesus had drawn a verbal cartoon for His audience. The lesson was so plain no one could miss it. The man with a large timber in his eye couldn't possibly remove a speck from his brother's eye. But we try it over and over today!

*For each tree is known by its own fruit.*—Conduct indicates true character just as fruit shows the true nature of the tree that bears it.

*out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.*—What is in the heart will come out in the speech. See Matt. 15:18-20. Let him who would glorify the Lord in his speech fill his heart with the truth of God's Word. See Psa. 119:11; 19:7-14; Phil. 4:4-9.

### *The Necessity of Obedience*

#### *Scripture*

6:46-49 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? 47 Every one that cometh unto me, and heareth my words, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: 48 he is like a man building a house, who digged and went deep, and laid a foundation upon the rock: and when a flood arose, the stream brake against that house, and could not shake it: because it had been well builded. 49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that built a house upon the earth without a foundation, against which the stream brake, and straightway it fell in; and the ruin of that house was great.

#### *Comments*

*And why call ye me Lord, Lord.*—See Matt. 7:22-23. Jesus called for sincerity and honesty in all human relationships. Hypocritical judging was forbidden. Those who followed Him were to have their heart in it. Unless you say it by your life, there is no use to call Him Lord with your mouth.

*heareth my words and doeth them.*—James said, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22). Failing to do so results

in self-delusion. Jesus' graphic illustration of the two houses—one built on solid rock and the other with no foundation—shows the folly of failing to obey His word.

### *Special Note*

## THE SABBATH

### A. The Jews and the sabbath.

1. It is first mentioned in Ex. 16:26.

2. Was it observed as an eternal principle by Adam? The fact that Gen. 2:2-3 states that God rested on the seventh day and hallowed it, leads some to assume that it was given to Adam and all his posterity. This view contradicts Moses' statement that no other nation—not even their fathers—had this law of which the sabbath law was a part (Deut. 4:8; 5:1-3; 4:13). Moses mentioned the sabbath when he gave the account of the creation because the Jews were keeping it when he wrote. God had given it to the Jews because it was on the seventh day that He had rested from His work.

3. Why was it given to the Jews? The seventh day, rather than any other day, was given because on it God had rested (Ex. 20:11). It was given to commemorate the deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Deut. 5:15).

4. What is the relation of the sabbath to the Old Covenant? The first important fact to remember is that the Old Covenant was the Ten Commandments of which the sabbath was the fourth (Ex. 34:28; Deut. 4:13). A second and equally important fact is this: The New Covenant supplanted the Old and the sabbath is nowhere found as a part of the New. See Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:6-13; II Cor. 3:2-18; Gal. 4:21-31.

### B. Jesus and the sabbath.

1. Why did He, as His custom was, observe the sabbath? He was born under the Law to redeem those under the Law (Gal. 4:4). At the time of His birth, His parents complied with the Law of Moses (Lk. 2:22-24). When the leper was cleansed, He commanded him to comply with the Law (Matt. 8:4). During His ministry, when asked what to do to have eternal life, He pointed to the Ten Commandments as the answer (Mk. 10:17-22). On the Day of Pentecost, however, when Peter spoke by the Holy Spirit, he said, "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins"

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(Acts 2:38). This is the directive in connection with the New Covenant.

2. What proof is there that He never broke the Law, although he was charged with sabbath-breaking?

The Jews complained that He broke the sabbath when He healed the lame man at Bethesda, but He defended His action by saying, "My Father worketh until now and I work" (John 5:18). A year and a half later, He referred to this incident and reminded the Jews that they carried out the law of circumcision even on the sabbath (John 7:21-24). When two laws were in conflict, the lesser was suspended at the point of conflict. Then why condemn Jesus for making a man completely whole on the sabbath?

He appealed to common sense when He asked, "Is it lawful to do good or bad on the sabbath?" (Matt. 12:9-12) No one dared say that His miracles of healing were bad. He pointed out the inconsistency of their complaints against Him, for they were in the habit of loosing the ox or the ass and leading it to water on the sabbath. See Luke 13:15. Does this indicate that the law had been relaxed to some extent? See Num. 15:32-36. Again, He answered the complaint of the Jews by reference to their history, specifically, an incident that involved David. See Matt. 12:2-8. It was mercy and not sacrifice that pleased God.

C. The Christian and the sabbath.

1. Was it the appointed day of meeting of the church? The first day of the week, and not the sabbath, was the day of their meeting. See Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:1-2.

2. Why did the apostles go to the synagogue on the sabbath? They went to preach the Gospel. See the account of Paul preaching in the synagogue on the sabbath in Antioch in Acts 13:14-52. They did some things as Jews which they refused to let others bind on Gentile Christians—for example, circumcision (Gal 2:3-5). At Cenchreae Paul kept the provisions of a Jewish vow (Acts 18:18) and later in Jerusalem he was prepared to make certain Jewish offerings (Acts 21:17-31). He did these things as Jewish customs, not as Christian obligations (Rom. 14:5-6).

3. Was the sabbath changed to the first day of the week? No. What about Constantine? He had nothing to do with it. The New Testament was written long before his time, and it indicates that the early church gathered on the first day of the week, not the sabbath (Acts 20:7).

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4. Are Christians commanded to "keep the first day of the week as a holy day" and refrain from working on that day? That provision related to the sabbath, not the first day of the week, the Lord's day. On the first day of the week, Christians were to assemble, break bread, preach the Word, and present the offering; but every day of the week was a holy day for them.

5. Is the Lord's day the first day of the week? The expression is found only in Rev. 1:10. Acts 20:7 indicates that the first day of the week was the day of meeting for the church.

6. What, then, is the significance of the sabbath to the Christian? It is a type of rest in heaven. See Heb. 4:9.

### *Summary*

In this chapter Luke gives a condensed statement of some of the most interesting and important events in the Galilean ministry of Our Lord. He completes his report on a series of complaints against Jesus. The two mentioned in this chapter are based on Jesus' supposed breaking of the sabbath. He tells of the selecting of the Twelve and the teaching of the multitudes. The lessons Jesus taught on that occasion are similar to those of the Sermon on the Mount as presented by Matthew.

The complaints about working on the sabbath are based on two different types of work. One was, according to the Jews, actual work on the holy day, for the disciples of Jesus pulled off the heads of grain and rubbed them in their hands to get the grain. But Jesus pointed out that they hadn't been reading the Bible or, if they had, they hadn't understood the meaning of David's action when he used the bread that according to law was for priests only and gave it to his men to keep them alive. The Son of Man who explained this Scripture to the Jews is also Lord of the sabbath and allowed His men to gather the grain for food on that holy day.

The other work was the merciful work of healing a man with a withered hand. Jesus knew what they were thinking, so He told the man to stand up in the midst of the group where everyone could see him. Then He commanded him to stretch forth his hand, and it was restored. The senseless fury of the complainers asked only, "What can we do to get rid of Him?"

Selecting the twelve apostles was one of the most important tasks in the ministry of Jesus. He spent all night in prayer before making the choice. Luke gives their names and tells something

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about some of them, closing his report with Judas who became the traitor.

After choosing the twelve, Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place where a large crowd from Judea and Jerusalem and even from Tyre and Sidon had gathered. They had come to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases.

The lesson began with the four Beatitudes and the four Woes. Then Jesus spoke of conduct toward enemies and others. In four brief statements of truth, He warned against following blind guides, false teachers, hypocritical judging, and conduct that is like trees producing corrupt fruit.

He closed the lesson with a warning about the necessity of true obedience. He warned against calling Him "Lord, Lord" and not doing what He said. He showed them what this meant by the illustration of the two houses, the one built on rock, the other had no foundation.

### *Questions*

1. What are the five complaints against Christ as given in chapters five and six?
2. On what issue were the two presented in this chapter based?
3. What was the original law about work on the sabbath?
4. What are the two types of work about which the complaints were made?
5. How does Jesus' reference to David justify His disciples conduct?
6. What did Jesus say about His own relation to the sabbath?
7. What was unusual about the presence of the man with the withered hand in the synagogue on that sabbath when Jesus was present?
8. For what were the Pharisees hoping?
9. How was the issue brought to the test?
10. What did Jesus tell the man to do? Why?
11. What question did Jesus ask?
12. What did He do just before He told the man to stretch forth his hand?
13. What effect did the miracle have on those who were hoping to find a cause to condemn Jesus?
14. What did the enemies of Jesus plan to do?
15. What did Jesus do before selecting the Twelve?

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16. What are some of the facts about the prayer life of Jesus?
17. How long did Jesus pray on that occasion?
18. What is an apostle?
19. Why was Jesus called the Apostle?
20. What principle is to be observed in explaining the use of the word "apostle"?
21. In what sense did Paul refer to James the Lord's brother as an apostle?
22. Was Peter's authority as an apostle different from that of the other apostles?
23. What is known about Andrew?
24. Why did Jesus call James and John "Sons of thunder"?
25. What may be said of the three who are commonly thought of as being the "inner circle of apostles"?
26. What of the two named Judas?
27. What are some of the difference between Matthew's account of the Sermon on the Mount and Luke's report of the lessons Jesus taught after selecting the Twelve?
28. Why did the people want to touch Jesus?
29. What four classes are called blessed?
30. What is the distinction between them and the ones mentioned in the Beatitudes of Matt. 5:1-12?
31. On what four classes are the woes pronounced?
32. What did Jesus mean when He said, "Beware when all men speak well of you"?
33. How can you love your enemies?
34. What rule of conduct toward others did Jesus give?
35. Is it possible to obey Jesus' command about love?
36. What did He mean by the reference to blind guides?
37. What did He mean by saying that a disciple is not above his teacher?
38. What kind of judging did He forbid?
39. Why did He say that a tree is known by its fruits?
40. What did He say about calling Him "Lord, Lord"?
41. How did He illustrate the necessity of obeying His word?

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### *Outline*

- A. Luke's account of two miracles in the healing ministry of Jesus (1-17).
1. Healing the centurion's servant—a lesson in faith (1-10).
    - a) It took place at Capernaum (1).
    - b) The centurion appealed to Jesus (2-5).
      - (1) His servant was dear to him and at the point of death.
      - (2) He sent the elders of the Jews to ask Jesus to come and save his servant.
      - (3) The elders urged Jesus to do so. They said:
        - (a) He is worthy that you do this for him.
        - (b) He loves our nation and built our synagogue.
    - c) Jesus went with the elders (6-9).
      - (1) As they neared the house, they met the friends of the centurion with a message for Jesus.
        - (a) He did not feel worthy to have Jesus enter his house or even to come in person to ask Jesus to come.
        - (b) His request: "Say the word and my servant shall be healed."
        - (c) The centurion's insight into the power and authority of Jesus:
          - i) As a man under authority he understood the power of giving orders.
          - ii) He knew what it meant to have his orders obeyed.
      - (2) Jesus marveled and said, "Not even in Israel have I found such faith."
    - d) When the centurion's friends returned to the house, they found the servant in good health.
  2. Raising the widow's son—a demonstration of Jesus' compassion (11-17).
    - a) The circumstances leading to the miracle (11-13).
      - (1) Jesus and His disciples, accompanied by a great crowd, were nearing the city of Nain where they met the funeral procession.
      - (2) The man that had died was the only son of a widowed mother.

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- (3) Many people from the city were with her.
- (4) When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said, "Don't cry."
- b) The gentle Jesus performed the mighty miracle (14-15).
  - (1) He touched the bier and the bearers stood still.
  - (2) He said, "Young man, I say to you, Arise."
  - (3) The dead man sat up and began to speak.
  - (4) Jesus gave him back to his mother.
- c) The effect of this miracle (16-17).
  - (1) Fear held all in its grasp.
  - (2) They glorified God saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us; God has visited His people."
  - (3) The report went out to all Judea and surrounding country.
- B. Luke's account of two incidents in the teaching ministry of Jesus (18-50).
  - 1. What He taught about John the Baptist—a lesson on true greatness (18-23).
    - a) John had sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus (18-23):
      - (1) "Are you the one that is to come, or are we to look for another?"
      - (2) Jesus' answer:
        - (a) Instead of answering "Yes" or "No," He showed them His power to heal many diseases and to restore the sight of the blind.
        - (b) He said, "Go tell John what you have seen and heard."
        - (c) He added, "Blessed is he whosoever he might be who is not ensnared by me."
    - b) The lesson about John (24-35).
      - (1) What did people expect to see in John? (24-26).
        - (a) A reed shaken in the wind?
        - (b) A man clothed in soft raiment?
        - (c) A prophet? Yes, but more than a prophet.
      - (2) The true greatness of John (27-28).
        - (a) He was the messenger to prepare for the Lord.
        - (b) Among those born of women there is none greater than John.
        - (c) The one who is but little in the kingdom of God is greater than he.



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- (3) The reaction to John's message (29-30).
  - (a) Publicans justified God by being baptized by John.
  - (b) The Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God, refusing to be baptized by John.
- (4) A contrast between John and Jesus (31-35).
  - (a) The example of children playing games: Funeral or Wedding.
  - (b) The people rejected both John and Jesus:
    - i) They said John had a demon.
    - ii) They accused Jesus of being a winebibber and a glutton.
  - (c) The wise understood both John and Jesus, for "Wisdom is justified of all her children."
- 2. What He taught on the occasion of the anointing in the house of Simon the Pharisee—a lesson on love and forgiveness. (36-50).
  - a) Jesus was a guest in the house of Simon (36).
  - b) The anointing while He was at the table (37-38).
    - (1) By a woman of the city, a sinner.
    - (2) She knew that He was at the Pharisee's house.
    - (3) She stood at His feet weeping; her tears wet His feet; she wiped them with her hair and anointed them with precious ointment.
  - c) The reaction of the Pharisee (39-47).
    - (1) Simon was saying to himself, "If this man were a prophet—he was sure that He wasn't—he would have known what sort of woman was touching him. Simon knew her only as a sinner.
    - (2) Jesus answered the question of Simon's mind and said, "Simon, I have something to say to you."
    - (3) Simon answered, "Teacher, say it." (40)
    - (4) Jesus told the story of two debtors, one owing five hundred denarii and the other, fifty. Their debts were cancelled when they couldn't pay them.
    - (5) Jesus asked, "Which of them will love more?"
    - (6) Simon answered, "I suppose the one to whom he forgave more."
    - (7) Jesus said, "You have decided correctly." Then He

pointed out the contrast between what the woman did and what Simon neglected to do.

- (8) Jesus said, "Her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much." But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little—that was true of Simon.
- d) The lesson of forgiveness (48-50).
  - (1) He said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven."
  - (2) The other guests said to themselves, "Who is this that even forgives sins?"
  - (3) Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

### *Healing The Centurion's Servant*

#### *Scripture*

7:1-10 After he had ended all his sayings in the ears of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick and at the point of death. 3 And when he heard concerning Jesus, he sent unto him elders of the Jews, asking him that he would come and save his servant. 4 And they, when they came to Jesus, besought him earnestly, saying, He is worthy that thou shouldest do this for him; 5 for he loveth our nation, and himself built us our synagogue. 6 And Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: 7 wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say the word, and my servant shall be healed. 8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under myself soldiers: and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. 9 And when Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned and said unto the multitude that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. 10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole.

#### *Comments*

*After he had ended all his sayings.*—that is, after the lesson recorded in chapter six. The incidents that follow, emphasize the healing

ministry of Jesus. The place is Capernaum. See also Matt. 8:5-13, *a certain centurion's servant*.—Theophilus, a Gentile, would be interested in this. Of course, by the time Luke was writing the account, the gospel had been preached to much of the Gentile world. The ministry of Jesus was largely to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," but there were some Gentiles who shared in the blessings of the Son of God. Such incidents as this gave Gentiles as well as Jews grounds to hope in Him. See Matt. 12:21; Lk. 2:32.

This Roman soldier's servant was dear to him; this helps us to see what kind of a man he was. The cruel business of war often tends to harden the hearts of men; some officers have little regard for their men. But the centurion's concern for his servant commended him to Jesus.

*sick and at the point of death*.—The servant was in critical condition. The centurion's request was urgent. Nothing but a miracle could save him.

*he heard concerning Jesus*.—The people of the whole area had heard about the miracles of Jesus. See Lk. 4:37; 6:17-19. The news traveled fast, and the distressed people were eager to bring their sick for Him to heal. He never turned one away who called on Him for help.

*he sent unto him elders of the Jews*.—Matthew says that the centurion came to Jesus and told Him about the sick servant. In the light of Luke's statement, we assume that he did it through his agents, the elders of the Jews.

Not all leaders of the Jews were opposed to Jesus. These elders were respected men who, the centurion thought, would have influence with Jesus.

*besought him earnestly*.—The elders were evidently sincere in their desire to help the centurion. They presented a strong case: "He is worthy of this thing he asks you to do." "He loves the Jewish nation; he built our synagogue."

This is not the only Roman soldier to be commended in Luke's writings. Cornelius was a devout man and one who worshiped God with all his house. See Acts 10:1-8.

Gentiles were attracted to the nation of Israel because God had given them the revelation of His will in the Old Covenant (Deut. 4: 7-8; 5:2-3). He had promised them the Messiah who would "reign as king and deal wisely, and execute justice and righteousness in the land" (Jer. 23:5). Hope was kindled in the hearts of many who

heard about Him. Gentiles who were without God and who had no hope in this world (Eph. 2:12) were strangely drawn to the people of God and the hope of all the world which is Christ. See Rom. 9:4-5.

But many Jews conducted themselves in such a manner as to cause Gentiles to blaspheme the name of God (Rom. 2:24). What a warning to Christians!

*And Jesus went with them.*—The Physician answered the call for help. The fact that a Gentile had turned to Him in his distress was not the point. Soon His gospel would be proclaimed in all the world with the message of salvation for all peoples.

*the centurion sent his friends.*—The genuine humility of the man made him realize that he was not worthy to have the Prophet enter his home. He sent his friends to ask Jesus to speak the word that his servant might live—such faith is the complement of such humility. Who were these friends? Jews or Gentiles? All we know is that they were friends. But his greatest Friend was the one whom some had called "the friend of sinners" (7:34).

*say the word and my servant shall be healed.*—John records a similar incident which should not be confused with this one (John 4:46-54). In both cases, however, Jesus spoke the word that brought healing to the sick without being in the immediate presence of the person to be healed. He was not limited either by time or by space, for He is God. *I also am a man set under authority.*—As an officer of the Roman army, he knew what it meant to take orders as well as give orders. He knew what it meant to be obeyed when he spoke. Perhaps no one ought to give orders who does not know how to obey orders.

He believed that Jesus' authority extended to the realm of disease. He could give the order, and the centurion's servant would live. The soldier expected a miracle to take place.

*when Jesus heard these things, he marvelled.*—He marvelled because of the nature of the centurion's faith and because a Gentile had such faith in contrast to the lack of it in Israel. Jesus marvelled also because of the unbelief of the people of His own town (Mark 6:6).

*found the servant.*—Jesus spoke the word; the centurion's servant was healed, and his faith in Jesus was justified. The friends found the servant in good health when they returned to the house.

Luke describes this amazing miracle in such simple terms, but we should remember that it was "the work" of God.

*Raising the Widow's Son**Scripture*

7:11-17 And it came to pass soon afterwards, that he went to a city called Nain; and his disciples went with him, and a great multitude. 12 Now when he drew near to the gate of the city, behold, there was carried out one that was dead, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. 13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. 14 And he came nigh and touched the bier: and the bearers stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. 15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he gave him to his mother. 16 And fear took hold on all: and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet is arisen among us: and, God hath visited his people. 17 And this report went forth concerning him in the whole of Judaea, and all the region round about.

*Comments*

*soon afterwards.*—The footnote in some Bibles reminds us that many ancient manuscripts suggest that this event occurred on the next day, that is, the day following the healing of the centurion's son. Nain is some fifteen miles from Capernaum. It is possible that Jesus made the journey within the time limit. But more likely, Luke merely says that this miracle followed after the other one without specifying the exact day on which it occurred.

*and a great multitude.*—Large numbers of people witnessed this miracle. A crowd accompanied Jesus and His disciples, and another crowd from the city of Nain was with the funeral procession. With that many people having witnessed the miracle, Luke had no difficulty verifying the facts as he was preparing to write to Theophilus.

*the only son of his mother.*—Note the details which suggest the genuineness of this miracle: Luke tells of the exact spot where it occurred—"when He drew near the gates of the city." The dead man was young and the only son of a widowed mother.

*when the Lord saw her.*—Luke had become convinced of the deity of Jesus and didn't hesitate to refer to Him as the Lord. See Rom. 10:9-10.

*he had compassion on her.*—The word signifies a deep stirring of the emotions. Jesus had pity and sympathy for the distressed mother.

Literally, the word refers to the vital organs of the body: the heart, the liver, the intestines and others. We know that fear, anger, joy, anxiety affect the function of these organs. The language of the New Testament expresses it in a bold term. It means that Jesus was deeply affected by the sight that met His eyes; His pity and compassion were really felt.

*Weep not.*—Jesus put His compassion into words when He said, "Don't cry—don't go on weeping." How helpless, by contrast, we often find ourselves when we try to comfort the sorrowing. "Don't cry" has little effect unless the cause of grief is removed. That's exactly what Jesus did, for He raised the son from the dead and gave him back to his weeping mother.

"Don't go on crying" can have meaning to the Christian as he looks to the resurrection when the enemy which is death shall be abolished. Paul urged the Christians at Thessalonica not to sorrow as those who have no hope. He assured them that Christ will come and that the dead in Christ will be raised and the living will be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air. These are indeed words of comfort. I Thes. 4:13-18; Rev. 14:13; I Pet. 1:3-5; I Cor. 15:50-58; II Cor. 4:16-5:8.

*And he that was dead sat up.*—Luke stresses this astounding thing: at the command of Jesus the dead man sat up and began to talk. Jesus gave him back to his mother.

*Fear took hold on all.*—The fear that held all in its grasp was not the fear that makes man a coward, but the fear that makes him bow in reverence before his God. They all praised God for what He had done, and they were all sure that God had raised up a Prophet in their midst.

*God hath visited his people.*—He had blessed them with the presence of Jesus the Son of God. The miracle that showed His compassion prepared them to accept His deity.

Reports about Jesus' activity quickly spread throughout all the country of Palestine—here called Judea—and the surrounding territory. These reports reached the ears of John's disciples.

### *About John the Baptist*

#### *Scripture*

7:18-35 And the disciples of John told him of all these things.  
19 And John called unto him two of his disciples sent them to the

Lord, saying, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another? 20 And when the men were come unto him, they said, John the Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another? 21 In that hour he cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits; and on many that were blind he bestowed sight. 22 And he answered and said unto them, Go and tell John the things which ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached to them. 23 And blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me.

24 And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to behold? a reed shaken with the wind? 25 But what went ye out to see? a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' court. 26 But what went ye out to see? a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. 27 This is he of whom it is written,

Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,

Who shall prepare thy way before thee.

28 I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there is none greater than John; yet he that is but little in the kingdom of God is greater than he. 29 And all the people when they heard, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. 30 But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him. 31 Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation, and to what are they like? 32 They are like unto children that sit in the market place, and call one to another; who say, We piped unto you, and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not weep. 33 For John the Baptist is come eating no bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a demon. 34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners? 35 And wisdom is justified of all her children.

#### *Comments*

*And the disciples of John.*—Matthew informs us that John was in prison when this incident occurred (Matt. 11:2). Luke had referred

to the imprisonment earlier in his account (Lk. 3:20). He also refers briefly to the death of John at the hands of Herod a little later (9:7-9).

*Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?*—There are two views about the reason for asking this question. One suggests that John had become impatient and discouraged as a result of his imprisonment and was actually wondering whether or not Jesus was the Messiah. The other—this is the view presented here—holds that John sent his disciples to Jesus for their own sakes that their faith might be strengthened and that their loyalty might be centered Him.

This, of course, is a matter of opinion; but it is hard to believe that John's faith faltered in face of persecution. He had seen the Spirit descend and abide on Jesus. He had heard God say, "This is my Son." Was John more likely to forget than Peter and John who refused to obey the order of the Sanhedrin in the face of the threat of death? They had seen the Risen Lord and could not forget what they had heard from Him (Acts 4:19-20). John's disciples had been loyal to him to the point of jealousy over the popularity of Jesus. Some of them may have been slow to transfer their loyalty to Jesus. See John 3:22-30.

*Go tell John the things which ye have seen and heard.*—This does not necessarily suggest that John was in doubt about the matter; it may suggest that Jesus was presenting visible evidence of His claim to be the Messiah so that John's disciples could see for themselves. It would relieve John's anxiety over their loyalty to Jesus to have them tell of the proof of His Messiahship.

What Jesus said corresponds to Isaiah's prophecy about the Messiah which Jesus read in the synagogue in Nazareth at the beginning of His ministry (Lk. 4:16-20). He could have answered the question with a simple "yes," but it was better to present the evidence that permitted the disciples to arrive at the answer for themselves. Jesus not only pointed to the miracles as His credentials but also to the fact that the poor had good tidings preached to them—this was the mark of the Messiah.

*And blessed is he whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me.*—Some were ensnared by what they saw in Jesus, largely because He did not come up to their expectations of Messiah. They saw Him at the feasts where publicans and sinners were gathered. They saw Him doing what they called work on the sabbath day. They heard Him reproach both the Pharisees and the lawyers. He



rejected the kingly crown they offered to Him, but later was compelled to wear the crown of thorns in shameful mockery of the fact that He is the King of kings and Lord of lords. He was a stumbling block to Jews who sought signs from heaven, but ignored the works that proved Him to be the Christ (I Cor 1:22-25; John 10:31-38).

This was a word of encouragement, perhaps for John, and certainly for his disciples. And it is also for all who examine the evidence and accept Him as the Christ.

*he began to say to the multitudes concerning John.*—The coming of John's disciples gave Jesus an excellent opportunity to teach the people about true greatness as it was seen in John the Baptist. Was he a reed shaken by the wind, that is, a weakling? Far from it! John was known for his great courage as well as for his humility (Matt. 3:14; John 3:30). Was he a man clothed in soft raiment, that is, one like the pampered sons of the kings of that day? All who had seen him remembered his garments of camel's hair and the leather girdle about his waist. No, John was not a man of luxury and ease.

*much more than a prophet.*—John was a prophet as much so as Elijah or any other Old Testament man of God who spoke God's message to His people under the power of the Holy Spirit. But he was more than a prophet, for he actually presented Messiah to Israel. The others had foretold His coming (Deut. 18:15; John 5:46).

*Among them that are born of women there is none greater than John.*—John was great in dedication to the task God gave him. He was great in humility, gladly serving as the forerunner of the Christ. He was great in courage, boldly denouncing the sin of Herod the tetrarch. He was great in faith, accepting the evidence God gave to prove that Jesus was the Son of God (John 1:29-34).

*yet he that is but little in the kingdom of God is greater than he.*—The contrast is between one born of women and one in the kingdom of God who enters that kingdom by being born of the water and the Spirit (John 3:3-5). The least in the spiritual realm is greater than the greatest of the physical realm. The kingdom of God is spiritual, and those born into that kingdom are the children of God.

*justified . . . rejected.*—The people who heard the message of John acknowledged that God was right in condemning their sins. The

Pharisees and lawyers rejected God's advice given through John, because they imagined that they were already righteous. Mark 1:4. *Whereunto shall I liken the men of this generation?*—Jesus likened them to children playing in the market place. They were playing two kinds of games, one the exact opposite of the other. One was the wedding game; the other was like a funeral. "We piped unto you and you didn't dance—the wedding." "We wailed and you didn't mourn—the funeral." These games illustrate the attitude of the Pharisees and others who refused to accept either John or Jesus. John's message was like the mournful funeral game, and the Pharisees and lawyers refused to be baptized by him. Jesus' message was like the festive wedding game, but they called Him a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. *a friend of publicans and sinners.*—The Pharisees sought to label Jesus and thereby discredit Him in the eyes of the people. In reality, He was the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the people.

The label was intended as an insult, but in reality it became a compliment, for He is the Friend of sinners who died to blot out their sins. The Pharisees said He was blaspheming when He said to a sinner, "Thy sins are forgiven."

They had implied that He was a sinner. His answer was, "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." He did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repent. Matt. 9: 12-13.

*And wisdom is justified of all her children.*—Wisdom's children can see why it was necessary for John to do what he did, and also understand why Jesus ate with publicans and sinners. Folly rejected the counsel of God, refusing to respond to the preaching of either John or Jesus.

### *The Anointing in the House of Simon*

#### *Scripture*

7:36-50 And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he entered into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. 37 And behold, a woman who was in the city, a sinner; and when she knew that he was sitting at meat in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster cruse of ointment, 38 and standing behind at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and

anointed them with the ointment. 39 Now when the Pharisee that had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, that she is a sinner. 40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Teacher, say on. 41 A certain lender had two debtors: the one owed five hundred shillings, and the other fifty. 42 When they had not *wherewith* to pay, he forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him most? 43 Simon answered and said, He, I suppose, to whom he forgave the most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. 44 And turning to the woman, he said unto Simon. Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath wetted my feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. 45 Thou gavest me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. 46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but she hath anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little. 48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. 49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that even forgiveth sins? 50 And he said unto the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

### Comments

*And one of the Pharisees.*—Luke mentions two other occasions when Jesus was a guest in the home of a Pharisee. One wonders why these Jewish leaders invited Him. Nicodemus was a Pharisee, but one who was interested in what Jesus had to say. The ones about whom Luke writes were openly antagonistic to Jesus.

This incident occurred at the height of Jesus' popularity; the Pharisee may have used it as an occasion to evaluate the claims of the Prophet for himself. It is evident that Simon didn't believe Him to be a prophet and perhaps sought to vindicate his judgment on the issue.

*And behold, a woman who was a sinner.*—We must be content to leave the woman unnamed as Luke does. All efforts to identify her with Mary Magdalene or any other known person of New Testament times are futile. Luke's designation, "a woman of the city, a sinner," is all that the account requires. Not the name of the

woman, but the lesson Jesus taught is what matters. The lesson is this: Christ does forgive sinners, and those who really understand His merciful forgiveness love Him greatly.

There is no indication that Luke intended this story to illustrate the thought of verse 35, "Wisdom is justified of her children." It does show what the Pharisee thought of Jesus in contrast to the love shown toward Him by a sinner who found forgiveness because of His mercy.

*when she knew that he was sitting at meat in the Pharisee's house.*—Two things are evident: She must have known Jesus, and her love for the Savior prompted her to enter the Pharisee's house to anoint His feet. What finer place to show her love for Him than in the house of one who needed to know Him? Was her weeping a sign of shame for a sinful life she was leading, or was it a tears of joy over having found Him who had forgiven her sins? The further development of the story gives us the answer to these questions.

*This man, if he were a prophet.*—Simon was watching the woman as she washed Jesus' feet with her tears and anointed His feet with precious ointment. He assumed that Jesus neither knew the woman nor what sort she was. Details are missing about the time and place of her having found forgiveness through Christ. There is no doubt, however, about this being the motivating force that prompted her to express her great love and appreciation for what had been done by Him for her. Being unaware of this, Simon was already passing judgment on Jesus. He was saying to himself, "This man is no prophet; I knew it all along. No prophet would let a woman that is a sinner touch him."

*And Jesus answering said unto him.*—Simon had not said a word, but Jesus knew what he was thinking. Probably his disgust could be seen in his face. His contempt for Jesus could scarcely be hidden.

Jesus said, "Simon, I have something to say to you." The scorn of the proud Pharisee must have shown through his half-polite permission for Jesus to speak: "Teacher, say it." Then Jesus told the little story of the two debtors and asked, "Which of them will love more?" It was a very simple story; anyone could answer the question. Simon's answer shows that he was completely unaware of the identity of the One who had asked it. He didn't know that Jesus was the Prophet about whom Moses had written (Deut. 18:15); Acts 3:22).