

Part III

NEW
TESTAMENT

8

Life and Ministry of Jesus

Acquaintance with Israel's history from the time of Malachi to the time of the Gospel record is indispensable to the study of the life of Jesus Christ. It was an epoch through which there were at work strong underlying forces that shaped the political and religious atmosphere of the world into which Jesus came. The irresistible tides of Graeco-Roman civilization were felt all around the Mediterranean basin and touched the fortunes of the small land of Judaea to provide the setting for Christ's coming.

Old Testament history ceases with Nehemiah's second journey to Jerusalem (432 B.C.), and Old Testament prophecy ceases with the book of Malachi about the same time. Between the close of the Old Testament record and the birth of Jesus more than four hundred years elapsed, but the Bible is silent regarding Jewish history during this intertestamental period. From other sources, however, we know that the fortunes of Palestine suffered severely under foreign conquerors.

When Old Testament history closed, the Jews in Judah were under protective Persian control, as they had been since their release from captivity in 536 by Cyrus, the Persian conqueror of Babylon. For another two hundred years they remained subjects of the Persian Empire—until the brilliant young Macedonian general Alexander the Great wrested the control of Palestine from Persia in 333–331 B.C. during his spectacular conquest of Asia. Alexander brought the great civilizing influence of Hellenism and for the first time the small Jewish state of Judaea (the territory corresponding to old Kingdom of Judah) came into contact with Western ideas of Greek culture and literature. These Hellenistic ideas spread rapidly throughout the Near East and had a marked bearing on the subsequent history of the Jewish nation. Alexander and his successors treated the Jews well and encouraged them to settle in Greek colonies outside the borders of Palestine. The Greek language came into general use all through the eastern Mediterranean basin, including Palestine. With the division of Alexander's eastern kingdom among his

generals at his death (323 B.C.), Palestine and Egypt fell under the rule of the Greek Ptolemies for a little more than a century. Palestine then passed briefly to the Hellenizing Seleucid kings of Syria (thirty-one years), thence to political independence under the Jewish house of the Maccabees (Hasmoneans). (See p. 93.)

Political Scene

The rise of Maccabean power began when Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), one of the Syrian kings (175–163 B.C.), tried to force Judaea into complete subjection to his rule. Up to this time the Jews had successfully resisted Greek ideas and retained tenaciously through custom and Judaic law their own racial and cultural identity, inspired by the strong religious belief in a covenant relationship with God that promised them future national greatness. Antiochus attempted to Hellenize the Jews by imposing pagan cults and culture and to wipe out Jewish theocratic worship. He ordered the destruction of all the copies of the Law and forbade under penalty of death the sacred covenant practices of circumcision, Sabbath-keeping, and religious feasts (see Customs). In 168 B.C. he desecrated the Temple at Jerusalem by offering a sow to Olympian Zeus on a Greek altar erected over the Brazen Altar (“the abomination that maketh desolate” of Daniel 9:27 and 11:31; Mt. 24:15). (Mosaic Law branded swine as unclean [Lev. 11:7].) Thousands of faithful Jews who resisted his edicts perished cruelly at his command.

With righteous zeal Mattathias, an aged priest, and his five sons led a guerrilla revolt, a struggle that was to last approximately twenty-five years. Judas Maccabaeus, the third son, captured Jerusalem in 165 B.C. and destroyed Antiochus’ idolatrous altar. With this purification of the Temple the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah) was instituted and Judaic worship restored. After the deaths of Judas and his younger brother Jonathan, Simon succeeded to leadership and by treaty with Syria won for the Jews the political independence of Judaea in 142 B.C. This new Jewish state conferred on Simon and his descendants the leadership of the nation and the office of high priest.

At Simon’s death his son John Hyrcanus succeeded as ruler and high priest. Ruling for thirty-one years (135–105 B.C.), he brought the Jewish state to great prosperity and power, adding to Judaea the territories of Samaria, Idumaea, and Galilee. He settled Galilee with Jews of pure Jewish blood and won it to a patriotic Judaism. Peraea, a division of Palestine east of the Jordan, also fell under his influence and became predominantly Jewish.

Two distinct religious parties came into view in Palestine at this time, the Pharisees and the Sadducees; the first were champions of pure Judaism and highly popular with the people while the second, the priestly party, embraced the cultural influences of Hellenism and took no part in the early Maccabean struggle (see pp. 217–218). Toward the close of his rule John Hyrcanus withdrew his support from the Pharisees to favor the more aristocratic Sadducean party. These two sects became open enemies and during the reign of John’s third son Alexander Jannaeus (104–78 B.C.) there was bitter fighting between them.

The successors of John Hyrcanus set themselves up as kings and became tyrannical and corrupt. During the reign of Aristobulus II, grandson of John Hyrcanus (69–63 B.C.), the Herodian house began its advance to power under the able and energetic Antipater, governor of Idumaea. (Idumaea or Edom was a territory south of Judaea peopled after the fall of Jerusalem by descendants of the Edomites. This territory was conquered by John Hyrcanus and its inhabitants compelled to adopt Judaism.) To further his own interests Antipater curried favor with Hyrcanus II, high priest and brother of Aristobulus II. When Aristobulus and Hyrcanus warred over the throne, Antipater supported the latter. The two brothers, each seeking to settle the dispute in his own favor, appealed to Pompey, the Roman general who had a year earlier annexed Syria to the Roman Empire (64 B.C.) and was now stationed at Damascus. Pompey ordered them to maintain peace, but Aristobulus rebelled; Judaea was thus drawn into the stream of Roman history. Pompey marched against him and, after a costly siege, defeated him at Jerusalem in 63 B.C. The Maccabean state was overthrown, and through the civil strife of these two brothers the Jews lost their liberty and became subject to the Romans. Palestine was added to the Roman Empire and the Jews were forced to pay annual tribute to Rome.

Pompey reinstated Hyrcanus as high priest, making him ruler without the title of king, to reign over the Jewish regions of Judaea (with Idumaea), Galilee, and Peraea.

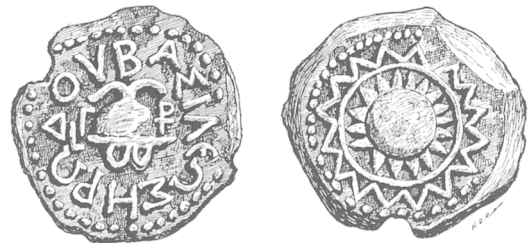
Hyrcanus was a weak governor, and his crafty advisor Antipater soon became the more powerful of the two. With the aid of Pompey’s legions, Hyrcanus and Antipater survived successive revolts by those who still championed Aristobulus’ cause. However, in 49 B.C. civil war broke out between Pompey and Julius Caesar, and the following year Pompey was defeated and died in Egypt. Antipater quickly shifted his allegiance to Caesar, hastening to solicit his good will by coming to Caesar’s aid at a desperate moment in his Egyptian campaign. In gratitude Caesar granted to the Jews of Egypt, Syria, and Phoenicia their religious freedom and privileges—they were allowed to observe

the Sabbath laws, worship in their synagogues, and contribute without restriction to the Temple treasury. As a special favor Caesar permitted the refortification of Jerusalem (which had been dismantled by John Hyrcanus under pressure from Syria) and exempted Judaeans from supplying troops for military service. These privileges were soon extended to the Jews of Asia Minor, allowing them to observe unhindered their ancient customs. Antipater won Roman citizenship for himself; in 47 B.C. he became procurator of Judaea and virtual ruler of Palestine. Although he had procured important concessions for the Jews, they hated him for his Idumaeans origin (see Gen. 27:41), his usurpation of Maccabean power, and his consistent allegiance to Rome.

Herod the Great, son of Antipater, like his father served the interests of Rome. Antipater had made him governor of Galilee (47 B.C.) and later Julius Caesar appointed him procurator of Coele-Syria—the territory between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon ranges. When the Maccabean house attempted to re-establish the kingship under Antigonus II, son of Aristobulus II, Herod went to Rome to appeal to Mark Antony and Octavianus (great-nephew and heir of Julius Caesar), members of the Second Triumvirate. They made Herod king of Judaea (40 B.C.), but upon his return to Palestine he was forced to wage a bloody battle to unseat Antigonus; and not until 37 B.C. did he occupy the palace at Jerusalem.

During his long reign (40–4 B.C.) Herod proved an able, although despotic and cruel, governor. To promote his influence and prestige and to make his position legitimate in the eyes of the Jews Herod allied himself to the Maccabean house by marrying Mariamne (the second of his five wives), granddaughter of Hyrcanus II, but the Jews continued to hate him as they had hated his father. In the years following, driven by fanatic jealousy and fear for his throne, one by one he murdered his enemies within the Maccabean house; he even murdered Mariamne and their two sons. In view of this it becomes less difficult to understand the terror that gripped Herod when he learned toward the close of his life that the King of the Jews had been born or to account for the cruelty he employed in the massacre of the Innocents (Mt. 2).

Herod's political fortunes were advanced by his slavish devotion to Rome. When Augustus Caesar (Octavianus) became Roman Emperor in 27 B.C., he



Another of Herod's Copper Coins. Obverse: lettering around a helmet. Reverse: Macedonian shield, with disk surrounded by rays. *The Jewish Encyclopedia.*

found in Herod a staunch supporter to guard the eastern boundaries of the Empire: Augustus gave him cities, large land grants, and lifelong favor. By 20 B.C. Herod's kingdom included Judaea, Samaria, Galilee, Trachonitis, Batanaea, Auranitis, Gaulanitis, and Peraea. During Augustus' peaceful reign Herod strengthened his realm, gave Roman order to its cities and towns, and made the roads safe for travel and commerce.

Although half-Jewish himself (Herod's father, Antipater, had been forced by John Hyrcanus to become religiously a Jew), Herod treated the Greek population of his kingdom with marked partiality, embarking upon a vast building program. He constructed the sumptuous harbor city of Caesarea nearly seventy miles northwest of Jerusalem on the Mediterranean, protecting it with a massive breakwater; by making skillful use of the tides, he provided the city with water for flushing the streets. (By the time of Herod Agrippa, Caesarea had become the official residence of the Roman governors.) Herod rebuilt much of the city of Samaria (Sebaste) and erected throughout his domain numerous theaters, amphitheaters, stadiums, and aqueducts. Hellenistic culture was encouraged, and many temples to Roman and Greek gods were erected throughout Palestine (but not in Judaea where, according to Josephus, such temples were forbidden). His allegiance to Caesar obliged him to break many of the customs and laws of the Jews, and his punishment of any civil disobedience—small or great—was severe. To conciliate the Jews of Judaea he painstakingly rebuilt their Temple out of gleaming white marble overlaid with gold, adding to it the imposing Court of the Gentiles (see p. 163), but his flagrant acts of paganism continually antagonized the Jews and defeated his generosity. This was the Herod who was ruling when Jesus was born.

Religious Scene

While Palestine was subjected to the various political crises of the intertestamental period, gradual changes were also taking place in the religious life of the Jewish nation. At the beginning of this period, some eighty years after the return of Judah from captivity

Copper Coin of Herod the Great. Obverse: a tripod with tray; on either side a palm branch. Reverse: lettering surrounding a wreath, in which is an X. *The Jewish Encyclopedia.*



in Babylon, Ezra and Nehemiah (458–445 B.C.) found that, although sacrificial temple worship had been re-established by the zealots and puritans who had returned with Zerubbabel, the people had grown lax in their adherence to monotheism and had failed to preserve their separateness from their polytheistic neighbors. These two great patriots determined to maintain for Judah its Jewish nationality and individuality. This could best be done only by a rigid observance of the distinctive Mosaic social and religious practices by which the Jews had been governed for centuries. As a result of their efforts the Priestly Code, embodied in the Pentateuch, was adopted by the nation and the ritualistic system of Judaism with its strict observance of Mosaic Law came into being. A dedicated priestly control dominated every aspect of national life; monotheism stood pre-eminent and became a national instinct in the church-state.

Side by side with this ritualistic system of worship existed a synagogue worship consisting of prayer, meditation, and Scriptural study. The synagogue was an institution that probably originated among the Jews during the Exile. Transplanted to Judaea upon the captives' return, it flourished in every city and village. The Jews of the Diaspora (Dispersion)—those who through the vicissitudes of poverty, war, slavery, or political adversity had settled throughout the pre-Roman world—continued synagogue worship in the lands of their adoption and ardently adhered to and disseminated the Judaism of their fathers.

It [the synagogue system] was essentially decentralized, since synagogues were encouraged everywhere. It was intensely democratic, instead of autocratic. Its main purpose was ethical and practical—intended to dominate all common life. It exalted the function of the prophet rather than that of the priest; and so it magnified the idea of Scriptures, which were the records of prophetic teaching and interpretation, as well as the action of preachers and interpreters of its own day. It became the home of what there was of popular education. . . . Its accent fell upon instruction rather than upon worship, tho the latter was not neglected in the rather elaborate scheme of prayers.¹

Another important contribution to the religious life of the nation during the intertestamental period was the gradual compilation and completion of Hebrew Scripture: the addition to the Pentateuch of two other major groups of sacred literature—the Prophets and the Writings (see p. 4)—although this literature was not formally accepted as canonical until the first century A.D. The Prophets and the Writings, as well as the Law, became the textbooks of the synagogues and strengthened the faith of the pious under foreign domination and during bitter internal dissension. With the widening use of Greek it was inevitable that the Scriptures should be translated into that language for the use of the Jews of the Dispersion. About 250 B.C.

a Greek version, the Septuagint or LXX (traditionally believed to have been prepared by seventy scholars), was begun by the Jews of Alexandria, Egypt, under the patronage of Ptolemy Philadelphus and was finished around 50 B.C. It included the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, as well as fourteen books which are today termed the *Apocrypha* (see p. 5). This important version, used by all Greek-speaking Jews, spread the truths and Messianic hopes of the Old Testament throughout the Greek-speaking world. All this helped prepare for the coming of Christ.

In the Maccabean period, as the priesthood became political and aristocratic, it lost touch with the aspirations of the Jew, its influence waned, and the religious education of the people passed into the hands of the scribes and Pharisees, zealous guardians of Judaism. With the rise of the Pharisaic party, which fought vigorously against the Hellenism introduced into Palestine, an intense devotion to legalistic Judaism developed; a minutely detailed oral law emerged and piety became the chief concern of the individual. In time the casuistry of the scribes and Pharisees hedged the Jew about with a multitude of restrictive regulations regarding his every action—night and day—from which his conscience was never free (see p. 268). Worship ceased to be a communion with God. It had been replaced by a supersensitive obedience to the letter of the Law.

Scribes

The group of men known as the scribes played a large part in intertestamental religious history. The early scribes of the Old Testament were kings' secretaries and clerks, but the priestly scribes (called *sopherim*) who rose to prominence toward the close of the Exile, among them Ezra (see p. 136), were a class of pious, learned Jews dedicated to the study, exposition, and preservation of Mosaic Law. Because of their efforts the sacred writings of the nation were collated and edited, and through the centuries thereafter scribes painstakingly transcribed all copies of the Scriptures and explained their meaning.

During the rule of the Maccabees lay scribes or scholars, in close sympathy with the Pharisees, appeared side by side with the priestly *sopherim*. They began to assume undue authority for the interpretation of the Law, adding many regulations to cover minor details of daily life. Their chief concern was with the Law's minute exposition down to every word and letter; so great was their emphasis on the letter that the moral law tended to be obscured and almost buried under their sophistry. In time they created a whole new collection of traditional oral law and their opinions were handed down as law itself.

Eventually in the second century of our era this tradition came to be reduced to written form. We call the

results the rabbinical literature. This huge mass of interpretation of the Scripture, the fruit of the devoted efforts of hundreds of different scholars, was gradually ordered and codified in two forms: (a) Cast in the form of running commentaries on the written law, called *Midrashim* or *Midrashes*; (b) systematically classified on the basis of a list of subjects, called "orders"—this came to be known as *Mishnah*. As the years went by, several *Mishnahs*—all containing the same six orders of material—arose. Gradually one of them, popularly ascribed to Judah the Patriarch, gained pre-eminent, almost canonical, rank. It then came to be the basis for further study and interpretation. The results of this process were the *Talmuds*, which sought to interpret and explain the *Mishnah*. Of the two *Talmuds*, the one called the *Babylonian* and completed in the sixth century eventually gained priority. It consists of the whole of the *Mishnah*, quoted literally section by section in the original Hebrew, each section being followed by the new interpretative material. This material, written in Aramaic after the editing of the *Mishnah*, is known as the "*Gemara*."²

In New Testament times the scribes' influence as lawyers and magistrates was great, and many of these "doctors of the law" sat in the Sanhedrin, the governing body of the Jews. "The scribes built up a great edifice of regulations based on the Law until these became an intolerable burden. And it was this edifice Jesus swept away, when he came with a religion of the spirit and of liberty."³

Pharisees

By Jesus' day there were four principal philosophical parties in Palestine (*Pharisees*, *Sadducees*, *Essenes*, *Zealots*) that influenced the religious life of the Jews. Of these four the *Pharisees* were dominant. Numbering between 6000 and 7000, they were a religious sect who in the second century B.C. (during the Maccabean period) separated themselves from the encroaching Hellenistic influences imposed by the Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes and rallied to the defense of Judaism in order to preserve the monotheism of the nation and the purity of the Mosaic Law. The name *Pharisees* derives from a Hebrew word meaning "the separated ones." As patriotic and pious churchmen, devoted teachers and preachers of the Law, themselves strict observers of the principles of Judaism, they strove to set an example of virtue, concord, and public-spiritedness and to keep alive the religious spirit of the chosen nation. Their interests centered in the synagogue, and by their efforts every child and adult was taught the Law (first five books of Moses, *Torah*, *Pentateuch*). In addition to the written Law these religious leaders taught the scribal opinions and interpretations of the Law—an "oral law" that finally came to control every phase of daily life. They also recognized the books of the Prophets and the Writings (*Hagiographa*) as sacred literature and taught them in the synagogues.

They adhered to a belief in angels and to the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead (Acts 23:8). The Jewish historian Josephus (37–?100 A.D.) wrote:

They also believe that souls have an immortal vigor in them, and that under the earth there will be rewards or punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life; and the latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison, but that the former shall have power to revive and live again; on account of which doctrines they are able greatly to persuade the body of the people. . . .⁴

During the decadence of the period of the later Maccabean kings and the oppressive rule of the Romans the *Pharisees* revived the prophetic hope for a Messianic king and kingdom. "It was they who, for the most part, prepared the ground for Christianity by taking the Messianic idea and working it into the very texture of common consciousness."⁵

When the New Testament record opens the *Pharisees* were numerous in Palestine and their prestige and influence were supreme among the people. Their earlier purpose had become obscured and they had grown arrogantly exclusive, proud of their piety and given to overemphasis on the externals of the Law and "the tradition of the elders." All of this led to hypocrisy, corruption, and spiritual dullness. The *Pharisees* and scribes were in continual conflict with Jesus' teachings and with his healing works on the Sabbath. His rebuke of them was severe: "The scribes and the *Pharisees* sit in Moses' seat. . . . Woe unto you, scribes and *Pharisees*, hypocrites!" (Mt. 23:2,14).

Sadducees

The *Sadducees* were a Jewish party that also originated in the second century B.C. during the Maccabean period. Their few members were drawn from the priestly families of Jerusalem and the aristocratic lay families of Judaea. Unlike the *Pharisees*, they did not separate themselves from the Hellenistic influences pervading Palestine, and their interests became more political than religious. In favor with the Maccabean house, they gained the high priesthood and controlled the Temple and its worship. In Jesus' day they held the balance of power in the Sanhedrin (see p. 219).

Their conservative acceptance of the written law (*Pentateuch*) only and their rejection of the oral law and traditions so carefully fostered by the *Pharisees* kept the two parties constantly at variance, but at times the *Sadducees* found it expedient to accede to *Pharisaic* practices to curry favor with the people. Some of their views were diametrically opposed to those of the *Pharisees*; they denied the resurrection of the dead with its rewards and punishments and the existence of angels (Mt. 22:23; Acts 23:8). Their opposition to Jesus was aroused toward the close of his public ministry when the momentum of his work

endangered their ecclesiastical and political status in Jerusalem; this hostility, a factor contributing to his crucifixion, continued as sporadic persecution of the early Apostolic Church. Jesus warned his disciples: "Beware of the leaven [doctrine] of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (Mt. 16:6).

Essenes

In the Maccabean period certain Jews—the Essenes—felt impelled to a devoutness even greater than the piety practiced by the Pharisees. These men formed themselves into a monastic brotherhood and withdrew from the pleasures and evils of the outside world to practice a rigid asceticism. Many of them lived as celibates in isolated communal colonies in the Dead Sea region, although many were said to reside in small communities in the cities and villages of Palestine. They numbered about four thousand, according to Philo and Josephus. New members were added by proselyting and by the adoption of children. They supported themselves by the simplest manual labor, principally agriculture, and shared all things. This sect revered Moses and was devoted to the study of the Law, but, eschewing animal sacrifices, was barred from Temple worship. Adhering to the highest ethical ideals, they were strongly opposed to slavery and war. Avoiding all sensual defilement, they sought the highest possible purity. They believed in the soul's immortality; their chief concern was life after death.

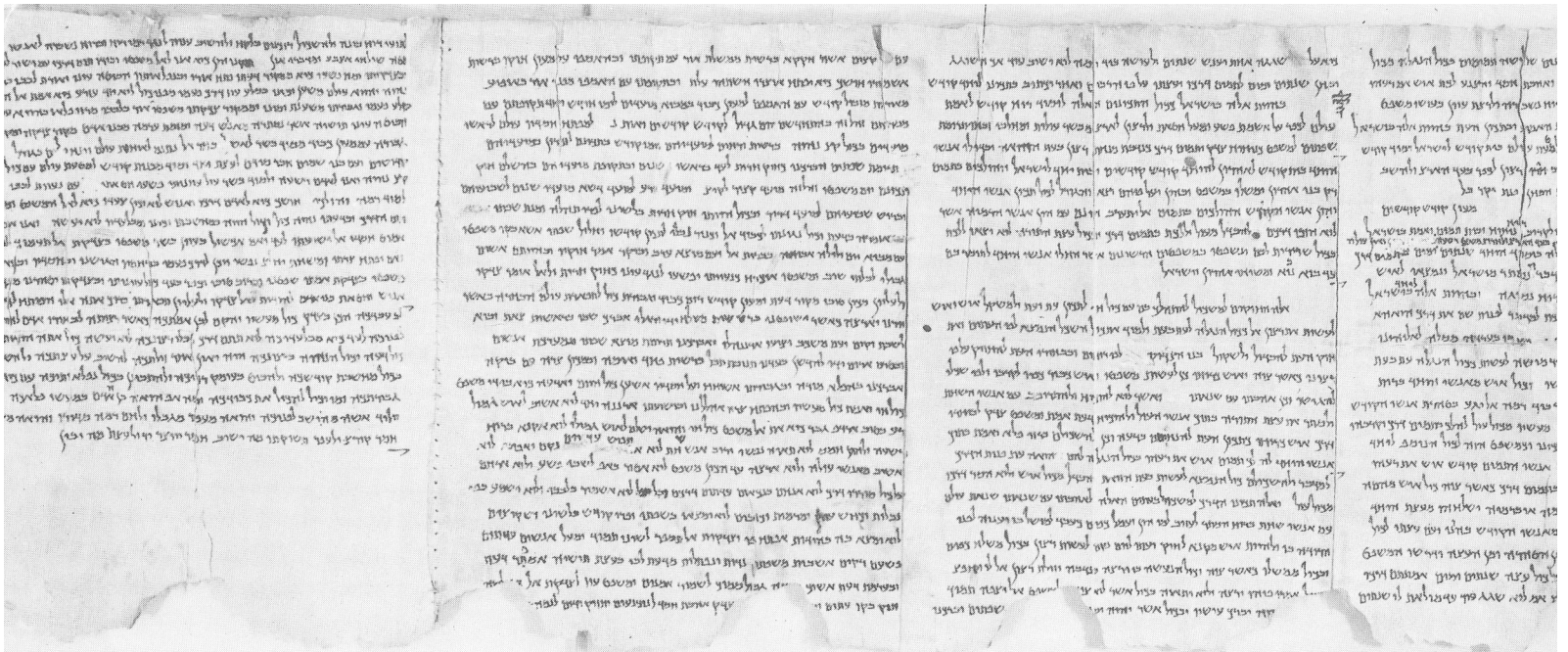
No New Testament reference is made to the Essenes, but the historians Pliny, Philo, Josephus, and Eusebius mention them. They disappeared as a sect early in the second century A.D. The discovery in 1947 of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the arid limestone

caves of the Qumran Wady in the Wilderness of Judaea, a little more than a mile from the northwest shore of the Dead Sea, focused attention of Biblical scholars on this little-known religious sect, for one of the scrolls was a code which appears to have governed these ascetics. (Its rules and principles are called The Manual of Discipline by Millar Burrows in *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, pp. 371-389.) Awakened interest led archeologists to the examination of a long-standing nearby ruin called Khirbet Qumran. In 1951, after careful excavation, the ruin proved to be part of the main Essene community.

Zealots

This party, an offshoot of the Pharisees, was composed of patriotic and fanatical Jewish resisters to Roman domination of Palestine. There had long been dissatisfied agitators in the land, restless under cruel and corrupt Roman governors, but at the time of the Roman census of Quirinius (ca. 6 A.D.) they became a loosely formed sect under the leadership of Judas of Galilee (Acts 5:37). Acknowledging God as their only Ruler and Lord, the Zealots considered subservience to Rome and the payment of tribute a betrayal of Israel's theocratic constitution, and for this principle they were willing to fight to the death. In time this party deteriorated into bands of lawless guerrillas and seditionists, terrorizing the people of their own country. Zealots played a memorable part in the Jewish rebellion of 66 and in the fanatical defense of Jerusalem before its fall in 70 A.D. In 72 in a last stand against the Romans 960 Zealots all died in the mountain fortress of Masada, killing one another rather than submit to the might of Rome.

The Sectarian Manual of Discipline, one of the Dead Sea Scrolls of Qumran. The Shrine of the Book. The Israel Museum, Jerusalem.





Excavation of Khirbet Qumran, an Essene community, as seen from the hills, with the Dead Sea in the background. By courtesy of the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums.

Sanhedrin

The Sanhedrin was the supreme ecclesiastical court of the Jews, a judicial council composed of seventy members in addition to the high priest. The time of its origin is uncertain. Its seeds are seen in the appointment of seventy elders by Moses (Num. 11:16,17), also in the group of judges set up by King Jehoshaphat (II Chron. 19:5–11). It is probable that this particular tribunal began its existence as a senate in Jerusalem in the third century B.C., during the period of Greek supremacy (II Macc. 1:10; Josephus, *Antiq.* xii 3.3; Acts 5:21). It was called *Sanhedrin* for the first time under the Maccabean Hyrcanus II by Josephus (*Antiq.* xiv 9.3).

At first composed of eminent priests, Levites, and Jewish aristocracy (later known as Sadducees), by Jesus' day its members, appointed for life, were drawn from the scribes and elders of the Pharisaic party as well. "Chief priests, scribes, and elders" is the New Testament designation for this council. Though its functions had been religious, political, and civil in the time of the Maccabees and Herod the

Great, under the Roman procurators its authority as a court of justice was limited to religious matters and confined to Judaea. In effect its pronouncements nevertheless influenced all Jewry.

Its council chamber was the Hall of Hewn Stones bordering on the Temple area. The members sat in a semicircle and were presided over by the high priest. Attended by two court scribes and faced by three rows of scholars, they debated and passed judgment on all questions of Jewish law and considered cases sometimes submitted by local councils of outlying towns.

When a man was on trial for his life, the Sanhedrin's high duty was to act in his defense, to judge him innocent until proved guilty, and to expend every effort to save him. Many times it fell short of this high ideal. This council could pronounce sentence of death on any Jew guilty of the crimes of blasphemy, Sabbath-breaking, or heresy, but the execution of such sentence was subject to the approval of the Roman procurator. It was a corrupt and politically minded Sanhedrin that bent Pilate to its will and

brought about the crucifixion of Jesus and which so intolerantly persecuted the early Christian Church.

The Messianic Hope

A scholar has said "Take Christ out of the Old Testament and the whole structure falls apart." The word *Messiah* originates in the Hebrew *Messias* "anointed one" (Greek, *Christos*, Christ), and designated to the Hebrew mind a God-appointed deliverer and ideal king who would free Israel from the oppression of heathen enemies, exalt it to a position of honor and glory, and usher in an unending reign of righteousness and peace. The hope of such a deliverer sprang from the Israelites' knowledge of themselves as the chosen people of Jehovah and from their trust in the ultimate triumph of the One God.

The name *Messiah* does not appear before the book of Daniel, but the idea of a personal Messiah runs throughout the Old Testament. The early Messianic prophecies in their orderly development are clearer to us in the light of Israel's history than they were to the early Hebrews, for the original Messianic expectation was at first nebulous, proceeding no further than the hope for political power and supremacy. The promise of a deliverer is implicit in Genesis 3:15 in the seed of the woman who is to bruise the serpent's head. Universal in scope, it points to the salvation of all mankind from evil and its concomitants. This redeemer was destined to spring from the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10). Just prior to Israel's entrance into Canaan Balam prophesied of Israel: "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel" (Num. 24:17). Moses, Israel's first great leader, foretold the coming of a prophet greater than himself: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deut. 18:15). God's covenant with the house of David marked the expectation that deliverance would come through the seed of David, Israel's first righteous king (II Sam. 7:12-16).

Not until the period of Israel's prophets (800-400 B.C.), however, did the Messianic hope begin to take definite shape. Failure of the Davidic dynasty to maintain its greatness, and the subsequent oppressions, wars, sorrows, and suffering of the people attendant upon the division of the kingdom turned the pious to God. Israel's great prophet Isaiah began to teach a higher conception of the popular hope and to stress the moral and spiritual character of the Messiah God would send, whose sole concern would be to establish righteousness and justice among his people: "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the

spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord . . . with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth . . . and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked" (Is. 11:1,2,4).

The same prophet held forth to Israel the promise of Immanuel (Is. 7:14), portrayed with inspiration the divine majesty of his nature, and foretold a glorious new age of peace: "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this" (Is. 9:6,7). Jeremiah and Ezekiel encouraged the nation in this same high concept, prophesying of "a righteous Branch, and a King," "one shepherd" (Jer. 23:5, 6; Ezek. 34:23). The passages relating to the suffering servant (Is. 53), so familiar today, were not regarded as Messianic until so seen by New Testament writers. The prophecy of Micah (5:2), designating Bethlehem as the locale of the Messiah's birthplace, was later fulfilled to the letter.

The Messianic expectation of the Anointed One is also to be seen in the Psalms. His sufferings, resurrection, ascension, priesthood, kingship and pre-eminence are foretold (see Messianic Prophecies, p. 337). The hope of redemption as set forth in the prophetic and poetic writings was not always connected with the figure of a Messiah, God Himself being frequently presented as the Deliverer from idolatry, war, sin, and death (Jer. 3:22; Mic. 4:1-4; Is. 25:8; 43:25).

The remnant of Judah returned from exile in Babylon with a hope for the restoration and glory of the nation—albeit a dim and distant hope, since they were still under foreign domination. This hope was almost extinguished three and a half centuries later when the Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes attempted to exterminate the Judaic religion and force Hellenism on the Jews. The short period of Jewish independence under the priest-kings of the Maccabees failed to bring to realization the high political and religious aspirations of the nation. Their reigns were corrupt and were succeeded by the despotism of Herod the Great and the increasing tyranny of Rome. Thus the more puritanical element of the nation sought refuge and comfort in the prophetic Messianic expectation of a Deliverer springing from the house of David, and the idea of a personal Messiah gained in popular appeal.

This concept was encouraged by a whole new type of pseudepigraphal and apocalyptic religious literature that came into being from the beginning of the Maccabean period (mainly from 165 B.C. to 120 A.D.), the work of lay writers among the Pharisees of

Palestine and the Jews of the Dispersion. (Pseudepigrapha ["writings under assumed names"]: III and IV Maccabees, Enoch, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Jubilees, Letter of Aristeas, Sibylline Oracles, Psalms of Solomon, Zadokite Fragments, Assumption of Moses, II Enoch, II and III Baruch, Martyrdom of

Isaiah, and the Books of Adam and Eve. Fourth Ezra is sometimes classed with this group and is the same as II Esdras, chaps. 3-14.) Although none of these books attained canonical status, they contributed much to strengthen the nation's trust in God and to help the individual Jew retain his faith. Drawing on Old

Recent excavation of Masada has uncovered the summer palace of King Herod the Great. This ancient fortress town on the western bank of the Dead Sea was the scene of the Zealots' last stand against the Romans. Israel Government Tourist Office.





Hills around Bethlehem.

Testament prophecy, the authors of these books amplified the teachings of the prophets as to the final destiny of the Jewish nation and of the world in general on the Day of Judgment when God's righteousness and justice would be vindicated; as a result a Jewish eschatology (doctrine relating to the last or final things) gradually took shape to express Jewish hopes and beliefs.

Two threads may be traced through this new body of literature: one nationalistic in tone pertaining to this world, the other transcendental and universal relating to the world to come. The principal theme was the establishment of the ideal kingdom of God. Their authors, despairing over the evil and distress in their times, looked to the future for the consummation of the sublime hope. Writing in apocalyptic language—in vivid symbolic images such as those of various beasts and birds and projecting a belief in angels and demons—they contrasted the kingdoms of the earth in which evil, death, and sin prevailed with the kingdom of God, which was wholly good; and they evolved great world pictures portraying successive stages or epochs involved in the bringing in of the eternal kingdom.

There was a great advance in the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, a subject touched on only briefly in the Old Testament and then chiefly as it related to Israel (Is. 26:19; Ezek. 37; Dan. 12:2; Hos. 6:2; 13:14). The individual responsibility of a man for his own thoughts and acts (which Jeremiah and Ezekiel had preached) was extended to the resurrection of the individual dead. There was to be a resurrection for both the righteous and the wicked, the former to be raised to everlasting life and paradisaic bliss, the latter to awake to everlasting shame and punishment.

As the Messianic hope strengthened, it was natural that the personal Messiah and his work should occupy a permanent and central position in this

developing eschatology. In some of these apocalyptic writings the concept of him is a transcendent one. He is described in the book of Enoch⁶ (I Enoch 37–72) as an angelic being and is alluded to by the title of "the Son of Man" (a term that appears in Dan. 7:13, which Jesus later appropriated to himself) and by the title "Anointed One." He appears as a pre-existent heavenly Messiah and is called "the Righteous One" and "the Elect One." His place is beside the Ancient of Days (compare Dan. 7:13) "under the wings of the Lord of spirits," and he is given power to judge men and to reveal "the treasures of that which is hidden." Before him "unrighteousness shall disappear as a shadow, and have no continuance." In the Psalms of Solomon (Chap. 17)⁷ he is designated "the son of David," "a righteous king, taught of God" who would purge Jerusalem of heathen conquerors and "make it holy as of old." Of his judgment is written: "At his rebuke nations shall flee before him; And he shall reprove sinners for the thoughts of their heart." The advent of this Messiah was to usher in the Messianic Age in which wars and idolatry would cease and all men would turn to God and with a new heart would keep His new covenant.

These writings had a profound influence on national thought, were imbedded in the Jews' educational background, and formed the eschatological beliefs of New Testament times. (See Jesus' discourse on Signs of Christ's Coming and Last Judgment [Mt. 24–25], pp. 306–310.)

Such was the political and religious situation in Palestine at the time of Jesus' birth. The Jewish nation, early instituted under theocratic government and possessed of a proud history, was restless and rebellious under the Roman yoke. Their hopes ran high for a king of their own, a powerful monarch who would deliver them from their oppressors; but when their King came, a suffering Messiah rather than a reigning one, they did not know him.

Jesus' Early Years

From the life and work of Jesus the Christ, known to us in his coincidence as the Son of God and the Son of man, stems the religion of Christianity, whose living principles are today an ever-operative force in the spiritualization of mankind. The great purpose of his mission was to reveal on earth "as it is in heaven" the kingdom of God, the spiritual realm of perfection, and to establish in the hearts and minds of men the reign and sovereignty of God. His whole motivation was love for God and love for man. This Son came out from the Father with an all-inclusive knowledge of the goodness of the Creator. He came into the world with an all-inclusive knowledge of the kingdom that he might awaken men to their rightful knowledge and possession of it, teaching "Behold, the kingdom of God is within you." "As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things."

Every event in Jesus' life was essential to the fulfillment of his mission and to the accomplishment of his proof of resurrection and ascension, pertinent and imperative to the salvation of "every one of us." Starting from this point of view, this study treats the principal events of Jesus' life in their orderly unfoldment, continuity, and mounting significance. The Gospels have been quoted freely and deliberately by the author that the reader may hear for himself the Word that shines through the words.

Erasmus, the great Biblical scholar of Rotterdam, once said that the New Testament pages "will give you Christ Himself . . . in an intimacy so close that He would be less visible to you if He stood before your eyes." No one of the four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, John—gives a full account of Jesus' life, but the interwoven harmony of all four preserves the record of his earthly sojourn and chronicles the fulfillment of his mission. (These Gospels in their relation to each other as literature are charted on p. 21.)

The birth of Jesus marked the beginning of the Christian era, but not until the sixth century A.D. was modern chronological dating introduced. At that time Dionysius Exiguus, a scholar and monk of the Western Church, published his calculation of dates, counting Jesus' birth as the starting point. However, his computations involved an error of several years and the date of Jesus' birth actually falls between 7 and 4 B.C.

In the advent of Jesus, the Messiah of the Old Testament became "the Christ" of the New and the promise of the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15) was at last realized. Paul wrote, "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4,5).

The coming of the Son of God in the flesh has been called the Incarnation, and the divine Word made flesh has been called the incarnate Son. "The Incarnation means the presence of the Divine in the human. . . ."⁸ Isaiah had foretold the divine nature of this Messiah: "The government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Is. 9:6). Yet he had also foretold Christ's earthly sufferings: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Is. 53:3).

John opens his gospel record: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . In him was life; and the life was the light of men. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1:1,4,14). A sublime description of the incarnate Son—**THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH . . . AND WE BEHELD HIS GLORY.**

The Word is God's self-revealing activity within God himself before the world was, distinguished but not separated from God (vv. 1, 2) within the creation of all things (v. 3), and within the animation and illumination of man (v. 4). . . .⁹

The Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke give genealogies of Jesus. Matthew carries Jesus' genealogy forward from Abraham, the father of the Hebrew race, to Joseph, a direct descendant of David and the reputed father of Jesus, showing Jesus as the son of Abraham, the covenant seed in whom all the nations of the world would be blessed, and the son of David, to whose house God had promised an everlasting kingship. Matthew traces Jesus' royal descent from David's son Solomon, thereby showing his right to be called King of the Jews and the promised Messiah of his nation (Ps. 80:3,4; Is. 11:1; Jer. 23:5).

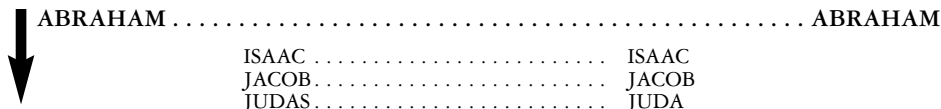
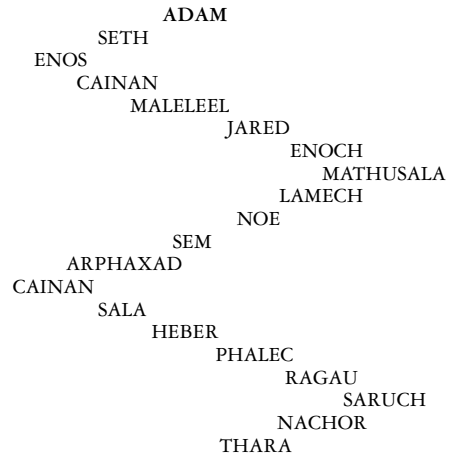
(Scholars agree that Matthew's genealogy is an artificial arrangement with some omissions of links in the line of generation. As an aid to memory, it was grouped into three general divisions—from Abraham to David, David to the Exile, and from the Exile to Jesus. There are fourteen generations listed from Abraham through David, fourteen from David through Josias, and fourteen from Jeconias to Jesus.)

GENEALOGIES OF JESUS CHRIST

According to Matthew 1:1-16 and Luke 3:23-38

Matthew gives the genealogy of Joseph, reputed father of Jesus, carrying the line forward from Abraham, father of the Hebrew race.

Luke gives the genealogy of Mary (although Joseph's name is substituted), carrying the line back to Adam.



- | | |
|----------------|----------|
| ISAAC | ISAAC |
| JACOB | JACOB |
| JUDAS | JUDA |
| PHARES | PHARES |
| ESROM | ESROM |
| ARAM | ARAM |
| AMINADAB | AMINADAB |
| NAASSON | NAASSON |
| SALMON | SALMON |
| BOOZ | BOOZ |
| OBED | OBED |
| JESSE | JESSE |
| DAVID | DAVID |



Luke carries Jesus' genealogy back from Joseph to Seth the founder of the Messianic line and to Adam—from the genesis of mankind—showing him to be not only the son of Abraham, but the Son of Man, and therefore Savior to the whole human race. Although the line of descent is through David, it is not through the kingly line of Solomon, but through David's son Nathan. According to Scripture the Messiah was to be the actual descendant of David according to the flesh (II Sam. 7:12–19; Acts 2:30; Rom. 1:3). This prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus as the son of Mary, daughter of Heli and a descendant of David.

The genealogy given in Matthew is the genealogy of Joseph, the reputed father of Jesus, his father in the eyes of the law. The genealogy given in Luke is the genealogy of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and is the human genealogy of Jesus Christ in actual fact. The Gospel of Matthew was written for Jews. All through it Joseph is prominent, Mary is scarcely mentioned. In Luke, on the other hand, Mary is the chief personage in the whole account of the Saviour's conception and birth. Joseph is brought in only incidentally and because he was Mary's husband. In all of this, of course, there is a deep significance.

In Matthew, Jesus appears as the Messiah. In Luke He appears as "the Son of Man," our Brother and Redeemer, who belongs to the whole race and claims kindred with all kinds and conditions of men. So in Matthew, the genealogy descends from Abraham to Joseph and Jesus, because all the predictions and promises touching the Messiah are fulfilled in Him. But in Luke the genealogy ascends from Jesus to Adam, because the genealogy is being traced back to the head of the whole race and shows the relation of the second Adam to the First. . . .

Mary was a descendant of David through her father, Heli. It is true that Luke 3:23 says that Joseph was the son of Heli. The simple explanation of this is that Mary being a woman her name according to Jewish usage could not come into the genealogy, males alone forming the line, so Joseph's name is introduced in the place of Mary's, he being Mary's husband. Heli was his father-in-law, and so Joseph is called the son of Heli, and the line thus completed. While Joseph was son-in-law of Heli, according to the flesh he was in actual fact the son of Jacob (Matthew 1:16).

Two genealogies are absolutely necessary to trace the lineage of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the one the royal and legal, the other the natural and literal; and these two genealogies we find—the legal and royal in Matthew's Gospel, the Gospel of law and kingship; the natural and literal in Luke's, the Gospel of humanity.

We are told in Jeremiah 22:30 that any descendant of Jeconiah could not come to the throne of David. Joseph was of this line, and while Joseph's genealogy furnishes the royal line for Jesus, his son before the law, nevertheless Jeremiah's prediction is fulfilled to the very letter, for Jesus (strictly speaking) was not Joseph's descendant and therefore was not of the seed of Jeconiah. If Jesus had been the son of Joseph in reality, He could not have come to the throne, but He is Mary's son through Nathan, and can come to the throne

legally by her marrying Joseph and so clearing His way legally to it.

As we study these two genealogies of Jesus carefully and read them in the light of Old Testament prediction, we find that so far from constituting a reason for doubting the accuracy of the Bible they are rather a confirmation of the minutest accuracy of that Book. . . . We need no longer stumble over the fact of two genealogies, but discover and rejoice in the deep meaning in the fact.¹⁰

The term *Son of man* was used by Jesus himself more than eighty times. But while Matthew and Luke trace Jesus' genealogy back as the Son of man and indicate his essential humanity, John, although he quotes Jesus' use of the title, never calls him the Son of man in his Gospel, and he gives no human genealogy. John gives the spiritual genealogy, calling Jesus "the only begotten of the Father" and "the Son of God," denoting his divine nature and origin. (And John declares that those who believe on Christ are likewise "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" [Jn. 1:13].)

Jesus appeared to the world for only a few years, yet his appearing changed the whole course of human history.

In thirty years Jesus completed his individual preparation for his great calling.

In three years he laid the foundation for the kingdom of God on earth and gave the perfect example of sonship for every follower.

In three days he crowned his universal life purpose of redemption by overcoming death and the grave.

In forty days he revealed his complete dominion over matter in preparation for the final victory of ascension above matter.

Birth and Infancy of Jesus

Events of marked significance surrounded the birth and early years of Jesus, from the angel's first announcement to Zacharias to the safe return of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus to Nazareth from Egypt.

Announcement to Zacharias

Lu. 1:5–25

The Gospel narrative opens in the Temple in Jerusalem with an angel's announcement to Zacharias of the coming of a son to his wife Elisabeth. According to Old Testament prophecy, the Messiah was to be preceded by his forerunner: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me:

and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 3:1).

Zacharias was a priest of the order of Abia (Abijah, eighth of the twenty-four courses, see p. 55); Elisabeth was of the ancient priestly line of Aaron, and up to this time she had been barren. This devout couple, well advanced in years, lived in the hill country of Judaea. "They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." In their hearts was a deep reverence, a purity wherein the spirit of God and the presence of angels could abound.

As Zacharias was executing his priestly office within the Holy Place of the Temple—and on this day it had been determined by lot that he should perform the sacred ritual of sprinkling incense on the Golden Altar, a special privilege that fell to a priest only once during his lifetime—an angel appeared at the right side of the altar. Zacharias was troubled at his appearing, but the angel said, "Fear not . . . for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John." (This promised child was later known as John the Baptist.)

The promises continued one by one as Zacharias listened: "Thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost [New Testament term for the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, see p. 375], even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias [AV New Testament form of the name Elijah], to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

"Whereby shall I know this?" asked Zacharias. The angel answered, "I am Gabriel [Dan. 8:15,16; 9:21], that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings." Doubting Gabriel's words, Zacharias asked for a sign. This he was given—he was told that because of his unbelief he would be struck dumb until the day these things should occur; and when he came out of the Temple he was unable to speak, to the astonishment of those in the courtyard.

As soon as his Temple duties had been accomplished, Zacharias returned to his own house in Judaea. "And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men" (see Barrenness, p. 41).

Annunciation to Mary

Lu. 1:26–38

While Zacharias and Elisabeth were anticipating the birth of their son, in the Galilean town of Nazareth to the north a related event was transpiring in the life of Mary, a cousin of Elisabeth. Mary was a virgin, a young daughter of Heli and a lineal descendant of King David through his son Nathan. She was betrothed to an Israelite named Joseph, a carpenter of Nazareth, a righteous and just man probably much her senior. According to Matthew, Joseph was of noble blood and could trace his line of descent from King David through David's royal son Solomon.

It needs not surprise us that the representative of such an illustrious ancestry should be found in a station so obscure. . . . The vicissitudes of the Jewish nation for century after century; its deportation to Babylon, and long suspension of national life; its succession of high-priestly rulers, after the return; its transition to the Asmonean line, and, finally, the reign of the Idumean house of Herod, with all the storm and turmoil which marked so many changes, had left, to use the figure of Isaiah [53:2], only a root in a dry ground, a humble citizen of Nazareth, as the heir of its ancient royalty.¹¹

Six months after the angel Gabriel had spoken to Zacharias he appeared to Mary: "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women." She was troubled at this greeting, but he said, "Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS [Joshua = Savior]. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Isaiah had prophesied "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Is. 7:14; compare Mt. 1:22,23). For centuries every Jewish woman had yearned to mother the Messiah, and now this God-given privilege was bestowed on this young pure-minded maiden who had waited with the same hope as her forebears.

This generation was of God, not of man, for when Mary questioned "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" the angel answered, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." The angel then revealed to her that her kinswoman Elisabeth had also found favor with God and six months earlier had conceived a son whose birth was to be associated with these glad tidings.

Mary's ready response evidenced her worthiness

for so sacred an honor, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."

His [Jesus'] coming into the world is mediated by His mother's faith responsive to, and receptive of, the grace of God (Lu. 1:30–38). If He was Son of God at all, He did not begin to be so at any given age—at twelve (Lu. 2:49), or at the Baptism (Mk. 1:11), or at the Transfiguration (9:7), or at the Resurrection (Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:4). He never was anything else. It is in harmony with that unique relation to God and man which is of the essence of His consciousness, that there should be something unique in the mode of His entrance into the world as well as in that of His leaving it.¹²

At once and in haste, Mary journeyed to Elisabeth's home in Judaea, nearly a hundred miles from Nazareth. As she went she treasured in her heart the angel's message. When Elisabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child within her stirred and she too was filled with the Holy Ghost. Her spiritual insight told her that here was the mother of Israel's Messiah, and with great elation she welcomed Mary: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord."

In answer to Elisabeth, Mary poured forth a song of praise "My soul doth magnify the Lord. . . ." (Lu. 1:46–55). This song—the Magnificat—so like that of Hannah (I Sam. 2:1–10) yet so far surpassing it, expressed the wealth of her deep religious thought and spiritual exaltation and mirrored her joy in having part in the great Messianic purpose of God. "The whole hymn is a mosaic of Old Testament imagery and language, and shows a mind so coloured by the sacred writings of her people that her whole utterance becomes, spontaneously, as by a second nature, an echo of that of prophets and saints."¹³

To protect the sacred secret of her child's conception Mary lingered with Elisabeth, but at the end of three months she returned to her own house, for during the period of betrothal, which might last as long as a year, the bride-to-be continued to live in the home of her parents.

Birth of John the Baptist

Lu. 1:57–80

Meanwhile Elisabeth gave birth to her son, and in accordance with Mosaic Law on the eighth day after his birth the child was circumcised, the rite admitting him into the privileges and duties of the covenant of Abraham. On this day, so important to every Jewish household, Elisabeth's cousins and neighbors came to

rejoice with her and to celebrate the naming of the child. When they would have given the boy his father's name Elisabeth objected, "Not so; but he shall be called John." Zacharias, deprived of the power of speech for many months, asked for a waxed tablet and wrote, in accord with the angel's word, "His name is John." His tongue was immediately freed. No longer in doubt, he praised God and prophesied the future dignity and mission of the child as the forerunner of Israel's Messiah.

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David. . . .

"And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;

"To give knowledge of salvation. . . . To give light to them that sit in darkness . . . to guide our feet into the way of peace."

In consonance with the angel's prophecy the child was brought up by his parents as a Nazarite. *Nazarite* means "separated" and refers to one who consecrated himself to the service of God by abstinence from the wine of the grape and every other kind of intoxicating drink, by permitting no razor to touch the hair of his head, and by avoiding ceremonial defilement with relation to food and to the dead (Num. 6:1–21). A man (or a woman) might take the Nazarite vow voluntarily as often as he wished, being free to set its length of observance. But John, like Samson and Samuel, was consecrated by his parents before birth, and so remained a Nazarite all his life. These words from Luke are all that are recorded of John's early years: "the hand of the Lord was with him," and "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel."

Announcement to Joseph

Mt. 1:18–25

When Joseph found that Mary was to bear a child, he decided to divorce her. A Jewish betrothal was virtually as binding as marriage and could be annulled only by a legal bill of divorcement. Joseph's kindness prompted him to plan to do this quietly to save her disgrace. Had he done so publicly it might have subjected her to the Mosaic penalty of stoning (Jn. 8:5). As Joseph deliberated, an angel came to him in a dream, saying, "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." When Joseph awoke, he put aside his misgivings and took Mary as his wife.

Advent of Jesus

Lu. 2:1–20

As Mary awaited in Nazareth the birth of her child, a proclamation issued from distant Rome touched her life and that of Joseph in a strange way. Augustus ordered a census that he might methodically levy taxes on all the peoples of his Empire. Roman subjects registered in the places of their residence, but Jews were enrolled in the cities of their birth according to families and tribes. This circumstance required Joseph to report to Bethlehem, since he belonged to the house of David of the tribe of Judah. Joseph took Mary with him on the sixty-nine-mile journey to Bethlehem in Judaea. Thus were they brought to the prophetically appointed place for the birth of Israel's Messiah.

Having traveled slowly, no doubt chiefly on foot, they found the town crowded; there was no room in the inn or khan, the lodging place provided for strangers. A place was made for them where the household animals were tethered, and in this humblest of surroundings Mary was delivered of her first-born son. Seven hundred years earlier Isaiah had prophesied "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given" (Is. 9:6). He for whom Israel had patiently watched and waited had now appeared.

Again there came an announcement by an angel, this time to shepherds watching over their flock by night in the fields of Bethlehem. Note in the very language of the announcement this touching of heaven and earth as the Word was made manifest to a waiting world: "Lo, *the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said . . . Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For UNTO YOU IS BORN THIS DAY in the city of David A SAVIOUR, WHICH IS CHRIST THE LORD. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*"

The shepherds hastened to the manger and saw the babe, as the angel had said, and they spread word of the Savior's birth. The shepherds' story was greeted with astonishment "but Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart."

Presentation in the Temple

Lu. 2:21–39

On the eighth day the infant was circumcised and called Jesus, the name divinely communicated to both Mary and Joseph. After forty days Mary traveled with Joseph the six miles from Bethlehem to Jerusalem to make her purification offerings in the Temple. Mosaic

Law regarded a woman as unclean after childbirth—forty days for a son, eighty days for a daughter—and required the sacrifice of a lamb for a burnt offering and a pigeon for a sin offering at the end of that time to effect a cleansing. The humble circumstances of Jesus' parents are indicated in Mary's offering of two turtledoves, as a woman of little means could substitute a pigeon or turtledove for the burnt offering (Lev. 12).

Then the child was "presented" to the Lord and the five-shekel redemption price for the first-born son was paid to the priests of the sanctuary (see p. 41). In Jerusalem was a just and devout Jew named Simeon who was expectantly awaiting the Messiah, because to him had come the promise of the Holy Ghost "that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ." Guided by the Spirit he came to the Temple and looked with clear vision on the child. Taking him in his arms, he blessed God and gave witness to the Christ and his mission: "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles [Is. 42:6; 60:1–3], and the glory of thy people Israel." Simeon's prophecy defined the blessing—a light to all men, and a glory to those transformed by his truth (see Jn. 8:12; II Cor. 4:4).

Simeon's added words foretold strong resistance to this light, for this pure Messianic standard, a measuring rod for the quality of men's thoughts, would cause great overturning in the world: "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against . . . that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed [Moffatt, destined to be a Sign for man's attack—to bring out the secret aims of many a heart]."

While Simeon was still speaking, an aged prophetess named Anna, who had faithfully served God night and day in the Temple, "gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." Thus these two representatives of the true Israel gave prophetic witness to the nation of the newborn Messiah.

Visit of the Magi

Mt. 2:1–12

Shortly after Jesus' presentation in the Temple, certain Magians or wise men of the Orient reached Jerusalem after a long journey from Persia (according to legend, three kings known as Melchior, Gaspar, and Balthasar). They were of a learned and priestly caste whose religion, similar to Zoroastrianism, included the expectation of a savior. They asked, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

When King Herod heard of their question, he was instantly apprehensive for the security of his throne and demanded of the scribes and priesthood where

Christ should be born. They cited the prophecy of Micah made some seven hundred years earlier: "In Bethlehem of Judaea." Herod directed the Magi to Bethlehem, cunningly asking that they bring him word when they had found the child so he too might worship him, though he was really planning the child's destruction.

"And, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was." Thus led, they found him; they "fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh." As the Christ child had received the homage of Israel in the adoration of the shepherds, now he received at the hands of these priestly pilgrims the first homage of the Gentile world. Warned in a dream not to return to Herod, the Magi then returned to their own country by another route. Their obedience proved a protection to the child and their gifts a provision for his imminent flight into Egypt.

Strangely—or was it strange?—the religious leaders of the Jewish nation, well versed in Old Testament prophecy, made no move to seek out the Christ child although the shepherds had reported what they had heard and seen, Simeon and Anna had spoken plainly in the Temple, Micah's prophecy had been brought to mind, and the Magi's visit indicated that the Messiah's time was at hand.

Flight into Egypt and Return

Mt. 2:13–23

As the Magi departed, an angel also warned Joseph in a dream: "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him." Obediently, by night—perhaps the same night—Joseph took his little family into Egypt (according to tradition, the city of On [Heliopolis]), there to remain for many months. Egypt was a Roman province outside Herod's jurisdiction; many Jews of the Dispersion resided there.

Herod did not treat the Magi's words lightly. When he found that they had thwarted him in his attempt to find the child, he was enraged; he ordered the slaying of all male children under two years of age at Bethlehem and the places nearby. This act was in character; Herod already had killed a number of his own household to retain his grip on the throne.

Old Testament history records a similar account of the tyranny of a ruler against the Messianic people. In the days just prior to the birth of Moses, the Pharaoh of Egypt, fearing the increase and growing strength of the Children of Israel, had commanded his Hebrew subjects, "Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river" (Ex. 1:22). Moses had been rescued

from this decree by Pharaoh's own daughter and reared as her son. As Moses was spared for the deliverance and guidance of the generations of Israel, so Jesus was placed beyond the reach of the destroyer and protected that he might carry out his Messianic mission for the world.

Egypt proved a haven to Joseph and his family until after the death of Herod. Joseph was then divinely commanded, "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life." Archelaus, cruel as his father Herod, was ruling as ethnarch in Judaea; but Joseph—journeying in quiet bypaths far from Jerusalem—brought Mary and Jesus safely to Nazareth in Galilee. In this manner was fulfilled the deeper meaning of Hosea's prophecy "Out of Egypt have I called my son" (compare Hos. 11:1; see also p. 540).

Childhood to Manhood

Lu. 2:40–52

Jesus' childhood and youth were spent in the small secluded city of Nazareth nestled in the hollow of a mountain ridge bordering on the northern side of the Plain of Esdraelon. The nearby slopes were covered with terraced gardens and the chief occupation of its inhabitants was agriculture. From the brow of the hill where the city was built there was a magnificent view of Palestine. From this vantage point Jesus as a child could have seen stretching to the south and west the fertile Esdraelon, the great granary of Palestine, the terrible scene in the past of many of Israel's wars and the battlefield of her conquerors, Egyptian, Assyrian, Chaldean, Greek, and Roman; to the west the Carmel range and the azure waters of the Mediterranean; and to the east beyond Jordan the rocky highland region of Gilead. From this hilltop he could also have traced the Via Maris, the Way of the Sea (Mt. 4:15), the great caravan route running north and south from Damascus to Egypt, and another extending west to east from the seacoast town of Ptolemais (Accho) to the Decapolis region beyond Jordan. Sheltered Nazareth was nevertheless part of the busy life of Galilee, tolerantly cosmopolitan as the result of its broad interests and contact with Greek and Roman influences.

Jesus was not the only child in the household; there were four brothers and several sisters in the family group (Mk. 6:3). (Three viewpoints regarding the "brethren" of Jesus have been held through the centuries: that Joseph had children by a former wife; that Mary bore other children after the birth of Jesus; that these were his kinsmen.) Luke describes the entire span of Jesus' childhood in one brief verse, embracing his physical growth and budding spiritual development in a few words: "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was

upon him." In Joseph's home was a deep love for God and a strict observance of all the Mosaic ordinances. Joseph proved a faithful guardian of the child he was privileged to foster; under his careful guidance Jesus was nurtured, cherished, educated, and trained in a knowledge of the Scriptures.

The Jewish Law earnestly impressed upon parents, especially upon fathers, the duty of instructing their children in the knowledge of God, His mighty acts and His laws, and also of disciplining them in religion and morality. . . . It was the home in Nazareth that opened to Jesus the avenues of knowledge, and first put Him in possession of the treasures of the OT. It also seems certain that in His home there was a type of family life which made fatherhood stand to Him henceforward as the highest manifestation of a love beneficent . . . and all-forgiving.¹⁴

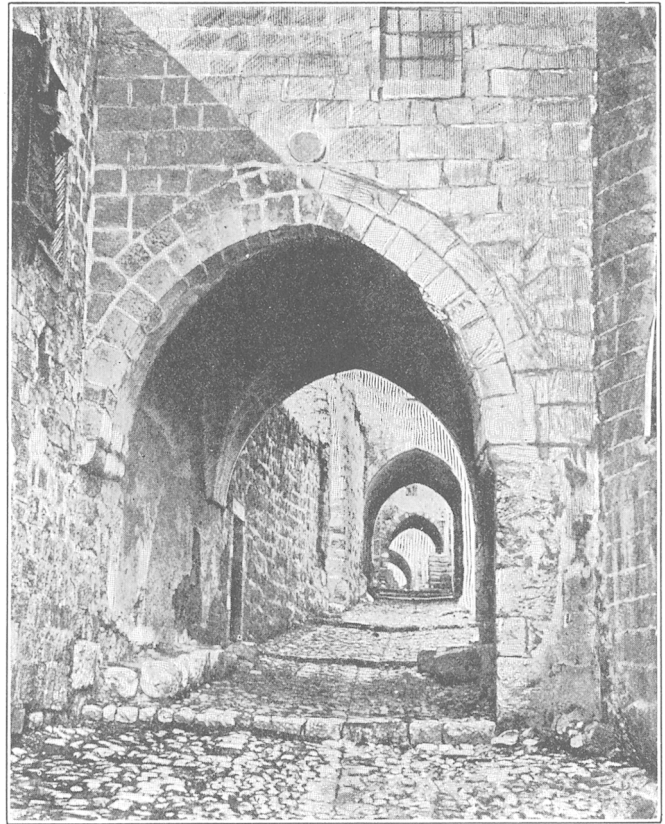
Jesus was undoubtedly educated in the manner of all Jewish boys. From infancy a Hebrew boy learned simple prayers from his mother; at the age of five he began to commit to memory the commandments and statutes of Mosaic Law, at six he attended the synagogue school for Scriptural instruction by the rabbis. Sabbath and weekday services thoroughly familiarized him with the Law and the Prophets and impressed on him the duties, privileges, and glory of being an Israelite. At the age of thirteen he became a "son of the Law" or "servant of the Law," bound to observe the Jewish fasts and religious feasts, to attend public worship, and to learn a trade.

But whatever the Boy Jesus may have learned as a child or boy in the house of His mother, or in the school of the synagogue, we know that His best teaching was derived from immediate insight into His Father's will. . . . The calm, untroubled seclusion of the happy valley, with its green fields and glorious scenery, was eminently conducive to a life of spiritual communion; and we know how from its every incident—the games of its innocent children, the buying and selling in its little market-place, the springing of its perennial fountain, the glory of its mountain lilies in their transitory loveliness, the hoarse cry in their wind-rocked nest of the raven's callow brood—He drew food for moral illustration and spiritual thought.¹⁵

Aramaic was the native tongue of Galilee, the language Jesus spoke; he also knew the classical Hebrew of Scripture, as some of his quotations indicate (Mk. 12:29,30; Lu. 22:37; Mt. 27:46). Probably he was familiar with Greek, a language common in Galilee among the foreign population.

In the Temple at Twelve

When Jesus was twelve, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover (see p. 60). As he eagerly joined the thousands of pilgrims who had come to this annual eight-day gathering, his mind must have been filled with all that he had learned, rever-



Street of arches in old Jerusalem leading to Herod's Palace. *The Jewish Encyclopedia.*

ence and dedication stirring within him as he went in the company of his parents to observe its solemn ceremonies.

At the close of the feast Joseph and Mary joined other Galilean villagers, relatives, and friends traveling homeward. After a day's journey they discovered that Jesus was not in the company of his cousins and friends. Hastily the two returned to Jerusalem to search for him, and after three days they found him—not in the market places, in the busy streets, or at the city's gates, but in the Temple—"sitting in the midst of the doctors [of the Law], both hearing them, and asking them questions" (the rabbinical method of teaching was by question and answer). Jesus was engrossed with this opportunity to learn from the leading religionists of his nation, and they in turn were amazed at his intelligence and at the answers he gave.

Approaching Jesus, Mary chided him on the basis of human relationship: "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." But he countered with the question "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Wycliffe translates this "Wist ye not that in those things which be of my Father, it behooveth me to be? [spelling modernized]." The first recorded words of Jesus, even at this early age, declare his true Sonship and relationship to

God. But Joseph and Mary did not understand the deeper meaning of his statement. Although conscious of his higher Sonship, he returned to Nazareth with them and remained subject to their authority until he reached maturity.

There is no further record of Joseph after this journey to Jerusalem, and according to tradition he died during Jesus' early manhood.

Eighteen Years at Nazareth

Eighteen silent years elapsed before Jesus emerged into public life. "In these years He 'began to do' long before He 'began to teach.' They were the years of . . . a sinless youth, a sinless manhood, spent in that humility, toil, obscurity, submission, contentment, prayer, to make them an eternal example to all our race."¹⁶ The Gospels give no details of these years, but in the light of Jesus' awareness of his divine mission they must have been filled with prayer, study of the Scripture, and revelation in preparation for that mission. He gained a profound knowledge of the Old Testament books and later drew on their riches to sustain him in temptation, strife, and suffering. He understood their Messianic prophecies as did no other. During these years his daily occupation, like that of Joseph, was carpentry, a trade that disciplined him in work and service and one he doubtless practiced until his departure from Nazareth. One brief verse in Luke bridges the history of this period from childhood to maturity: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

Opening Events of Jesus' Ministry

By 26 A.D. the political scene had changed. Augustus partitioned Palestine after Herod the Great's death in 4 B.C., following the divisions Herod had stipulated in his will. Herod's son Archelaus was made ethnarch of Samaria, Judaea, and northern Idumaea. Herod Antipas, another son, received Galilee and Peraea; a third son, Philip, received the regions of Ituraea, Gaulanitis, Trachonitis, Auranitis, and Batanaea. After ten years of misgovernment Archelaus was supplanted by a Roman procurator. In 26 the procurator was Pontius Pilate; the Roman emperor was Tiberias, Augustus' successor. The high priests of the Jewish hierarchy in Jerusalem at this time were Annas and Caiaphas.

Ministry of John the Baptist

Mt. 3:1-12; Mk. 1:1-8; Lu. 3:1-20

The preaching of John the Baptist prefaced the opening of Jesus' public ministry and stirred afresh the Messianic hope. As the birth of John had preceded

that of Jesus by six months, so his ministry preceded that of Jesus by the same length of time, and he began his labors probably in the summer of 26 A.D. The last of the prophets, he closed the prophetic period; the forerunner of Jesus Christ, he stood at the threshold of a new order, introducing the dispensation of grace and announcing the imminent presence of the promised Messiah.

John was in the barren hills of the wilderness of Judaea when he received his call to preach, a call as compelling as that of Isaiah or of Jeremiah. The Fourth Gospel attests: "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light" (Jn. 1:6-8).

A child of promise and a Nazarite from birth, John was disciplined and sanctified to his office. His clothes were as simple as those of the early prophets, a camel's-hair tunic and wide leather belt, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Sternly calling the nation to repentance, he startled them with the message: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"—words never before proclaimed. (The word *repentance* is a translation of the Greek *metanoyah*, meaning "to think differently," "to have another mind," "to feel contrition and desire to amend.") John's audiences were chiefly circumcised Jews dissatisfied with the ceremonial forms of worship. To them he preached a new kind of purification, "the baptism of repentance for the remission [forgiveness] of sins," administering the rite of baptism or immersion in water. This washing by water was the sign and seal of a moral cleansing in preparation for spiritual regeneration. Baptism had up to this time been employed only for Gentile proselytes; it was a practice foreign to the Jews, who considered that as members of the chosen race they needed no cleansing.

The Jews understood from the writings of the Prophets that an Elijah was to precede the Messianic King (Mal. 4:5). The common people welcomed John, and eager crowds came from Jerusalem and all parts of Judaea to confess their sins and be baptized in the Jordan. When John saw many Pharisees and Sadducees come to the baptism, he read their hearts and warned against unrepentance and a reliance for salvation on their physical descent from Abraham: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance [Weymouth, let your lives prove your change of heart]: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."

Desiring to know how to put their repentance into action, the people asked, "What shall we do then?" John's answer turned their thought to practical acts of brotherhood and to just dealings with their fellow men.

To the people he said: "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise."

To the publicans: "Exact no more than that which is appointed you."

To the soldiers: "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages."

When the people speculated as to whether or not he was the Christ, John laid no claim to the title but proclaimed instead the coming of another prophet superior to himself: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

John's ministry, confined mainly to the region of the Jordan, continued for about fifteen months. The latter portion was contemporary with Jesus' Judaeen ministry, but was abruptly terminated by imprisonment and martyrdom (see pp. 242, 271).

Baptism of Jesus

Mt. 3:13-17; Mk. 1:9-11; Lu. 3:21-23

When Jesus reached the age of thirty, the age at which under Mosaic Law a priest entered upon his office, he came from his home in Nazareth to the Jordan to be baptized by John. In the eighteen years since he had spoken the prescient words "I must be about my Father's business," he had quietly matured. He was now ready to assume his office as Savior of the world.

Jesus was "without sin." John immediately recognized his excellence and protested: "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" Needing no repentance himself but conforming to the new order by which men were seeking to prepare for the kingdom, Jesus humbled himself and placed himself on the side of sinners that he might fulfill the work of righteousness and mediation for which he had been sent. He answered the Baptist: "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." These first recorded words of the man Jesus are indicative of the "wisdom and stature" that were his from the start of his mission.

So John baptized him, and this deliberate act inaugurated Jesus' public ministry, an outward sign of consecration. But to Jesus himself was given the heavenly sign of the Holy Ghost. As he came up out of the water, "lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and

lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This baptism by the Spirit gave testimony to his readiness, and conferred upon him the signet of divine approbation. Jesus was filled anew with the Holy Ghost and equipped for the stupendous work that lay ahead. John too witnessed this divine baptism and later confirmed it (Jn. 1:32-34).

The Temptation

Mt. 4:1-11; Mk. 1:12,13; Lu. 4: 1-13

Jesus' temptation immediately followed his baptism. Returning from the Jordan, he "was led by the Spirit into the wilderness." Impelled by the conviction that his ministry was at hand and with resolution crystallized, here in the lonely mountain wilds of Judaea he fasted and prayed for forty days. The kingdom he was to found on earth, a spiritual kingdom, could only be made visible by its establishment in the hearts of men, and through communion with his Father Jesus sought the means and methods by which this was to be accomplished. So fully endowed was he with the Holy Ghost that he was able to appraise rightly the things of God and the things of the world; and when Satan presented to him three phases of worldly temptation, he withstood and overcame each one.

After forty days Jesus was hungry, and the tempter said, "if thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."

Jesus answered: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (compare Deut. 8:3).

Then the devil took him up and set him on a pinnacle of the Temple and said, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee."

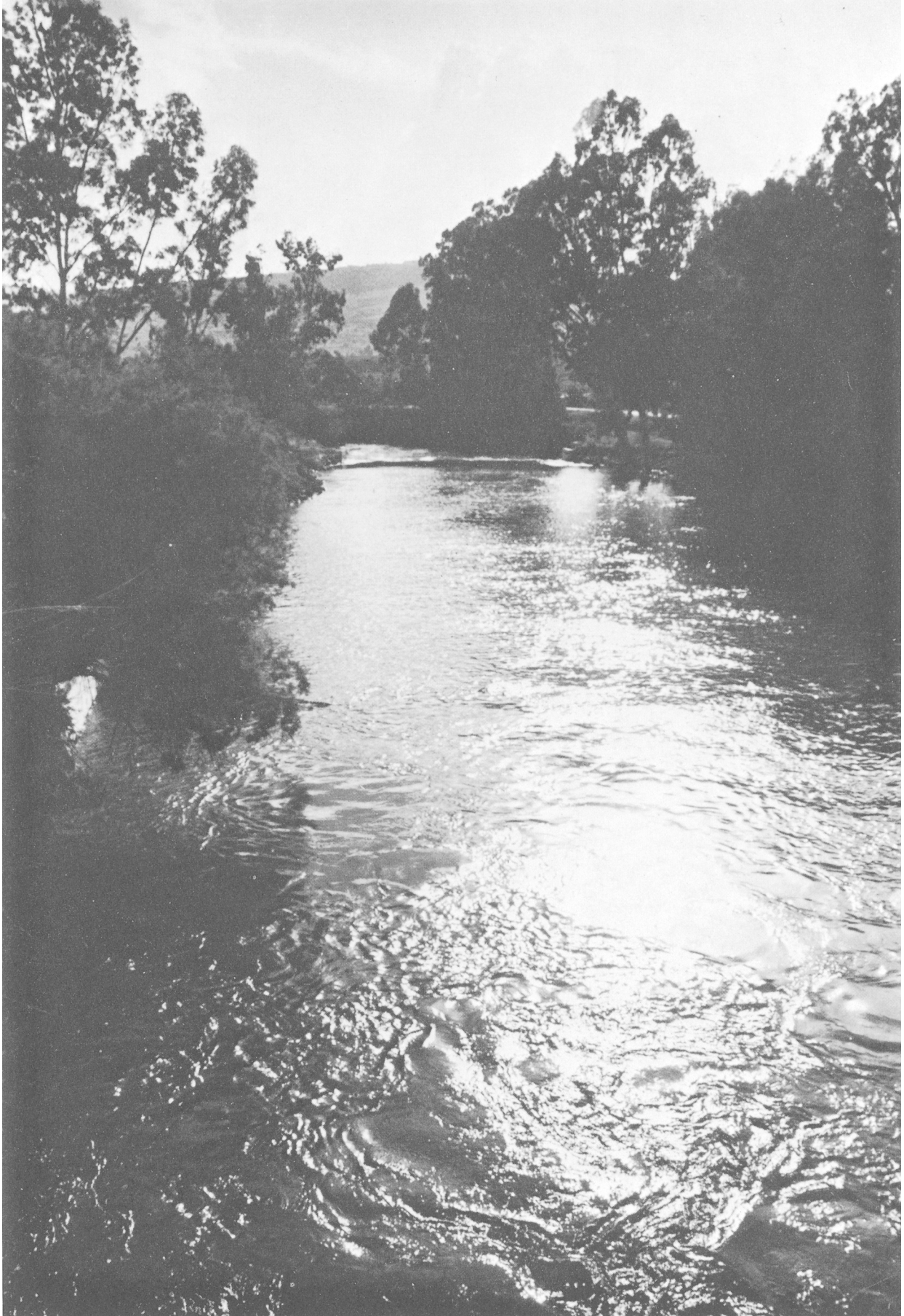
Jesus answered: "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (compare Deut. 6:16).

Again, the devil took him up into a high mountain, and in a moment of time showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and said, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

Jesus answered: "Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (compare Deut. 6:13).

The devil said, "If . . . if . . . if" in the attempt to introduce into his thought a doubt as to his true identity.

The tempter's whole object during the forty days evidently was to get Him to distrust the heavenly testimony



In such a tranquil spot as this on the bank of the Jordan, Jesus was baptized. Israel Government Tourist Office.

borne to Him at His baptism as THE SON OF GOD—to persuade Him to regard it as but a splendid illusion—and, generally, to dislodge from His breast the consciousness of His Sonship.¹⁷

In this struggle the Devil tried to tempt Jesus to debase his spiritual power so that his Messianic mission might fail; but Jesus made no compromise with Satan. He would not misuse that power for personal glorification, nor was he deluded into founding or furthering his kingdom by political power or policy. The Savior put Satan behind him from the outset, and in whatever form evil appeared throughout his ministry, “the prince of this world” could find nothing in him.

The three temptations are addressed to the three forms in which the disease of sin makes its appearance on the soul—to the solace of sense, and the love of praise, and the desire of gain (I John 2:16).¹⁸

Assuming that in the Baptism Jesus accepted the Messianic call, the possibilities of the ensuing ordeal of temptation were three—that He should recoil from the task, that He should misconceive it, or that, rightly apprehending it, He should adopt wrong methods.¹⁹

The first bypath down which he was tempted to turn was the plan of concentrating on the effort to make life smoother and more comfortable for himself and his followers. . . . Again, he was tempted to offer the people a “sign,” such as that of leaping safely from a pinnacle of the Temple: But in his thought every gift with which he was equipped was meant to help men, not to dazzle them. Moreover, almost till the last day of his life Jesus is represented as taking steps to evade any danger that threatened to bring his work to a premature close.

The fact that Jesus was speaking figuratively in describing his temptations is made especially clear in the third narrative, which represents him as being offered, at the price of homage to Satan, the lordship over all earthly kingdoms which he viewed from a high mountain. The peculiar subtlety of this suggestion lay in this: that it might easily be made to appear that a long life of popularity and earthly power would provide far greater opportunity for beneficent work and lofty teaching than a short life largely spent in controversy and ending in a violent death.²⁰

With Jesus’ words “Get thee behind me, Satan,” the Devil left him, and “angels came and ministered unto him.” Satan did not openly renew the attack until Jesus’ first announcement of his coming humiliating death, when Peter protested “Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee” (Mt. 16:21–23). But Satan was finally vanquished in Jesus’ struggles at Gethsemane and at Calvary.

Jesus was the perfect Son in all things. He alone, through his pure love for God and man, maintained a spiritual discipline of thought which refused entry to Satan’s arguments. He proved the kingdom of God

within him to be an impregnable fortress. Even before he began to preach the kingdom, he proved its power and presence in his own experience. According to Edersheim, the three forty-day fasts—of Moses (Ex. 24:18), of Elijah (I Ki. 19:8), and of Jesus—present interesting points of comparison and contrast:

Moses fasted in the middle, Elijah at the end, Jesus at the beginning of His ministry. Moses fasted in the Presence of God; Elijah alone; Jesus assaulted by the Devil. Moses had been called up by God; Elijah had gone forth in the bitterness of his own spirit; Jesus was driven by the Spirit. Moses failed after his forty days’ fast, when in indignation he cast the Tables of the Law from him; Elijah failed before his forty days’ fast; Jesus was assailed for forty days and endured the trial. Moses was angry against Israel; Elijah despaired of Israel; Jesus overcame for Israel.²¹

John the Baptist’s Testimony

Jn. 1:19–34

About this time the Sanhedrin (see p. 219) decided to investigate the Baptist’s new religious movement, which was drawing such great crowds of followers and exciting all Judaea with the hope of a Messiah. They sent priests and Levites to John, who was baptizing at Bethabara (a ford on the east side of the Jordan twelve miles south of the Sea of Galilee), to ask “Who art thou?”

John answered their question explicitly: “I am not the Christ. . . . I am not [Elijah]. . . . I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias [Isaiah].” Literally he was not Elijah (Elias), but in figure he was (Mt. 17:11,12). So they questioned, “Why baptizest thou then?” Again referring to his office as forerunner, John replied, “I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose.”

On the following day as he saw Jesus coming toward him, radiant from his victory over Satan in the wilderness, John declared to his followers: “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.” John did not testify of Christ as a conquering Messiah or as the Lion of the tribe of Judah; he spoke of him as the Lamb of God, a sacrificial offering, whose work would be that of atonement.

To confirm his identification of Jesus as the God-sent Messiah, John revealed that God had told him of the sign by which he would know him: “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it



The Judean Wilderness. This endless sand map of wadi and hillock, dune and escarp, flows down to the Dead Sea, which lies beneath its haze in the distance, with the massif of the Moab mountains rising on its far side. Photograph by Manoug. Jordan Tourism Office—New York.

abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.” Joyously John assured his listeners that he had seen this visible sign, declaring, “I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.”

First Disciples

Jn. 1:35–51

The next day as John the Baptist conversed with two of his disciples, Andrew and John,* he saw Jesus

*Andrew is identified as Simon Peter’s brother, but the second disciple, though unnamed, has been identified by most scholars as John, later one of the twelve apostles. Characteristically, John does not mention his own name in his Gospel (Jn. 1:35, 40).

passing by and, pointing him out to them, said again, “Behold the Lamb of God!” When they heard these words they instantly followed Jesus, and thus began for each of them a life of following. Their first meeting with the Savior was natural and simple. His direct “What seek ye?” went straight to the heart of their motive and to the quality of their desire, requiring them to search within. When the two asked, “Master, where dwellest thou?” Jesus invited, “Come and see.” So “they came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.” What they heard in that *tenth* hour is not known, but as he shared with them the treasures of his consciousness they *saw* where he dwelt—“in the secret place of the most High”—and became convinced that the Messiah Israel had long awaited was before them.

Andrew hastened to tell his brother Simon “We have found the Messiah” and to bring him to Jesus. Sensing at once his potential, Jesus gave Peter a new surname: “Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas.”

Having gathered these three young Galilean disciples, Jesus started for Galilee and on the way found Philip of Bethsaida. “Follow me,” he said. Philip at once sought Nathanael to tell him the joyous news: “We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” Nathanael looked askance at the idea that the Messiah could come from such a locale: “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” His incredulous attitude reflected a current Judaeen concept of the inferiority of Galilee to Judaea because of its mixed population of Jews and strangers. Philip repeated the Master’s invitation, “Come and see.”

As Nathanael approached, Jesus said, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!” (*Strong’s Concordance*, guile: [fig.] *wile*:—craft, deceit, guile, subtilty.) When Nathanael asked “Whence knowest thou me?” Jesus answered, “Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.” In quick faith Nathanael accepted him, “Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.” Jesus asked, “Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.” The heavens had been opened to Jesus at baptism; now he promised this same blessing to his new disciples.

Affirmations such as “we have found the Messiah,” “we have found him, of whom Moses . . . and the prophets, did write,” and “thou art the Son of God . . . the King of Israel” had never before been made. For these humble Galileans there was no doubt concerning this man.

First Miracle Water into Wine

Jn. 2:1–11

After a three-day journey Jesus came with his new disciples to a marriage in Cana of Galilee, one at which his mother was also present. A Jewish marriage was a time of great rejoicing, an event that broke the pattern of everyday life, marked by a marriage feast that

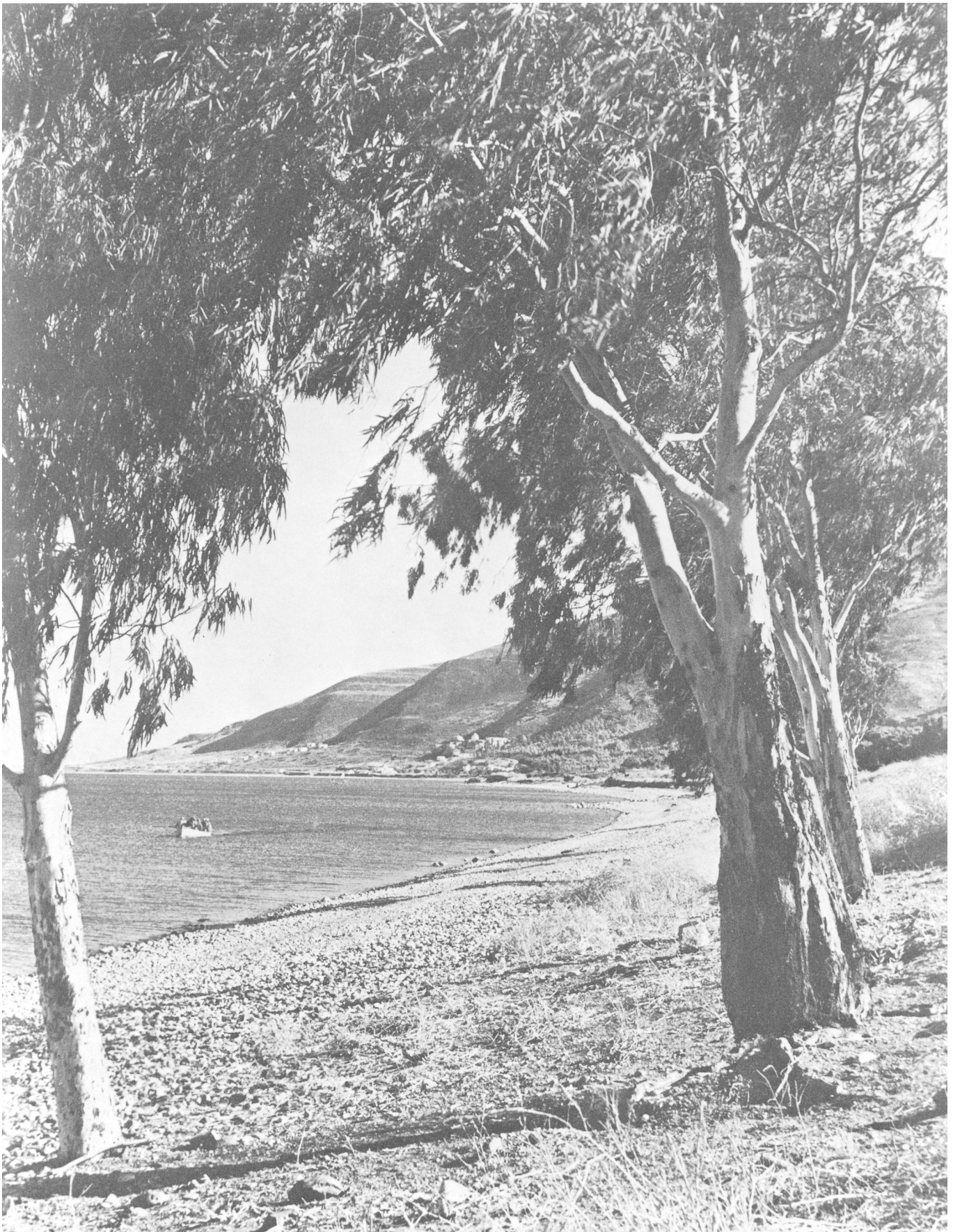
usually lasted seven days. It was customary to serve wine throughout the celebration, but at this particular wedding feast the supply had been exhausted. Mary turned to her son, “They have no wine.” Detaching himself from family ties and personal relationships as he had at the age of twelve, Jesus answered: “Woman [a term of respect], what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.”

When he [Jesus] had returned from His first Temple-visit, it had been . . . to “be subject to His Parents.” That period was now ended, and a new one had begun—that of active consecration of the whole life to His “Father’s business.” And what passed at the marriage-feast marks the beginning of this period. We stand on the threshold, over which we pass from the old to the new—to use a New Testament figure: to the marriage-supper of the Lamb.

Viewed in this light, what passed at the marriage in Cana seems like taking up the thread, where it had been dropped at the first manifestation of His Messianic consciousness. . . . What He had first uttered as a Child, on His first visit to the Temple, that He manifested forth when a Man, entering on His active work—negatively, in His reply to His Mother; positively, in the “sign” He wrought.²²

Even though Jesus had said “Mine hour is not yet come,” Mary unhesitatingly instructed the servants, “Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.” At hand, probably near the door in readiness for the many ceremonial cleansings obligatory on the Jew, stood six large earthenware or stone jars, each capable of holding about nine gallons of water. Jesus commanded, “Fill the waterpots with water,” and the servants filled them to the brim. Then he said, “Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast.” And when the servants poured they found that the water had been transformed into wine. When the “governor,” an honored guest in charge of the festivities, tasted it, he said to the bridegroom, “Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.”

This turning of the water into wine, a miracle of grace and compassion, revealed the Father’s presence and bounty and gave the first public evidence of Jesus’ divine nature and power. It prefigured Jesus’ Whole ministry, in which he poured forth without measure the rich wine of his Father’s love. “This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.”



A curve of the Galilean shore line. Israel Government Tourist Office.

PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF JESUS



MILEAGES TO JERUSALEM	
Bethany	2
Bethlehem	5
Caesarea Philippi	105
Cana	65
Capernaum	79
Emmaus	6
Jericho	17
Nain	58
Nazareth	63
Sychar	30



0 20 40
Scale of Miles

Public Ministry

Jesus' public career falls naturally into these periods of ministry—Judaeen, Galilean, Perea, and Passion Week—and covers in point of time three years, 27–30 A.D.

He was now about his Father's business—to establish on earth the kingdom of heaven, the sovereignty of God. His purpose was to reveal the Father and the Son and bring redemption from sin. Through preaching, healing, and the power of his own example he made known the realities and presence of the kingdom and the love and will of his Father—"I speak that which I have seen with my Father" (Jn. 8:38). This kingdom, he taught, was "at hand" (Mk. 1:15), one "not of this world" but spiritual (Jn. 18:36), not a place but a power "within you" (Lu. 17:21), one that could only be attained by a new birth (Jn. 3:5) and by obedience to the commands of Christ. It was the Father's good pleasure to give men this kingdom (Lu. 12:32); its truths would set them free from sin and suffering of every sort (Jn. 8:32).

He made many illuminating statements concerning this kingdom: its appearing so small as to be like seed; so natural in evolving as to be like nature's growth; so priceless as to be like a pearl; so transforming as to be like leaven. Its spiritual nature became increasingly evident as his ministry progressed: it was a realm of Spirit, for he taught that "God is Spirit."

The Kingdom of God, a spiritual and moral kingdom, was to be established upon the earth. It was the nature of this kingdom, first, to transform the individual, second, to dominate and purify the world. Such a kingdom could not be founded from without. . . . The only means of establishing such a kingdom as he had been commissioned to found was to win to its support individuals who felt its truth and power, waiting patiently until those adherents should attain such numbers and strength as would leaven humanity entire, and transform the whole into the ideal society of perfected individuals.

This plan of Jesus is the most remarkable ever conceived. Rome had united the Mediterranean world by an all-conquering idea of universal political dominion, and men had marveled at the accomplishment of the impossible. Yet how much greater was Jesus' idea of uniting the whole world by the ties of religion into a universal spiritual brotherhood, a union not external, political and selfish, but internal, religious, humanitarian. An invisible kingdom which, planted in a small and obscure country, should expand till it embraced all countries, all men, all time. Such was Jesus' idea of the Kingdom of God. . . . Jesus determined upon this plan with full confidence that it was God's will, and with full assurance of its ultimate success. The accomplishment of it he set about with a resolution which carried him through hardships, isolation, reproach, opposition, martyrdom. . . .

Jesus' own life was the embodiment of his conception of the kingdom, an ideal realization of God's perfect will for men, and so a concrete and living illustration of his teaching.²³

Jesus came into the world fully prepared and qualified to bring this kingdom to earth. Isaiah had said of the promised Immanuel: "Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good" (Is. 7:15). Hebrews states of him: "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Heb. 1:9).

God had appointed him. “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles” (Is. 42:1). “Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you. . . .” (I Pet. 1:20).

God had equipped him. “God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him” (Jn. 3:34).

God had commissioned him. “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God. . . .” (Is. 61:1,2).

God had certified him. “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Mt. 3:17). “Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you. . . .” (Acts 2:22).

In carrying out his mission Jesus gloriously fulfilled the threefold office of Prophet, Priest, and King foretold of his Messiahship—“(a) A prophet to enlighten, warn, and instruct (John vi: 14; iii: 2). (b) A priest to sympathize, intercede, and make atonement for his people (Is. liii; Heb. vii). (c) A king to reign in, rule over, protect, deliver, and bless them (Zech. xiv:9; Ps. ii:6).”²⁴

Jesus’ public ministry revealed the magnitude of the nature of Christ as he marked the way of the kingdom.

Judaeian Ministry

Following the marriage in Cana Jesus went to Capernaum (in Galilee) and from there to Jerusalem to attend the Passover, probably in the spring of 27 A.D. This visit to Jerusalem marked the beginning of his ministry in Judaea.

Much of the land of Judaea was wilderness. Its central portion rose 1500 to 1800 feet above sea level in a rugged mountainous tableland cut by numerous gorges and valleys. To the east the land dropped sharply into the desert strip of the Jordan-Dead Sea rift; to the west it sloped gradually into the lowlands toward the Mediterranean. Flocks of sheep grazed its stony hills, and where possible the mountainsides were terraced for cultivation of vineyards and olive groves. Judaea’s inhabitants were intensely patriotic Jews who fiercely resented the rule of Rome. The region was also the stronghold of Pharisaism and the home of Rabbinism (see Rabbis, p. 250); here the spirit of Mosaic religion had been all but lost in meaningless ritual and punctilious observance of formal rules of conduct.

During his Judaeian ministry—an approximately nine-month period that John’s Gospel alone records—Jesus cleansed the Temple, set before the people his Messianic claims, and began his preaching of the kingdom; but the Jewish religious leaders, jealous of their ecclesiastical control over the people, opposed him instantly. Seeking hearts more humble, he left Jerusalem to preach for a time in the Judaeian hills and his disciples baptized those who believed (Jn. 4:2), but when he felt the resentment and hostility of the Pharisees he turned toward Galilee.

First Cleansing of the Temple

Jn. 2:13–22

Jesus was now ready to begin his Messianic labors. The time was propitious; his first disciples had been selected and the Feast of the Passover was at hand. So he journeyed to Jerusalem, for he could have opened his public ministry in no more fitting place than the citadel of the nation's religion, within the very confines of the Temple itself.

His first public act—cleansing the Temple—was both authoritative and startling. Entering the courts of the sanctuary, his gaze rested on a scene shockingly like that of a noisy, crowded market place. Drove of sheep, goats, and oxen were being herded into pens between the arched columns of the Court of the Gentiles; cages of doves were stacked nearby. The din of merchants filled the air as they bargained with the thousands of pilgrims from all parts of Palestine over the sale of sacrificial offerings; and, to add to the desecration, a thriving trade was going on at the money-changers' stalls as foreign coin was exchanged into half-shekels for the Temple tax. These abuses within the Temple precincts had been fostered with the tacit consent of the priests because of the profits accruing to the Temple treasury. Rebuking this profanation of his Father's house, Jesus made a scourge or lash of small cords and drove out those who sold sheep and oxen and doves. He overthrew the tables of the money-changers, commanding, "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise." They could not understand him as with divine zeal he swept all before him.

By this striking, fearless act Jesus focused upon himself the attention of the nation. The Jewish rulers at once approached him. Who was this Galilean stranger who had stepped out of obscurity? He was obviously not one of the Levitical priesthood; he was unknown to them as a rabbi. Though their consciences were doubtless pricked, they were angry because their prestige had suffered a severe blow; yet, feeling the silent approval of Jesus' act by those watching, they dared not reprove him. So in half-concealed antagonism they asked a sign of his authority. In veiled language Jesus promised them the "sign" of resurrection, foretelling at the very outset of his ministry the victorious fruition of his work: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." It was as if he had said "I am the immortal Son of God, and in time you shall know this." Assuming he meant Herod's Temple, they countered: "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?" The Apostle John noted later that Jesus was referring to "the temple of his body."

Jesus began at once to preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the common people. Many

were attracted to him during this feast, not only because of his words but also because he performed miracles such as they had never seen before, and they believed in him (Jn. 2:23). But among the Pharisees hostility to this new teacher sprang up almost immediately.

First Discourse The New Birth

Jn. 3:1–21

Nicodemus was among those early drawn to the Galilean. While Jesus was still in Jerusalem this prominent and wealthy member of the Pharisaic party and a ruler of the Jews (a member of the Sanhedrin) sought an interview. Desiring to hear of the new teachings from the lips of the Teacher himself, he came to the house in which Jesus was staying. Sincere in his search for the truth, he was at the same time concerned about his position, and to avoid criticism or censure by other members of the council he came in the darkness of night.

Out of this timid visit came Jesus' great discourse on the new birth. Nicodemus began cautiously: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." Jesus went at once to the core of the matter, demanding complete discipleship: "I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Born again—or, as it were, *begin life anew* in relation to God; his manner of thinking, feeling, and acting with reference to spiritual things, undergoing a *fundamental and permanent revolution*. **cannot see**—can have no part in . . . **the kingdom of God**—whether in its beginnings here (Luke 16:16), or its consummation hereafter. (Matthew 25:34; Ephesians 5:5).²⁵

Perplexed, Nicodemus asked, "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Prone to literal interpretation of the Scriptures through his Pharisaic training, he failed to grasp the fact that Jesus was speaking of spiritual regeneration. Had Jesus used the figure of the new birth in reference to Gentile proselytes, his words might have been intelligible to his visitor; but because Nicodemus was a Jew, a member of the chosen people and therefore in his own eyes already justly entitled to the kingdom, he did not realize that the words applied to him.

Startling Nicodemus with an answer that brushed aside all preconceived ideas of Jewish rights to citizenship in the kingdom, Jesus bluntly set forth the fundamental and indispensable qualification for access to it: "I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that

which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." His statement struck at the very foundations of ritualistic religion, requiring a twofold purification—first of repentance, then of regeneration. Jesus continued: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." By this allusion to the mystery of the movements of the wind he illustrated the mystery of the regenerating power of the Spirit.

Nicodemus, still not understanding, asked, "How can these things be?" As a religious teacher he should have known the transforming power of God in the hearts of men, as taught in the Old Testament; the "night" of Nicodemus' thought may be glimpsed in Jesus' rebuke: "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? . . . If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" Jesus asserted the divine origin of his teachings and urged Nicodemus to accept in faith the truths he was telling him: "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven."

Jesus revealed many fundamental facts concerning the kingdom as he closed his discourse with Nicodemus: the way of salvation through the sufferings and triumphs of the Son of man; the gift of eternal life to those who believe; the love of God in sending His only begotten Son, not to condemn but to save; and the condemnation of those who willfully turn away from the Light which is come into the world. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. . . ."

Although Jesus' words had made a deep impression on Nicodemus, he did not at this time make an open avowal of discipleship.

(A full list of Jesus' discourses appears on p. 336.)

John the Baptist's Further Testimony

Jn. 3:22–36

When Jesus left Jerusalem for the nearby villages of Judaea, many people followed him and were baptized in his name by his disciples. John's disciples therefore protested to John, baptizing at the springs of Aenon. Far from regarding Jesus a rival, however, the Baptist gladly testified again to Jesus' pre-eminence: "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from

heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.

"He that cometh from above is above all. . . . And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth. . . . For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Second Discourse Water of Life

Jn. 4:1–42

Some months later, in the winter of 27 A.D., Jesus and his small band of disciples set out for Galilee. Two main reasons had prompted his departure from Judaea. The opposition of the Pharisees was increasing as Jesus' revolutionary teachings attracted new adherents. His success even greater than John's, it was of primary importance to Jesus that there be no premature clash with this religious party. According to the Synoptists, Jesus left when he heard that the Baptist had been imprisoned by Herod Antipas for daring to denounce the immorality of Antipas' marriage to Herodias, the wife of Herod's brother Philip (Mt. 4:12; 14:3; Mk. 6:17; Lu. 3:19,20). (Josephus says that John was sent to the castle of Machaerus, a fortress-prison in Peraea east of the Dead Sea built by the Maccabean ruler Alexander Jannaeus, refortified by Herod the Great and used as one of his residences.)

En route to Galilee Jesus and his companions passed through Samaria, a region of racially mixed population. The Samaritans were a people who had sprung from both Assyrian and Israelitish origins through intermarriage after the northern kingdom of Israel was invaded and colonized by Assyria. Samaritan religious practice was mixed—partly the worship of Jehovah, partly worship of idols. On Judah's return from Captivity (536 B.C.) the Samaritans had offered their assistance in the rebuilding of the Second Temple, but because of the impurity of their religion the help had been summarily refused and a schism arose between the Jews and the Samaritans. Although their worship remained Jewish in form and they adopted the Pentateuch as their sacred Scripture, in 432 B.C. the Samaritans erected a rival temple on Mount Gerizim near Shechem, one later destroyed by John Hyrcanus. This schism was still in existence in the time of Jesus; so intense was the antipathy



Dead Sea by moonlight, near Jericho, with mountains of Moab in distance. Jordan Tourism Office—New York.

between the Jews and Samaritans that the strict Jew regarded even setting foot in Samaria a defilement.

It was about midday when Jesus approached Sychar (near Shechem); being “wearied with his journey” he rested at Jacob’s Well while his disciples

went into the city to obtain food. His weariness was undoubtedly occasioned less by physical fatigue than by the weight upon his spirit of the resistance of the Pharisees and the recent disheartening news of John’s imprisonment. As Jesus awaited the disciples’ return, a

Samaritan woman approached to draw water, and his meeting with her presented the first opportunity to teach in Samaria.

Jesus asked a small favor—"Give me to drink"—thus opening the way for his rendering a great service to her. Aware that he was a Jew, she was surprised at his request and demurred. "With His wondrous skill in using even the smallest and commonest trifles to lead to the highest and worthiest truths, He [lifted] her thoughts to matters infinitely above the mere wants of the body."²⁶ He said, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. . . . Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (compare Jn. 7:37). The water he offered, spiritual life, alone could satisfy perpetually the deep longings of the soul. Eagerly the woman asked, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw."

At her entreaty Jesus at once roused her conscience, laying bare the immorality of her life; to receive this gift of God required a purification. At this point, perceiving he was a prophet, the woman interposed the age-old bitterly disputed question concerning the place where God should be worshiped—at Mount Gerizim or in Jerusalem. Jesus lifted her thought above localized worship and thus lessened the longstanding animosity: "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (Most later translators working from the Greek render this passage "God is Spirit.")

"Words like these marked an epoch in the spiritual history of the world; a revolution in all previous

ideas of the relation of man to his Maker."²⁷ Not accepting his answer, and still looking to the future, she said, "I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things." He replied, "I that speak unto thee am he"—Jesus' first open declaration of Messiahship.

The disciples, returning from the city, were amazed to find the Master deep in conversation with a hated Samaritan, but they asked no questions. Leaving her waterpot at the well, the woman hurried to spread the news to the men in the city: "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"

During his first discourse Jesus had lifted a man's thought step by step to the necessity of regeneration within. In the second he lifted a woman's thought to the desire for the living water of Christ. The first had taken place at night; the second occurred at midday. According to gospel history Nicodemus did not emerge from that long night to confess his faith (except for one brief moment [Jn. 7:50-52]) until after Jesus' crucifixion, when he came openly to assist Joseph of Arimathaea in preparing Jesus' body for burial (Jn. 19:39,40). The woman of Samaria ran quickly in the clear light of that same day to summon others to hear and judge for themselves.

When the disciples offered Jesus the food they had purchased, he said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of. . . . My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." While they had been gone he had won his first adherent in Samaria, and through her he was already winning more; this was true refreshment and sustenance. These firstfruits of his teaching in Samaria presaged to him a great harvest, and he told his disciples, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."

At the invitation of those who believed, Jesus remained in Sychar for two days. Many others were convinced by his preaching—"Now we believe . . . for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."



Galilean Ministry

A fisherman casts a small hand net into the Sea of Galilee, following a practice of his forefathers. Israel Government Tourist Office.

Jesus' return to Galilee in the winter of 27 A.D. marked the beginning of his Galilean ministry, and for the next twenty-three months he made Galilee the principal field of his labors. This province in the northern part of Palestine was a rich land, with its fertile Plain of Esdraelon, the swift-flowing Upper Jordan, and the Sea of Galilee (also known as Lake of Chinnereth, Lake of Gennesaret, Sea of Tiberias). Fish from the Sea of Galilee was in Jesus' time a major asset in the economic life of Palestine as well as a chief source of subsistence. Well-watered by numerous streams, Galilee produced grain and fruits in abundance; its thriving trade routes tapped the busy commerce of Egypt, Arabia, and Syria. Well-built Roman military roads also traversed the region.

Galilee possessed a large Gentile population of many nationalities—Phoenicians, Arabs, Syrians, Greeks, Romans. It also possessed a faithful Jewish population, descendants of those patriotic Jews brought in long before by John Hyrcanus. Because Galilee numbered among its inhabitants many of foreign extraction (Is. 9:1) and because the speech of its Jews was marked by linguistic peculiarities, Judaeans looked upon Galileans with condescension. The people were industrious, vigorous, and—Josephus says—“inured to war from their infancy. . . . The cities lie here very thick, and the very many villages there are here are every where so full of people by the richness of their soil, and the very least of them contained above fifteen thousand inhabitants.”²⁸ Galilee was more liberal in outlook and less narrowly nationalistic in spirit than Judaea because of its wider contacts with the Greek and Roman world, and its people were to prove more receptive to the new teachings of Jesus. Here Jesus was not under the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, nor was he so exposed to the observation of the scribes and Pharisees.

Jesus made the port city of Capernaum his headquarters. Capernaum, on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, was situated on the direct caravan route from Damascus to Egypt. Of considerable size and importance, it contained a customs station, military post, and the official residence of Herod Antipas' representative. Capernaum means the *field of repentance*, *city of comfort*, *city of compassion*, *city of consolation*. Jesus “came and dwelt in Capernaum.” From here he made many circuits throughout Galilee to preach the gospel of the kingdom and to confirm his words by notable miracles of healing.

First Period of the Galilean Ministry

When Jesus came into Galilee, the Galileans received him readily, for many had witnessed his works at the Passover in Jerusalem in the spring of 27 A.D. It was natural for him to begin his preaching in the synagogues, where ready and eager audiences of both men and women were to be found. The synagogue was the center of Jewish religious and social life, a place of worship and a school for instruction in the Scriptures for both children and adults. By Jesus' time Jerusalem had more than four hundred fifty synagogues, and every village had at least one—where ten male Jews resided it was obligatory to form a congregation. The synagogue's Sabbath order of service was presided over by a ruler or rabbi: it called for prayer, the reading of portions of the Law and the Prophets, and an exposition of Scripture by a member of the congregation or a distinguished visitor. Jesus was often invited to give the exposition, so much of his early teaching was done in the synagogues.

He opened his ministry in Galilee with the ringing announcement "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mk. 1:15). He came "in the power of the Spirit . . . and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about" (Lu. 4:14). He traveled through the villages and towns, substantiating his message by many miracles.

These first six months in Galilee were marked by great success and popularity, but Jesus' words and miracles eventually roused the fears of the entrenched religious teachers—the Pharisees and the scribes—who became alarmed by both his revolutionary teachings and his disregard of traditional law. They soon brought against him serious accusations of blasphemy and Sabbath-breaking.

Healing of Nobleman's Son

Jn. 4:46–54

The first recorded event of Jesus' Galilean ministry—the healing of the son of an officer of Herod Antipas' court—took place in Cana (see p. 358). This is the first specific healing mentioned in the Gospels and a significant one because it was accomplished at a distance. It made known a basic truth—the Word of God had a saving power whether the Savior himself was present or absent.

This officer's son was dying at Capernaum. Hearing that Jesus had come into Galilee, he went to Cana to beseech "Sir, come down ere my child die." Jesus did not come down; instead he commanded "Go

thy way; thy son liveth." The man returned to Capernaum to find that his son had been healed in the same hour Jesus had spoken these words to him. Thus this influential man and his whole household were brought into the faith.

Jesus' Miracles

Let us here consider Jesus' miraculous works, for healing was a characteristic and vital part of the gospel he taught. The Old Testament pages attest the healing power of the Spirit through the faith of Israel's righteous men and prophets (see *Miracles of the Old Testament*, p. 167). So when the people saw Jesus manifest this same power in restoring men to immediate wholeness they recognized that he was worthy to be called a prophet (Lu. 7:16; Jn. 9:17). His spiritual power was of a magnitude never seen before; suffering and sinning humanity was drawn irresistibly to him, for the salvation he offered embraced body as well as soul. One scholar has said that his miracles of healing were the outreaching of tenderness to the human need.

The power Jesus exerted came from God; he himself called it "the Spirit of God" (Mt. 12:28); it was his by divine authority as the Son of God, and as the Son of man he maintained its possession by his life of unbroken communion with God. His unceasing prayer, coupled with undeviating obedience to the will of God, was the essence of that communion. He consistently disclaimed any power of his own to work miracles: "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth."

Jesus . . . could appeal to his miraculous powers as evidences of His Divine mission, and often did so. . . . Even in the wilderness He had refused to exert them, under any circumstances, either for His natural wants, or for His personal ends, and He adhered to this amazing self-restraint through His whole career. . . . No more sublime spectacle can be conceived than boundless power, kept in perfect control, for ends wholly unselfish and noble.²⁹

Frederick Farrar says: "All Christ's miracles are revelations also."³⁰ To men they are revelations because they reveal a spiritual force that transcends the known laws of the physical world; to Jesus they were the natural effect of his accurate knowledge of God and the laws of His kingdom, giving evidence of the concord and order of that kingdom, which he was establishing on earth.

Although these miracles were seen by many (most of them took place in public), they were not wonders



One of the four sources of the Jordan River flowing out of a basalt cliff on the western slope of Mount Hermon. Israel Government Tourist Office.

done solely for the purpose of attracting men. Jesus spoke of them as attesting his Messiahship: "The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me" (Jn. 10:25). They were undeniable proofs of the truth of his teachings and the direct result of the power of the Word in the affairs of men. In his answer to the Baptist's question "Art thou he that should come?" Jesus pointed to his healing works: "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Mt. 11:5).

Jesus' miracles may be generally classified as (1) those of healing and (2) those of supremacy over the forces of nature.

Specific Miracles of Healing

From the inception of his ministry Jesus proclaimed that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and his devotion of time and effort to healing human ills shows clearly that such untoward conditions have no place in the kingdom (compare Rev. 21:4). Sick minds and bodies were made whole; sinners were forgiven; hearts were chastened; men, women, and children were restored to useful lives. These cures were sometimes occasioned by individual faith, sometimes by the faith or love of a friend, sometimes by Jesus' compassion. Often his commands required of those who sought his help the seemingly impossible—"Rise, take up thy bed and walk"; "Stretch forth thine hand"—but immediately and unquestioningly he was obeyed.

Out of the vast number of physical healings Jesus performed, only a few specific ones were recorded by the Gospel writers. These include cures of blindness, dumbness, deafness, paralysis, atrophy, leprosy, fever, insanity, epilepsy, deformity, adultery, greed, as well as raisings from the dead. His healings are cited in the succeeding narrative in order of their occurrence. (A list of Jesus' miracles appears on p. 335; see also *The Healing Work of Jesus*, p. 358.)

Miracles of Supremacy

Not only did Jesus heal the sick and raise the dead; he also manifested his dominion over the forces of nature and its phenomena. Through prayer—his affirmation and understanding of God's omnipotence—he exercised the power of the Spirit as the occasion demanded: when a lesson was requisite, when protection and sustenance were urgent, when mortality needed to be vanquished.

Jesus proved his control over the elements of nature:

Turning water into wine at the wedding feast (Jn. 2:1–11).

Stilling the tempest (Mt. 8:23–27; Mk. 4:35–41; Lu. 8:22–25).

Walking on the sea (Mt. 14:24–33; Mk. 6:47–52; Jn. 6:16–21).

Withering the fruitless fig tree (Mt. 21:18–20; Mk. 11:12–14,20).

He drew upon the beneficence and providence of God to meet immediate need:

Providing the great draft of fishes at the call of the four disciples (Lu. 5:1–11).

Feeding five thousand with five loaves and two fishes (Mt. 14:13–21; Mk. 6:34–44; Lu. 9:11–17; Jn. 6:1–14).

Feeding four thousand with seven loaves and a few fishes (Mt. 15:32–38; Mk. 8:1–9).

Obtaining tribute money from the fish's mouth (Mt. 17:24–27).

Providing the second great draft of fishes after Resurrection (Jn. 21:1–11).

Jesus banished time and space, and transcended the substance of matter:

"Immediately the ship was at the land whither they went" (Jn. 6:21).

Suddenly vanishing from the sight of two disciples at Emmaus (Lu. 24:31).

Suddenly appearing among the apostles although "the doors were shut" (Jn. 20:19; 20:26).

Jesus "abolished death, and . . . brought life and immortality to light":

When he overcame death and rose again (Mt. 28:1–7; Mk. 16:1–7; Lu. 24:1–8; Jn. 20:1–10).

When, by his appearances during the forty days after Resurrection, he supplied evidence of his continuing existence (Acts 1:3).

When he ascended (Mk. 16:19; Lu. 24–51; Acts 1:9–11).

The Master did not reserve to himself the power to work miracles, but taught his followers its universal availability. He enjoined them to do the works he did, and his teachings imparted the knowledge and faith to follow his example. A principal prerequisite to attainment was faith in him: "I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also" (Jn. 14:12). Hand in hand with this were such other essentials as love, humility, prayer, watching, and obedience to the moral and spiritual precepts of his gospel.

First Rejection at Nazareth

Lu. 4:16–30

From Cana Jesus went to Nazareth, the first visit to his home since the opening of his ministry. Reports of

his new doctrine and of his healing power had preceded him, and on the Sabbath when he went to the synagogue he had attended from boyhood he was invited by the presiding rabbi to read from the Prophet Isaiah. Jesus selected the Messianic passage: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Is. 61:1,2). His choice and use of this passage indicated his comprehensive knowledge of the Old Testament, for he read only that portion uniquely applicable to his present ministry, making no mention of the prophet's words concerning "the day of vengeance."

Closing the book, he affirmed, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Startled by his claim to Messiahship, his friends and neighbors asked each other "Is not this Joseph's son?" They had known him so long in his humble beginnings that they could not believe his claim to Messiahship. Aware of their incredulity, Jesus said, "Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country. . . . Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country." He rebuked them by reciting two instances in the lives of Israel's great prophets when their messages, ignored by Israel, were heeded by foreigners: Elias (Elijah) by the widow of Sarepta (Zarephath); Eliseus (Elisha) by Naaman the Syrian.

Those who had known him from boyhood reacted with anger and violence. They "thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong." Luke records no miracle of healing on this visit, but he does make note of Jesus' miraculous escape from Nazareth, for "passing through the midst of them [he] went his way"—one of many advancing steps toward his own resurrection.

Call of the Four

Great Draft of Fishes

Mt. 4:18–22; Mk. 1:16–20; Lu. 5:1–11

After his rejection at Nazareth, Jesus settled in Capernaum and inaugurated a positive course of action. Although the first disciples had been with Jesus at the Passover and during his Judean ministry, he apparently went alone to Nazareth while for a time they resumed their former occupation of fishing. (Fishing was one of the chief industries of Capernaum, as it was of several other cities that dotted the densely populated shores of the Sea of Galilee, among them Chorazin, Bethsaida, Magdala, Gergesa, Tarichea, and Sinnabris. Several thousand small fishing craft sailed the waters of the lake, and the many varieties of fish

caught and sold fresh, pickled, or dried, formed an important part of the Palestinian diet. Common sights were those of fishermen casting their nets in the early morning hours and spreading them out to dry in the warm afternoon sun. Such Galileans were courageous, intelligent, enterprising men, and by the very nature of their livelihood were given to that meditation during their long hours on the water that would make them receptive students of the Word.)

The Master now extended a definite call to four who had joined him earlier in his ministry—a summons that in its simplicity demanded the highest service. As he walked along the shore of the Sea of Galilee Jesus found Simon and Simon's brother Andrew casting their nets. "Follow me," he said, "and I will make you fishers of men." Matthew records "They straightway left their nets, and followed him." A little farther along he saw James and John, partners of Simon and Andrew, mending their nets. He spoke to them; "they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him."

According to Luke, the call of the Four came on a day Jesus preached to the people from Simon Peter's boat. He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." Simon answered, "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net." Having done so, he and Andrew caught so many fish that their net broke. They summoned their partners James and John, nearby in another vessel; the catch was so large that both boats began to sink. Humbled by this miracle, Simon kneeled at the Master's feet, saying, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord," but Jesus only drew him closer with the promise of a new and higher vocation: "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." And, when the four had brought their small craft to land, "they forsook all, and followed him."

As the priests of Israel more than a millennium earlier, standing in the waters overflowing the banks of the Jordan, had anticipated the blessings of the Promised Land, so now these first disciples, standing in the shallows of the Galilean Sea, saw before them a glorious calling. They did not fully comprehend the magnitude of that calling, but Jesus did, and he foresaw their successful ministry and its far-reaching effects.

Widening Fame and Opposition

Much transpired in the ensuing months—late spring and early summer of 28 A.D. Jesus healed the man with the unclean spirit, Simon's mother-in-law, the leper, and the paralytic (Mt. 8:14–17; 9:1–8; Mk. 1:21–2:12; Lu. 4:33–44; 5:12–26; see also pp. 359–360). He called Matthew the publican, a taxgatherer,

to discipleship; he preached in the synagogues of Galilee and was “glorified of all.” As his fame spread multitudes came to him bringing their sick and diseased, and he healed them.

Jesus had now become a national figure. Crowds from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judaea, and Peraea flocked to hear his simple gospel of love and to believe on him. The Pharisees and scribes had soon grown apprehensive and resistant; their own long-established rabbinical authority was jeopardized. Jesus faced fantastic odds. The rabbis of his day claimed sole jurisdiction of religious teaching. (*Rabbi* means “my master,” a title respectfully given to scholars of the Law who had graduated from rabbinical schools such as the famous ones of Hillel and Schammai. Their lives were devoted to the study and teaching of the Torah and to memorizing the great body of oral traditions that interpreted the Law [see p. 216]. This last task alone was a tremendous one and only the greatest rabbis fully achieved it.) The rabbis wielded an amazing power over the people, for their interpretations of the Law, which dictated practically every detail of daily life, were revered equally with, if not above, Scripture itself; and they constantly added new doctrines and refinements. By the time of Jesus the conscientious Jew could find little peace of mind in his anxious attempt to obey their endless array of regulations.

They or their nominees filled every office, from the highest in the priesthood to the lowest in the community. They were the casuists, the teachers, the priests, the judges, the magistrates, and the physicians of the nation. . . . No one could be born, circumcised, brought up, educated, betrothed, married, or buried—no one could celebrate the Sabbath or other feasts, or begin a business, or make a contract, or kill a beast for food, or even bake bread, without the advice or presence of a Rabbi.³¹

Jesus did not hesitate to set aside rabbinical teachings that conflicted with his gospel; he was breaking down their whole materialistic system, hence he posed a real threat to their jealously guarded and hitherto invulnerable position and incurred their bitter antagonism.

Discourse

The Son and the Father

Jn. 5:19–47

It had been some months since Jesus had been in Judaea; in early summer of 28 A.D. he made a brief visit to Jerusalem to attend one of the national feasts (unidentified by the Gospel writer) and once more to proclaim his message in the city whose Pharisaic teachers had rejected it. The growing acceptance in Galilee of his new doctrine had not escaped the attention of the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem and his every word and act had been reported. His first

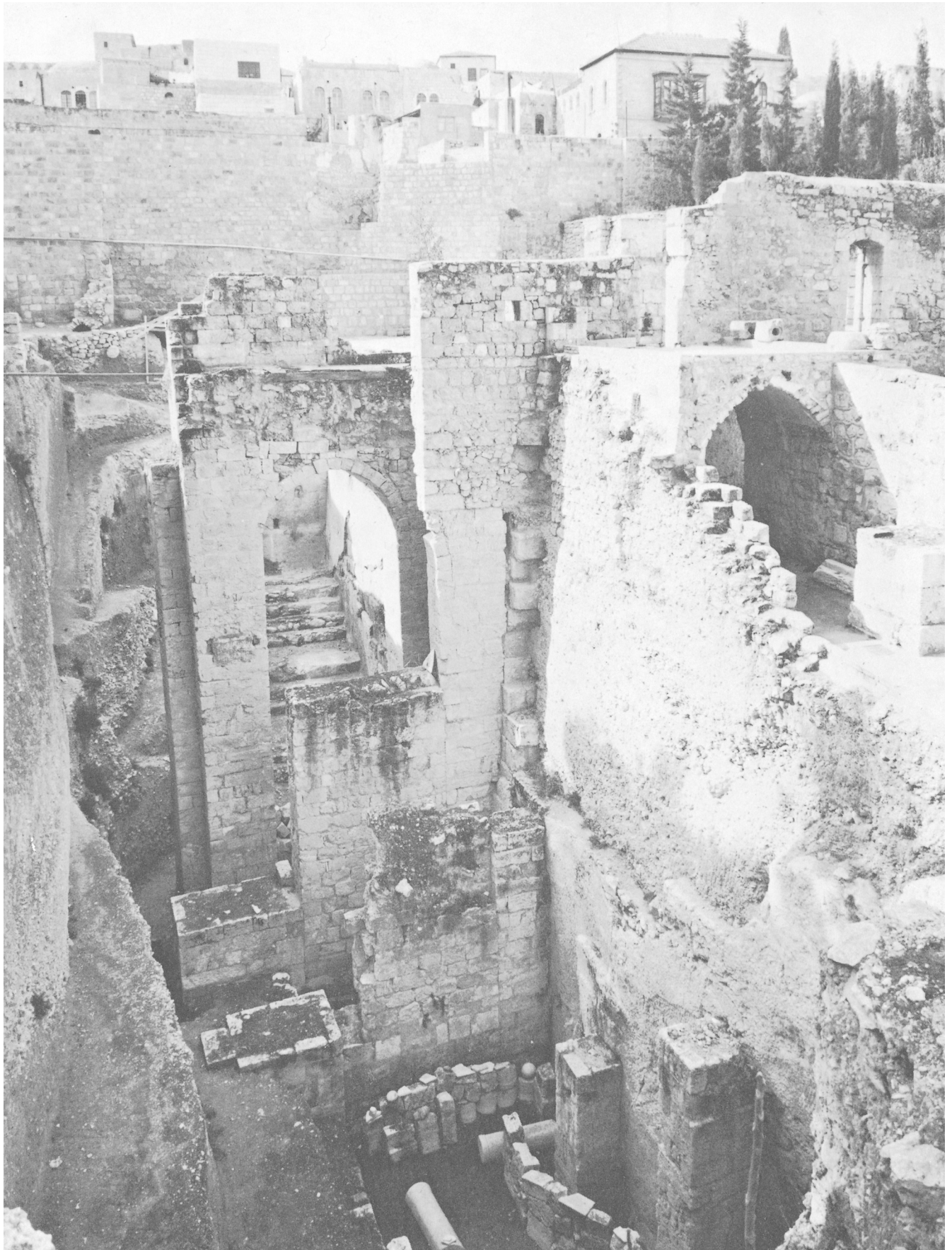
known act in Jerusalem on this visit was the healing at the public pool of Bethesda of the man who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. This startling cure on the Sabbath and his deliberate command that the man carry his bed on the Sabbath (Jn. 5:1–16) gave the Jerusalem hierarchy a pretext to move against him. They charged him with Sabbath-breaking and sought to kill him.

In the face of official persecution Jesus boldly defended his right to good works: “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” His claim to divine Sonship, already attested to in Galilee, instantly caused his Jerusalem hearers to add the charge of blasphemy, so they “sought the more to kill him” (Jn. 5:17, 18). Supporting his prerogative of Sonship and explaining the work of the Father and of the Son more fully, he said, “The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do. . . . For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth.” No thought of rivalry was present in the aim and spirit of his works—only a perfect unity and accord with his Father.

In his defense he further asserted that the Father had given him power to quicken and to judge (which he had just done in his healing of the chronic invalid): “As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.” That quickening, he explained, was even now at hand: “I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

He continued, citing the indisputable testimony of four witnesses, although only two were required by Jewish law: of John the Baptist, of his own works, of the Father Himself, and of the Scriptures. He closed his discourse: “Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. I receive not honour from men. . . . Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.”

Jesus’ opponents raised no hand against him, and soon after the feast he returned from Jerusalem to Galilee, there to heal in the synagogue on the Sabbath a man with a withered hand (Mt. 12:9–14; Mk. 3:1–6; Lu. 6:6–11; see p. 360). This Sabbath healing aroused such violent opposition on the part of the Pharisees and scribes that they met in council to find some way to destroy him. When Jesus heard of this, “he withdrew himself from thence” (see *Swelling Tide of Hatred*, p. 352).



Site of Pool of Bethesda, Jerusalem. Excavations within the compound of the Crusader Church of St. Anne have reached down to the level of the Pool of Bethesda of Jesus' time. Jordan Tourism Office—New York.

Second Period of the Galilean Ministry

The effects of the open break with the Jewish rulers in Jerusalem were felt in Galilee; from this time on they watched Jesus' every act with suspicion and perverted his words. Jesus no longer taught freely in the synagogues, but drew his audiences away from the villages to the mountains and to the seaside. Up to this time only seven of Jesus' disciples have been known to us by name: Andrew, Peter, John, James, Philip, Nathanael, and Matthew. But in the second Galilean period, which covered about ten months (summer of 28 A.D. to April of 29), the Master began deliberate organizing of his closest followers in the choice of twelve apostles. Definite instruction and practical training followed. In his incomparable Sermon on the Mount Jesus set forth the underlying principles of the kingdom of God and proceeded fearlessly in the face of still-rising hostility to impress these truths on his audience by parables, by discourses, and by miracles. Toward the close of this second Galilean period many adherents, disillusioned in Jesus as their hope for a popular leader, began to turn away.

Choosing the Twelve Apostles

Mk. 3:13-19; Lu. 6:12-16

In midsummer 28; to avoid the persecution of the scribes and Pharisees who dominated the synagogues, Jesus ceased to teach in the cities and came down along the shore of the Sea of Galilee. He was thronged by people from Galilee, Judaea, Idumaea, Peraea, even from the Phoenician cities of Tyre and Sidon to the north, people drawn to him by the reports of his remarkable cures. He healed the sick, the diseased, the palsied, the epileptic, and preached to them of the kingdom.

Pressed by their many demands, he saw that the time had come to choose from among his many disciples a few he could thoroughly train to help him in his labors. His earnest preparation for this important step is evident in the brief account of this event. "He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles." The word *apostle* means "one commissioned" or "one sent" and signifies a delegate as well as a messenger.

The old order of the Law was past, supplanted by the teachings of grace. The twelve apostles superseded in type the twelve tribes of Israel of the Old Testament, representing a new spiritual Israel in whose hearts and minds God's law would be written and God's covenant would be kept.

No one can know all the qualities Jesus sought in those he chose or all the qualifications they possessed, but promising and worthy they must have been to deserve such honor.

These men came from various walks of life: some had been prosperous fishermen, one was an affluent tax collector of Roman revenues, another a guerrilla fighter sworn to oppose Roman rule; the occupations of the others are not recorded. They were vigorous, intelligent young men, and—with the exception of Judas Iscariot—all were native to the province of Galilee. They had probably been educated as children in the synagogue schools, but none was steeped in the ecclesiastical doctrines then prevalent. They were humble, teachable men, hungry of soul, convinced from the moment they met Jesus that he was the Messiah, and without reservation they willingly left all—livelihood, family, home—to follow him. All embodied in varying degrees two fundamental requisites—faith and obedience—requirements Jesus later taught as essential to true discipleship.

The New Testament biographies of the apostles are scant and vary in detail. They nevertheless establish some facts about the lives of most of them and thereby help round out the narrative of Jesus' ministry.

Simon Peter or Cephas	"hearing"; "rock," "stone"
Andrew, Peter's brother	"manly"
James, son of Zebedee	(from O.T. name Jacob)
John, son of Zebedee	"Jehovah is gracious"
Philip	"lover of horses"
Bartholomew or Nathanael	"son of Tolmai", "given of God"
Matthew or Levi	"gift of Jehovah"; "a joining"
Thomas or Didymus	"a twin" or "double"
Simon Zelotes	"hearing"; "a Zealot"
James the Less	(from O.T. name Jacob)
Thaddaeus	"that praises and confesses"
or Lebbaeus	"a man of heart"
or Judas	(from O.T. name Judah)
Judas Iscariot	"man of Kerioth"

Simon Peter

Simon was the son of Jona (Bar-jona), a native of Bethsaida who resided in Capernaum with his wife and mother-in-law. A fisherman, with his brother Andrew he was in partnership with James and John and their father Zebedee. He became one of Jesus' earliest and most ardent disciples, one of the chosen Four. At their first meeting the Master immediately perceived the latent possibilities of the man and called him Cephas, the Aramaic word for "rock," or Peter, from the Greek *petros* (Jn. 1:42). From the outset Peter showed outstanding qualities of leadership and his name always appears first in the list of the apostles. In

temperament he was generous and impulsive; of a quick and inquiring mind, he asked the Master more questions than did any of the others. He was one of the three (with James and John) chosen to be present with Jesus at the raising of Jairus' daughter, at the Transfiguration, and in the group apart in the Garden of Gethsemane.

At all times Peter manifested a quick, fervent zeal and a boundless enthusiasm for Jesus' work. When Jesus gave his great discourse on the bread of life, many Jews turned away. As Jesus questioned the Twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Peter answered loyally, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life" (Jn. 6:67,68).

When his clear insight enabled him to declare of Jesus "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus blessed him for his perception and promised him a stewardship in his Church: "I say . . . unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 16:16-19).

Once Jesus sharply rebuked Peter for his misunderstanding of the necessity of the cross as a part of the Messianic mission: "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" (Mt. 16:23).

When Jesus spoke of giving up material possessions for treasure in heaven, Peter asked, "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" Jesus replied: "Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life" (Mt. 19:27ff.).

Jesus foresaw a severe testing time for Peter, and at the Last Supper he said, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Impetuously Peter affirmed, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death." Jesus, knowing Peter's untried faith, predicted, "I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me" (Lu. 22:31ff.).

At his Master's arrest Peter was quick to draw his sword, but at Jesus' command he sheathed it. As the soldiers bound Jesus and led him to the house of the high priest for trial, Peter followed "afar off." Then "he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire," and before the crowing of the cock he vehem-

ently denied Jesus three times. Even as Peter made the third denial, Jesus turned and looked at him; Peter, instantly filled with remorse, "went out, and wept bitterly" (Mt. 26:75). The pain of guilt lifted when Jesus accorded him a special appearance after Resurrection. Later the three denials were canceled and he was restored to favor; and, strengthened by Christ's love and grace, he was entrusted with the mission "Feed my sheep" (Jn. 21:16).

To the fulfillment of this charge Peter dedicated the remainder of his life. At Pentecost he made the first statement of Christian doctrine for the Church. His mission of preaching and healing was mainly to the Jews, and with courageous faith he gave the early Christians eminent leadership. He is the author of two epistles of the New Testament, First and Second Peter. (For a more detailed account of his later life, see *The Work of the Twelve Apostles*, p. 374.)

Andrew

Andrew was Simon Peter's brother, also a fisherman. That he was a searcher after truth is evident. He first appears as a disciple of John the Baptist, but when John pointed to Jesus and called him the Lamb of God he immediately followed Jesus. He was the first to say "We have found the Messiah," as he brought his brother to Jesus. Andrew was one of the Four called by the Master at the beginning of the Galilean ministry. At the feeding of the five thousand Andrew reported to Jesus, "There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?" (Jn. 6:9). With Peter, James, and John, Andrew earnestly questioned Jesus at the Mount of Olives about the destruction of the Temple and heard his words concerning the fall of Jerusalem and his Second Coming. Nothing is known of Andrew's apostolic ministry.

James

Son of Zebedee and Salome and elder brother of John. James' home was probably Bethsaida. His father was a prosperous Galilean fisherman with his own hired servants; his mother was one of the faithful women who later ministered to Jesus in Galilee (Mk. 15:41). (It would appear that Salome was the sister of the Virgin Mary; *if so* James and John were cousins of Jesus [compare Mt. 27:56; Mk. 15:40; Jn. 19:25].) James and John were in partnership with Peter and Andrew. The four were eager disciples of Jesus and were so united in spirit and service that the accounts of their association with him are always closely intertwined. Slain by Herod Agrippa I in 44 A.D. during persecution of the Christian Church, James was the first of the apostles to suffer martyrdom (Acts 12:1,2).

John

This younger brother of James, son of Salome and Zebedee, was also a fisherman. He was originally a disciple of John the Baptist (an inference drawn from Jn. 1:35,40), and like Andrew he followed Jesus at once. He and James, two of the Four, were mending their nets when Jesus called them to the ministry.

At the time these two were chosen to be among the Twelve Jesus gave them the name Boanerges, "sons of thunder" (Mk. 3:17). Only brief glimpses of their untempered zeal appear in the Gospel story. On one occasion John reported to Jesus, "We saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us," but Jesus replied, "Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us" (Lu. 9:49,50). On another occasion John and James desired that Jesus bring down fire upon certain inhospitable Samaritans, but he rebuked them: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Lu. 9:55,56).

As Jesus journeyed to Jerusalem to face death these two brothers asked for the positions of honor at his right and left hand in his kingdom. When he replied "Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup [the cross] that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" they answered, "We can" (Mk. 10:38,39; compare Mt. 20:20,21).

Like Peter, James and John stood in special favor with Jesus in the inner circle of three—present with him at the raising of Jairus' daughter, at the Transfiguration, and in Gethsemane.

Of a strong and loving nature, John gave the Master a deep, unselfish loyalty and received in return Jesus' special love. He is identified as "that disciple whom Jesus loved." He was so close to Jesus in spirit that at the Last Supper he reclined in the place of honor at his right hand—"leaning on Jesus' bosom." Alone of all the apostles John stood faithfully at the cross, and to him Jesus entrusted his mother. He outran Peter to the tomb on Resurrection morning. Without evidence of Jesus' resurrection other than the discarded grave clothes, "he saw, and believed." As Jesus stood on the shore of the Sea of Galilee at his third appearance to the apostles, John was the first to recognize him. When Peter questioned Jesus of John, "What shall this man do?" the answer was "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me" (Jn. 21:21,22).

John stood with Peter as a co-leader and "pillar" in the Apostolic Church. After the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. he lived, according to tradition, at Ephesus, where he labored as pastor in the churches of Asia Minor. As the last surviving apostle he served as mentor to the Church, helping to guard and guide its purity and spiritual integrity. Banished to the isle

of Patmos by the Roman emperor Domitian (ca. 95 A.D.), he there received the marvelous visions and prophecies of the Apocalypse. Five books of the New Testament came from his pen: the Fourth Gospel; First, Second, Third John; and the book of Revelation. Some current opinion holds that the last four were written not by this John but by an unknown writer called John the Elder. There is, however, much internal evidence to indicate that they could have been written by no one but this apostle.

Philip

A native of Bethsaida, according to tradition a charitable. The name Philip (from the Greek *philippos*) means "a lover of horses," perhaps indicating the character of the man, for a trainer of horses usually possesses restraint, steadiness, and self-control. Philip was the first disciple to whom Jesus spoke the significant words "Follow me." He hastened to tell Nathanael that he and Peter and Andrew had found Israel's long-awaited Messiah.

At the feeding of the five thousand—Jesus' first miracle of its kind—Philip's comprehension of the illimitable power of God was tested by Jesus' question "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" His answer showed he entertained no expectation of divine aid in meeting the need of the multitude: "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little" (Jn. 6:5,7).

At the Last Supper Philip petitioned, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." His request for a visible manifestation of God indicated his lack of a full understanding of the complete oneness of Christ's nature with the Father's. Jesus replied, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" (Jn. 14:8,9). The last Biblical mention of Philip is of his presence in the upper room with those who before Pentecost awaited the descent of the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:13).

Bartholomew (Nathanael)

This apostle was a native of Cana in Galilee. In the Synoptic Gospels he is called Bartholomew (son of Tolmai); in the Fourth Gospel he is named Nathanael. When Philip informed him he had found the Messiah, a man called Jesus from Nazareth, Nathanael hesitated, remarking innocently, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Jesus' commendation of Nathanael was immediate—"Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"—as he discerned the wholesome character of the man—without artifice, cunning, deceit, treachery, or wile. The moment Nathanael heard Jesus' words he acknowledged,

“Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.” Nathanael was one of the seven apostles fishing on the Sea of Galilee to whom Jesus appeared after Resurrection. Beyond this no Scriptural record remains.

Matthew

Matthew, also known as Levi in the Gospels of Mark and Luke, was the seventh disciple specially called by the Master early in the Galilean ministry. He was the son of Alphaeus and probably a man of considerable wealth, for he held the lucrative position at Capernaum of a publican or collector of Roman tax revenues. The Jews classed publicans with the worst kind of sinners—traitors, renegades, murderers—and looked on them with the utmost contempt and hate, not only because they were in the employ of a foreign government, but also because they frequently extorted excessive fees from their own people. Publicans were socially ostracized, forbidden to enter the Temple or the synagogue, participate in public prayers, fill offices in courts of law, or give testimony.

But how differently Jesus regarded the publican Matthew, and how instant his measure of Matthew's character: “He saw a *man* . . . sitting at the receipt of custom” and said to him “Follow me” (Mt. 9:9). Without a backward glance Matthew “left all, rose up, and followed him” (Lu. 5:28). Jesus' mission embraced all classes of men; he did not hesitate to choose Matthew, seeing in him fitness for discipleship. With joy Matthew made Jesus a feast in his own house to which a great company of other publicans were invited (Lu. 5:29). Nothing is known of his apostolic labors.

Some scholars attribute the authorship of the Gospel of Matthew to Matthew himself; others are of the opinion that if he was not the author of the entire book he certainly contributed substantially to it.

Thomas

The first mention of this apostle is at his appointment as one of the Twelve. In the Synoptics he is called Thomas, while in John he is also identified as Didymus, a twin. The four events that bring Thomas into view toward the close of Jesus' ministry show him to have been a man of courage and loyalty but slow to attain sure understanding and faith.

Thomas, in the face of grave danger to Jesus, bravely offered to accompany him to Bethany at the time of Lazarus' sickness, saying to the other apostles, “Let us also go, that we may die with him” (Jn. 11:16). Thomas refused to believe the apostles' report of Jesus' resurrection without tangible personal evidence: “Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.” His doubt was removed eight days later when Jesus

showed him the proof he sought, saying, “Be not faithless, but believing.” Strengthened and comforted, Thomas acknowledged, “My Lord and my God” (Jn. 20:25ff.). He was one of the seven apostles who breakfasted with Jesus at the Sea of Galilee during his third appearance after Resurrection. Nothing further is known of his life.

Simon Zelotes

Only the appointment of this apostle as one of the Twelve is recorded. Matthew and Mark designate him “the Canaanite”; Luke identifies him as “Zelotes.” His name indicates that he was a Zealot, a member of a party of patriotic and fanatical Jewish resisters to Roman rule over Palestine (see also p. 218). His appointment implied a willing submission to lay aside the sword of war for “the sword of the Spirit.” Cunningham Geikie says of him, “No name is more striking in the list than that of Simon the Zealot, for to none of the Twelve could the contrast be so vivid between their former and their new position.”³²

James

This apostle was the son of Mary and Alphaeus (Cleophas, according to Jn. 19:25) and brother of Joses. He was called James “the less” (little, small, or RSV “the younger”), perhaps because of his stature or youth, to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee. His mother was one of the devoted women who ministered to Jesus in Galilee and who was present at the cross and at the tomb on Resurrection morning. Of his apostleship nothing is known.

Thaddaeus (Lebbaeus, Judas)

Matthew calls him Thaddaeus and Lebbaeus, Luke designates him Judas (John further adds “not Iscariot”), but little is known about him. A single saying is attributed to him: at the Last Supper, when Jesus told his apostles he was going away, Judas asked a forthright question concerning the visible manifestation of Christ's kingdom—“Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?” (Jn. 14:22)—showing that he had not yet fully grasped the spiritual nature of that kingdom.

Judas Iscariot

This Judas, from the town of Kerioth in southern Judaea (the only Judaeen among the apostles), was the son of a Simon about whom nothing is recorded. His name always occurs last in the lists of the Twelve. Judas' motives for following Jesus appear to have been mixed: he began with affection for the Master, yet underneath was a strain of ambition and greed, worldly and political.

Judas Iscariot was treasurer of the apostle band; and at the supper in Bethany, as Mary anointed Jesus'

feet with a costly ointment, he asked, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" John commented later: "This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein" (Jn. 12:5,6).

Jesus' insight was not at fault in choosing Judas; in selecting such a man he was holding out to all men the hope of regeneration and salvation. He knew what evil propensities were struggling for ascendancy in the human nature of the man, but he also knew that as Judas heard the truth of his teachings and served him there would be continuous opportunity for spiritual growth. He waited patiently for a change in Judas. If Judas chose to give up these propensities his heart and spirit would soften; if not, they would harden slowly but inexorably. Less than a year after Judas' appointment as an apostle Jesus made indirect reference to his character: "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (Jn. 6:70).

Judas' disappointed hopes for a temporal Messianic kingdom and his mercenary desires impelled him to betray his Master; to this end he covenanted with Jesus' enemies for a paltry thirty pieces of silver—about nineteen dollars in today's terms. At the Last Supper the Master identified him as his betrayer, adding, "It had been good for that man if he had not been born" (Mt. 26:24). When Judas failed to resist Satan and the last vestige of moral conscience was darkened, Jesus let him go. Within a few hours Judas guided armed Levites of the Temple guard as well as a band of Roman soldiers to the garden of Gethsemane to effect Jesus' arrest, betraying him with a kiss.

Judas had become irked by the very standard of apostleship he had at first espoused, for it unmasked his failings, and when that irritation hardened into resistance he himself was betrayed by his own weaknesses. Repentance came too late and, having set in motion a flood of events he was powerless to stop, he handed himself (Mt. 27:5; compare Acts 1:18).

His place was later filled by a disciple named

Matthias, who had been a follower of Jesus from the beginning (Acts 1:15–26).

The task before the Twelve was stupendous. Their mission, laden with promise, must not fail. Through them was to come not only the promulgation of Christ's gospel but also the founding of his Church. From the time of their selection Jesus carefully taught and trained them, showing by his example "the way, the truth, and the life." They were henceforth privileged to hear his inspired words, to witness his wondrous deeds, to mark his voluntary and perfect obedience to the Father's will, to partake of his loving spirit, to be with him daily, to do the works he did, and to grow into a more mature comprehension of his Messiahship and glory.

At first Jesus took the Twelve with him wherever he went. Later, he sent them out on an evangelizing mission, preparing them for future service. Times of severe testing lay ahead; there was much to learn and so short a time in which to learn it. Peter's faith faltered, Thomas doubted, Judas turned traitor. The weak places of their faith needed to be strengthened so there would be no breach in the wall of their discipleship.

With the exception of Judas Iscariot, so far as we know, these faithful delegates fulfilled in their lives the great trust Jesus laid upon them. According to the spirit of each, they served him with love and loyalty. They needed no greater authority; they asked for none beyond the Holy Spirit that had been promised them. They preached boldly in the name of Jesus Christ and their inspired devotion to his cause established the new Christian movement firmly. Persecuted, examined before the Sanhedrin, scourged and imprisoned, they rejoiced to be "counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." No more glorious testimony could be given of them than that they had been chosen by the Master, and men "took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."

Opposite page: The Horns of Hattin: twin peaks overlooking the Sea of Galilee and the Plain of Gennesaret. This lovely natural amphitheater is the traditional site of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Photograph: Israel Government Tourist Office.



The Sermon on the Mount

Mt. 5-7; Lu. 6:20-49

Eager crowds now attended Jesus' every move. As he came down from his mountain retreat after his selection of the Twelve, he was met on a hillside plateau by a great multitude. They had streamed out from the cities and villages of Galilee, Judaea, and the region of Decapolis; they had come even from far-off Tyre and Sidon, bringing their sick and diseased, and with compassion Jesus healed them all.

To them he delivered his great discourse concerning the kingdom, since termed the Sermon on the Mount. (The title has been applied at least since the time of Augustine [ca. 394 A.D.]. Some modern scholars are of the opinion that the two records of this sermon as found in Matthew and Luke are two different accounts of

the same event; that the discourse in Luke appears in its original form, while Matthew's is a compilation and careful grouping of many of Jesus' teachings about the kingdom. Other scholars believe they were given on two different occasions.) According to Matthew, Jesus "went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him." (The site has been tentatively identified as the Horns of Hattin, a hill in the plateau country west of Tiberias.) Here under the open sky he expounded the principles of the kingdom of heaven on earth, the character and life of its citizens, and their fundamental duties. He also defined the moral and spiritual laws that constitute its government, and dealt with "things new and old." The Law of Sinai was completed in the new commands of love and grace.

Jesus' sermon showed an open break with Judaism; he drew a sharp line between the ritualistic righteousness of his day and the dynamic moral and spiritual righteousness of the kingdom to be exemplified in the new life of his followers.

For the first time in the history of religion, a communion is founded without a priesthood, or offerings, or a Temple, or ceremonial services; without symbolical worship or a visible sanctuary. There is an utter absence of everything external or sensuous: the grand spiritual truths of absolute religious freedom, love, and righteousness, alone are heard.³³

This discourse is sometimes called Jesus' ordination address to his apostles, but it was directed to all his hearers and is applicable throughout all time to every new disciple.

Duties of Citizenship in the Kingdom

Beatitudes (Mt. 5:3–12)

Jesus began with promises of happiness and blessedness to the citizens of the kingdom. The Beatitudes, as these blessings are now called, express the essential spirit of the kingdom and open its gates to all men. Jesus named the cardinal virtues required of citizenship in the kingdom and specified the rewards for those who qualified:

Blessed are the poor in spirit

Blessed are they that mourn

Blessed are the meek

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness [right-mindedness]

Blessed are the merciful

Blessed are the pure in heart

Blessed are the peacemakers

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake . . . when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake—

theirs is the kingdom of heaven

they shall be comforted

they shall inherit the earth

they shall be filled

they shall obtain mercy
 they shall see God
 they shall be called the children [RSV sons] of
 God
 theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . . Rejoice,
 and be exceeding glad: for great is your
 reward in heaven: for so persecuted they
 the prophets which were before you. . . .

Significantly, Jesus made mention not of a temporal kingdom that would fulfill the nation's current Messianic hope of conquering a world but rather of a spiritual kingdom attainable only through humility, righteousness, trial, and persecution.

Duties of Its Citizens to the World (Mt. 5:13–16)

As citizens of the kingdom, Christ's followers were to set an example whose vitality and goodness would turn men to God.

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? . . .

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

The Moral and Spiritual Law of the Kingdom

Its Righteousness Contrasted with Traditional Teachings (Mt. 5:17–48)

Jesus taught of a higher righteousness under the kingdom's law of love. He did not set aside Mosaic Law or leave it in the letter; he transformed it by the spirit of love and called on his followers to keep its moral and spiritual requirements in this same spirit, warning "except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." His every declaration was in contradistinction to the cold letter of traditional law and the sacrosanct formalism of the rabbis. Conscious of himself as the fulfillment of the Law, his words "*I say unto you*" carried a superior authority, superseding what the ancients had said. He extended law-keeping to the self-discipline of surmounting impure thoughts and hateful feelings; these, according to the law of the kingdom, come under condemnation as surely as extreme offenses. The children of the kingdom were to strive to be perfect "even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Note the contrasts.)

"It was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

"But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca ['O empty one'], shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

“It was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

“But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”

“It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

“But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.”

“It hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

“But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

“And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. . . .”

“It hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? . . .”

The Righteousness Required in the Kingdom, and Its Reward (Mt. 6:1–7:12)

Jesus specified clearly what the citizens of his kingdom must and must not do. The desire to do the will of God rather than to impress men should be the incentive to true righteousness, and righteous deeds were to be done “in secret”—sincerely and unostentatiously. The duty of the seekers of the kingdom was to love God in single-minded service, to lay up spiritual treasures. They were not to let the anxieties of daily life distract them in their search, but to trust in God’s care. They were not to judge the faults of others and overlook the greater faults within themselves. And always they were to pray, to “ask . . . seek . . . knock.” God would assuredly answer their prayers.

In this portion of his sermon Jesus contrasted the righteous action with its opposite so his listeners could not fail to catch his meaning. (Note the contrasts.)

Charity. “Take heed that ye do *not* your alms [RV righteousness] before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. . . .

“But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.”

Prayer. “When thou prayest, thou shalt *not* be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men [see p. 293]. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

“But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

“But when ye pray, use *not* vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye . . . like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

“After this manner therefore pray ye.” The *Lord’s Prayer* is in two parts: the first relates to God—His nature, His kingdom, His will; the second relates to the needs of men. In the realization of the first lies the fulfillment of the second.

“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.” (The most ancient manuscripts do not include this doxology.)

Forgiveness. “If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

“But if ye forgive *not* men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

Secret Fasting. “When ye fast, be *not*, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

“But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.”

Wealth. “Lay *not* up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

“But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

Single-mindedness. “The light of the body is the eye: if . . . thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

“But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

Trust in God’s Care. “Take *no* thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. . . .”

Intelligent Behavior. “Judge *not*, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote [splinter] that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? . . .

“First cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.”

“Give *not* that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.”

Diligence in Prayer. “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. . . .

True Religion. “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”

In this succinct admonition, often called the *Golden Rule*, Jesus summed up the positive universal principle of brotherhood—the “royal law” of the kingdom (Ja. 2:8).

The New Way of Life Enjoined (Mt. 7:13–27)

Jesus closed his sermon with a series of admonitions. His followers would not find the way to the kingdom an easy one since it demanded self-discipline and self-denial, but it would lead to eternal life. His followers would know the professing Christian from the practicing one by his works. And if they would be wise and secure they would build their lives on his spiritual teachings.

Choose the Right Path. “Enter ye in at the strait [RV narrow] gate:

“for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

“Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

Be on Guard against False Teachers. “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

“Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”

Have a Living Faith. “Not every one that *saieth* unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven;

but he that *doeth* the will of my Father which is in heaven. . . .”

Build on the Rock of Christ. “Whosoever *heareth* these sayings of mine, *and doeth them*, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended . . . the floods came

. . . the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

“And every one that *beareth* these sayings of mine, *and doeth them not*, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended . . . the floods came . . . the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”

Jesus' words struck home; his audience sensed a ring of truth and authority foreign to the teachings of their rabbis.

As he had “set himself” on the mount, and his disciples had come to him, so he “set” the kingdom on a mount and his followers must seek it.

Jesus' Testimony of the Baptist

Mt. 11:2–19; Lu. 7:18–35

Jesus continued journeying that summer among the cities and villages of Galilee. Wherever he went multitudes followed him. He had given them the doctrine of the kingdom; again he demonstrated the power of that doctrine. In Capernaum he encountered the marvelous faith of a Roman centurion and healed his servant (Mt. 8:5–13; Lu. 7:1–10; see p. 361). He startled all Galilee with the raising of the widow's son at Nain (Lu. 7:11–16; see p. 370). In awe the people declared, “A great prophet is risen up among us”; “God hath visited his people.” And he restored the sight and speech of a man both blind and dumb (Mt. 12:22–29; compare Lu. 11:14; see p. 361).

Reports of these miracles spread rapidly and word reached even John the Baptist in Perea. Languishing for months in prison, this fiery preacher, cut off in the prime of his career and shut away from the free and open life of the wilderness, sent messengers to Jesus to ask “Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?”—an unexpected question from one who had once testified with conviction “Behold the Lamb of God!”

Jesus' answer to John brings to mind passages of Isaiah (Is. 35:5; 61:1) that pointed to Christ's healing and saving mission: “Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.” And he added “Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me,” which Weymouth translates: “Blessed is every one who does not stumble and fall because of my claims.”

After the departure of John's messengers Jesus spoke to the people in defense of the Baptist. John was no “reed shaken with the wind.” He was a prophet, “yea . . . more than a prophet,” being

Christ's forerunner prophesied by Malachi (Mal. 3:1). Jesus acknowledged John as greatest of those born of woman, but went on to say, “Notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he”—greater was the lowliest disciple who followed Christ in faith and loyalty.

Discourse

Woes on Impenitent Cities

Invitation to the Weary

Mt. 11:20–30

Addressing himself to the still-resistant listeners in the crowd, who would heed neither John nor himself, Jesus upbraided his generation and the unrepentant cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum which they had come: “Woe unto thee . . . for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.”

Changing the tone, he praised the wisdom of the Father who had hidden spiritual truths from intellectual and worldly minds and unveiled them to babes. In language clearer than ever before Jesus spoke of himself in relation to the Father, for though rejected by Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, questioned by John, and maligned by the rabbis, he was known to the Father, and to him had been committed the things of the kingdom: “All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.”

Then, with a compassion that embraced both friends and enemies, he issued to all an invitation to come to him to learn of God: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy [Weymouth: my yoke is good], and my burden is light.”

Parables

Second Galilean Period

The Pharisees and scribes were now openly hostile to Jesus as they felt their influence waning, and they seized every opportunity to oppose his doctrines and contradict his words. This caused Jesus to change his mode of teaching; he began to instruct the people by means of parables—anecdotal illustrations of his point.

The Biblical parable has been defined as “an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.” This method of instruction was a tactful and impressive means of setting forth clearly and impersonally great spiritual truths. Jesus’ analogies engaged the attention of the common people as well as that of his more learned listeners and induced them to dwell upon and retain the kernel of his teachings. His parables tested and sifted his audiences—to ears unprepared to hear the message was obscure; to the hearing ear it was lucid.

All of Jesus’ parables are replete with meaning; their interpretation cannot be set within bounds for many implications and applications are possible. In simple, graphic language he spoke of the sower, the seed, the net, the bread, the candle, the vineyard, the shepherd, making familiar objects and activities of daily life symbolic, giving them spiritual counterparts to make the realities of the kingdom more intelligible and persuasive to his listeners. He so illumined the course of nature and human life, so delicately balanced the natural law with the spiritual truth, and so imbued his words with “the seed” of revelation that the parable has throughout all time become peculiarly his own.

To the parables of our Lord there is nothing in all language to be compared, for simplicity, grace, fulness, and variety of spiritual teaching. They are adapted to all classes and stages of advancement, being understood by each according to the measure of his spiritual capacity.³⁴

To the multitudes Jesus spoke in parables; only to his disciples did he expound them (Mk. 4:34). When the disciples asked “Why speakest thou unto them in parables?” Jesus answered: “Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.” He then emphasized the special privilege that was theirs: “Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those

things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them” (Mt. 13:10 ff.).

(A list of Jesus’ recorded parables appears on p. 336.)

Parable

Two Debtors

Lu. 7:41–50

The parable of the two debtors was spoken in the house of Simon, a Pharisee, where Jesus had been invited to dine: there was not yet an open break between him and the Pharisees, and he taught—as always—wherever there was an inquiring mind. As he reclined at dinner, a woman—easily recognizable as a despised sinner—slipped unnoticed into the room. Standing at the foot of his couch she began to wash his feet with her tears, to wipe them with her unbound hair, and to sprinkle them with a precious ointment. Simon instantly disapproved, feeling that Jesus could be no prophet if he permitted such a woman as this social outcast to approach him. A Pharisee would have repulsed her contemptuously, fearful of the pollution of her touch. Aware of his cold disdain, Jesus reproved Simon for his self-righteousness; but like the prophet Nathan who showed David his sin, he used a parable to cause Simon to judge himself.

“There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.” Jesus questioned Simon, “Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?” After Simon’s reluctant admission “I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most,” Jesus emphasized the lesson of forgiveness by throwing into bold relief the contrition of the woman who “loved much” and the disrespect of his host who “loved little.” “Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. 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.”

Turning to the woman still waiting in penitence, Jesus said, “Thy sins are forgiven. . . . Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.” (See *Healing of Penitent Sinner*, p. 368.)

Parables of the Kingdom

The time was ripening for a fuller revelation of the mysteries of the kingdom—"things which [had] been kept secret from the foundation of the world." Therefore on a day that enthusiastic crowds converged on him at the Sea of Galilee—crowds so great that he retreated into a small boat to speak to those who lined the shore—Jesus told eight parables of the kingdom, depicting its intrinsic nature.

The Sower and the Seed Mt. 13:1–23; Mk. 4:1–20; Lu. 8:4–15

Jesus was well aware that not all who heard his gospel would appropriate its truths, and the parable of the sower is an apt illustration of his own ministry in planting the kingdom. It was also a teaching to his disciples, who would soon go out to spread the seed of his gospel among all people. Just as the soil of the Galilean fields and hills varied from stony shallowness to depth and richness, so they would find that the soil of the human heart differed in quality and capacity to effect spiritual growth.

"Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

"Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

"And some fell among thorns: and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

"But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold."

When his disciples asked the meaning of this parable Jesus interpreted it in the most explicit terms, explaining the spiritual meaning phrase by phrase. They would encounter the casual listener, the momentarily enthusiastic, the pleasure-loving, the care-ridden and worldly. But only in the receptive soil of a good heart, the "good ground," would the seed, the Word, remain alive to be nourished and cultivated to yield its spiritual harvest—coming, as Paul says, "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

"The sower soweth the word" (Mk.); ("The seed is the word of God" [Lu.]).

"And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts" (Mk.); ("lest they should believe and be saved" [Lu.]).

"And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended" (Mk.); ("which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away" [Lu.]).

"And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful" (Mk.); ("and bring no fruit to perfection" [Lu.]).

"And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred" (Mk.); ("keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" [Lu.]).

Natural Growth of the Seed

Mk. 4:26–29

In the parable of the seed Jesus taught, by reference to a law of nature, the natural invisible life-giving energy of the truths of the kingdom at work in the lives of men. A marvel is the new life of the Christian that, supplied by the Spirit, spontaneously develops and transforms him into spiritual maturity.

"So is the *kingdom of God*, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come."

Tares and Wheat

Mt. 13:24–30, 36–43

While Jesus' parable of the sower illustrates the planting of the kingdom, the parable of the tares and wheat illustrates its harvesting. By similitude Jesus once more presented a foreview of the kingdom's progressive development on earth, growing among all classes of men and under varying social conditions. (Some interpret this development as the evolving of the visible Church.) Although the good seed had been sown, Jesus foresaw that Satan, whose attempt from the beginning of time had been to set up a reign counter to God's (Is. 14:13,14), would attempt to displace this heavenly kingdom by planting the spurious seed of evil "while men slept."

"The *kingdom of heaven* is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the

wheat, and went his way." Tares are noxious weeds which in their early sprouting bear a close resemblance to the grain. The householder said "An enemy hath done this." In answer to his servants' question "Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?" he answered "Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."

The disciples sought an explanation and again Jesus interpreted concisely, relating the parable to himself and his mission. His parable admonished vigilance, wisdom, righteousness, and patient endurance to the end—until "that Wicked be revealed" and cast out.

"He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;
 "The field is the world;
 "the good seed are the children of the kingdom;
 "but the tares are the children of the wicked one;
 "The enemy that sowed them is the devil;
 "the harvest is the end of the world;
 "and the reapers are the angels."

"As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. [The outgathering]

"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." [The ingathering]

Both the outgathering of the wicked and the ingathering of the righteous are prophetically described in the book of Revelation.

Mustard Seed

Mt. 13:31,32; Mk. 4:30-32; Lu. 13:18,19

In his parable of the mustard seed, proverbially the smallest of all seeds which yet produces a plant of relatively vast size, Jesus both unveiled and veiled the fact that even "a grain" of the truth of the kingdom contains a divine energy and indestructible vitality, so that from its humblest beginnings it expands to embrace and bless the world.

"The *kingdom of heaven* is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

Leaven

Mt. 13:33; Lu. 13:20,21

The parable of the mustard seed portrayed the outward manifestation of the kingdom and its blessings in the lives of men; Jesus' parable of the leaven described its invisible workings. As leaven is the fermenting element that causes dough to rise and become light, so the leaven of Christian truth would ultimately permeate the world's thought to regenerate and transform the individual and society.

"The *kingdom of heaven* is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."

Hidden Treasure

Mt. 13:44

The kingdom was at hand—it had come. Jesus urged each man to recognize and evaluate it rightly. His parable of the hidden treasure pertains to the priceless value of the kingdom for the one who perceives its worth and makes it his own. In this analogy the kingdom was found unexpectedly and without a search, but to obtain what he had found he joyfully relinquished all other possessions to establish a just claim to it.

"The *kingdom of heaven* is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."

The Pearl

Mt. 13:45,46

Jesus' parable of the pearl of great price is closely related to the parable of the hidden treasure in its central thought of the inestimable worth of the kingdom. Here, however, the kingdom was found as the result of fervent desire and long and earnest search; in this instance also it was obtained in the same way—only when all else had been renounced.

"The *kingdom of heaven* is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

The Dragnet

Mt. 13:47-50

The final parable of this series is that of the dragnet. It may be likened somewhat to the parable of the tares and wheat, dealing as it does with the same point but presenting it in another aspect and laying the burden of emphasis on the future separation of the wicked and the just. The dragnet, an object familiar in Jesus' day, was an immense net sometimes a quarter of a mile or more long which, paid out from a vessel in a large semicircle near the shore, swept the bottom of the sea and caught all the fish within its compass.

Jesus' figurative use of the dragnet was indicative of the all-embracing ministry of God's kingdom, which reaches out to draw all men irresistibly under its influence.

"The *kingdom of heaven* is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

"So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (see Rev. 20:11–15).

At the conclusion of these parables Jesus asked the people: "Have ye understood all these things?" "Yea, Lord," they answered. Then he said: "Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."

Accusations against Jesus

It will be useful here to examine the accusations repeatedly brought against Jesus by the Pharisees, the scribes, and eventually the Sadducees. These were couched in religious terms until almost the last, when political charges were raised. The accusations of a religious nature can be grouped under four general headings: blasphemy, Sabbath-breaking, improper religious conduct, madness and alliance with Satan.

Sometimes Jesus rebuked those who made such charges, allowed a silence to speak for him, or withdrew from the scene; but in every instance he acted to avoid any danger that would bring his mission to an untimely end. Occasionally, however, he deliberately challenged restrictive rabbinical traditions. As he dealt with these accusations he imparted many essential Christian truths.

Charge of Blasphemy

To blaspheme is to slander, defame, or dishonor the character of God, to speak evil of His holy name or person. Jesus' repeated claim to Sonship with God and to possession of God's divine attributes of power were blasphemous in the eyes of the scribes and Pharisees. To them this unknown Galilean was usurping the prerogatives of God. According to Mosaic Law the crime of blasphemy was punishable by death (Lev. 24:16).

When Jesus healed the palsied man, saying, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee," the scribes said to themselves, "Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?" But he substantiated his claim by healing the man, making evident the fact that he did have this power (Mk. 2:5–12). (Later the Christian Church pronounced forgiveness in the name of Christ.)

When Jesus declared to the Jews, following his healing of the infirm man, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," they sought to kill him, enraged that he spoke in such familiar terms of God, "making himself equal with God" (Jn. 5:17,18).

When Jesus later asserted "I and my Father are one," the Jews took up stones to stone him. He reasoned with them: "Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?" They answered, "For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." Jesus cited Scriptural authority for his affirmation of unity with the Father, asking: "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? [Ps. 82:6] If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" Calling their attention to his works, he justified his claim: "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him." But again they tried to take him (Jn. 10:30–39).

When he cast a devil out of the man who was dumb, the Pharisees and the scribes abandoned discretion and bared their enmity openly: "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils." Jesus instantly exposed the fallacy of their reasoning, "If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?" Turning the accusation against them, he asserted that *they* were the blasphemers since they were denying the power of God: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad. . . . All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven . . . neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (Mt. 12:24–32).

At Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin, the high priest Caiaphas demanded, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" When Jesus answered, "I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven," the council formally accused him of blasphemy and condemned him to death (Mk. 14:61–64).

Charge of Sabbath-breaking

The Hebrew Sabbath of the Old Testament was Israel's most sacred religious institution, a sign of its covenant relation with God. It was a day of cessation from labor, a holy day of worship in accordance with the Fourth Commandment, and under Mosaic Law its nonobservance was punishable by death (Ex. 31:14). By New Testament times the scribes and Pharisees had laid upon the observance of this day a burden of minute regulations.

No feature of the Jewish system was so marked as its extraordinary strictness in the outward observance of the Sabbath, as a day of entire rest. The scribes had elaborated, from the command of Moses, a vast array of prohibitions and injunctions, covering the whole of social, individual, and public life, and carried it to the extreme of ridiculous caricature. Lengthened rules were prescribed as to the kinds of knots which might legally be tied on Sabbath. The camel-driver's knot and the sailor's were unlawful, and it was equally illegal to tie or to loose them. A knot which could be untied with one hand might be undone. A shoe or sandal, a woman's cup, a wine or oilskin, or a flesh-pot might be tied. A pitcher at a spring might be tied to the body-sash, but not with a cord.

It was forbidden to write two letters, either with the right hand or the left, whether of the same size or of different sizes, or with different inks, or in different languages, or with any pigment . . . or anything that can make marks. . . . But they might be written on any dark fluid, on the sap of a fruit-tree, on road-dust, on sand, or on anything in which the writing did not remain. . . .

The quantity of food that might be carried on Sabbath from one place to another was duly settled. It must be less in bulk than a dried fig: if of honey, only as much as would anoint a wound; if water, as much as would make eyesalve; if paper, as much as would be put in a phylactery; if ink, as much as would form two letters.

To kindle or extinguish a fire on the Sabbath was a great desecration of the day, nor was even sickness allowed to violate Rabbinical rules. It was forbidden to give an emetic on Sabbath, to set a broken bone, or put back a dislocated joint, though some Rabbis, more liberal, held that whatever endangered life made the Sabbath law void, "for the commands were given to Israel only that they might live by them."

. . . From the decline of the sun on Friday, to its setting, was Sabbath-eve. . . . All food must be prepared, all vessels washed, and all lights kindled, before sunset. . . . The refinements of Rabbinical casuistry were, indeed, endless. To wear one kind of sandals was carrying a burden, while to wear another kind was not. One might carry a burden on his shoulder, but it must not be slung between two. It was unlawful to go out with wooden sandals or shoes which had nails in the soles, or with a shoe and a slipper, unless one foot were hurt. . . .

In an insincere age such excessive strictness led to constant evasions by Pharisees and Sadducees alike. To escape the restrictions which limited a journey on Sabbath to 2,000 cubits from a town or city, they carried food on

Friday evening to a spot that distance beyond the walls, and assumed, by a fiction, that this made that spot. also their dwelling. They could thus, on the Sabbath, walk the full distance to it, and an equal distance beyond it, this journey being only the legal distance from the fictitious place of residence!³⁵

When Jesus ignored or took issue with these irksome and spiritually unnecessary, restrictions he was accused of Sabbath-breaking. This offense was a flagrant sin in their eyes, second only to that of the blasphemy of his Messianic claim.

On a Sabbath Jesus healed the man who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years, ordering him to take up his bed and walk. When the man obeyed, the Jews reprimanded him: "It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed." Learning that it was Jesus who had so commanded, they tried to kill Jesus (Jn. 5:10-16).

When his disciples picked ears of corn on the Sabbath as they went through the cornfields, the Pharisees asked, "Why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?" Jesus replied with a query: "Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God . . . and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?" "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath," he said. Matthew adds to this account Jesus' words: "Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple" (Mt. 12:1-6; Mk. 2:24-28).

One Sabbath as Jesus taught in the synagogue, he saw a man with a withered hand. The Pharisees and scribes challenged: "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days?"; among the Pharisees healing practices were prohibited on the Sabbath unless a life were in actual danger. Jesus asked: "What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep?" He summarized: "Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days" and, turning to the man, healed him (Mt. 12:10-13).

This same charge of unlawful healing was made when Jesus healed the woman who had been crippled for eighteen years (Lu. 13:14).

When Jesus effected on a Sabbath day the marvelous healing of the man born blind, the Pharisees argued among themselves, some saying "This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day," others saying "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" (Jn. 9:16).

Although the rabbis were increasingly incensed at Jesus' continued infraction of their Sabbath prohibitions, they never brought a formal charge of Sabbath-breaking against him; the mercy of his works and the sympathy and approval of the people restrained them.

Charge of Improper Religious Conduct

By New Testament times the conduct of the Jew was under constant rabbinical scrutiny. As a member of God's holy Israel he was to keep himself holy. He therefore felt impelled to obey every Mosaic law and each scribal regulation. If he did not, the penalty was both exclusion from religious worship and social ostracism. The intent of these legislations was the prevention of sin and defilement. Contact with any unclean thing caused defilement and the Law therefore made distinctions as to what was "clean" and "unclean." The Law forbade the worship of idols, social contact with the heathen, the eating of the flesh of unclean animals (Lev. 11; Deut. 14:2-21). Certain purificatory rites were enjoined for women after childbirth (Lev. 12), after contact with a human corpse (Num. 19:11-22) or the bodies of dead animals (Lev. 5:2), for lepers (Lev. 14), for discharges of the body (Lev. 15), and for certain unavoidable contaminations.

By Jesus' day the catalogue of unclean things that could cause ritual defilement had grown out of all bounds through the casuistry of the Pharisees. Ceremonial rites of purification had been highly elaborated, extending even to the washing of hands, the preparation of foods, the washing of food vessels, and so on. The spirit of the Law was entombed in hollow ritual.

When this new teacher from Galilee failed to conform to the trivia of rabbinical regulations relating to purification or to keep his person withdrawn from those individuals whose presence was considered polluting, the scribes and Pharisees accused him of irreligious conduct. Jesus' teachings abolished the need for ceremonial purification and changed the emphasis from outward cleanliness to inward purity of mind and heart.

"Why," the Pharisees and scribes asked critically, "walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?" (See p. 273). Jesus rebuked them: "Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites . . . This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. . . . Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. . . . There is nothing from without a

man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man" (Mk. 7:5-15).

A similar charge of improper conduct was implied when Jesus dined at a Pharisee's house and, to his host's astonishment, sat down to eat without ceremonially washing his hands. Jesus responded, "Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?" (Lu. 11:39, 40).

"Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?" the apostles were asked when the Pharisees saw Jesus at the feast of Matthew the publican. Publicans were considered apostate because of their close association with the Gentiles, so the rabbis (who held themselves aloof from social outcasts lest they become polluted) were shocked that a teacher of his stature would let himself be seen in such company (see also p. 255). To Jesus, fear of pollution weighed not at all in the scale of mercy, and his response was "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice" (Mt. 9:11-13; compare Hos. 6:6).

The fear of contamination that so troubled the Pharisees did not mar the ministry of Jesus, who restored to health the socially ostracized who had need. On one occasion Jesus put out his hand and touched a leper before healing him (Mt. 8:3), and later he did not hesitate to approach and touch the bier of a dead man in Nain and restore him to life (Lu. 7:14).

"Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?" This question referred mainly to the fasts religious Jews imposed upon themselves voluntarily. To chasten the soul one sat sorrowful of face in sackcloth and ashes (see p. 61). Some of the Pharisees fasted as frequently as twice a week to impress others with their piety. Jesus taught that with the kingdom of heaven at hand this was not a time for mourning: "Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days" (Mk. 2:18-20).

He went on to teach by two short parables—the new patch on an old garment, the new wine in old bottles—that his new religion could not be added or adapted to the ritualistic forms of Judaism: "New wine must be put into new bottles." "The joy of the kingdom does not go well with fasting. There must be congruity between faith and form. The new faith must make its own new forms."³⁶ Jesus instructed his followers in the Sermon on the Mount to shun the

frequently empty ceremonial display of mourning or humility, and instead to fast in secret (Mt. 6:16–18).

Charge of Madness and of Alliance with Satan

Jesus' enemies could not deny the validity of his miraculous works. Infuriated at their own inability to counteract his teachings or duplicate his healings, they resorted to slander and insinuation, declaring he was mad.

Jesus was attracting such crowds during the second period of his Galilean ministry that wherever he went people pressed him so continually he scarcely had time to eat. His zeal in the face of the Pharisees' hostility must have appeared fanatical to some, so that at one point his friends—and perhaps his relatives—concerned for his safety, “went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.” But the scribes who had come from Jerusalem interpreted his fervor maliciously, claiming that he was in league with the devil: “He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.” Jesus warned them in the strongest of terms that to call the power by which he acted diabolical was to commit the unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, “because they said, He hath an unclean spirit” (Mk. 3:21,22,28–30).

There was division among his listeners at his extraordinary statement, in his discourse on the Good Shepherd, that he would lay down his life but would take it again at his Father's command. Many said, “He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?” Others, remembering his healing of the man born blind, said, “These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?” (Jn. 10:20,21).

These accusations precipitated recurrent crises, but each served only to advance the undeniable truth that this was the Son of God, speaking God's word with power. The enmity of the Pharisees, scribes, and Sadducees, however, hardened into relentless resistance, and repeatedly they sought to destroy him:

- “watched” to find accusation against him
- “murmured” at his reception of sinners
- “sent forth spies” to find treason in his words
- “assembled together”
- “consulted” to take him by subtlety
- “covenanted” with Judas
- “delivered him to Pilate” for judgment
- “were instant with loud voices” to crucify

The succeeding weeks of Jesus' Galilean ministry were marked by a number of startling miracles. His apostles were filled with amazement by his stilling of a storm—“What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!” (Mt. 8:27). He restored to sanity the demoniac of Gadara (Mt. 8:28–34; Mk.

5:1–20; Lu. 8:26–39; see p. 362); at Capernaum he healed the woman with an issue of blood and raised the daughter of Jairus (Mt. 9:18–26; Mk. 5:21–43; Lu. 8:40–56; see pp. 362, 370).

Second Rejection at Nazareth

Mt. 13:54–58; Mk. 6:1–6

As Jesus set out from Capernaum for Nazareth he healed two blind men and a dumb demoniac (Mt. 9:27–34). On this second visit to his own village, this time accompanied by the Twelve, Jesus again taught in the synagogue. Word of his miracles had preceded him, but the Nazarenes still failed to see beyond the old associations and refused to credit his Messiahship. They asked, “From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?”

Jesus repeated what he had said at his first rejection, “A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.” It is recorded that he “could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.” Knowing the futility of further appeal he left Nazareth, never to return. (One is inclined too often to think of Jesus' “mighty work” as only healings and spectacular miracles when his real “mighty work” was greater than any of these. His whole ministry was dedicated to the proving of his sonship with God and the deathlessness of life—and each day he was carrying forward that proof, for all mankind, to the final issues of resurrection and ascension. His disbelieving fellow townsmen cut themselves off from his blessings and failed to contribute to the strengthening of his life work.)

Commissioning of the Twelve

Mt. 9:35–11:1; Mk. 6:7–13; Lu. 9:1–6

From Nazareth Jesus and his apostles continued a circuit of Galilee, relying for food and shelter mainly on traditional Hebrew hospitality (see p. 44). Certain women who had been healed also accompanied the little band and ministered to its daily needs from their own resources. Among these were Mary Magdalene; Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza; Susanna; Salome; and Mary, wife of Cleophas and mother of James the Less.

As Jesus journeyed, the wretched, the poor, the sick gathered about him for healing, and when he saw that they were as sheep without a shepherd, he was filled with compassionate love for them. The Twelve

as a group had been closely associated with him now for more than six months and had had the continuous benefit of his personal teaching. They were ready for active service; so, providing for the present and preparing for the future, Jesus commissioned them to preach and to heal. This new and further step in the organization of the kingdom was far-reaching in importance and significance, although at the time it went almost unnoticed by the political and religious authorities.

Jesus' plan was to send the Twelve before him on an evangelizing mission. Invested with his power and authority, they went out "two and two," facing without him the demands of any situation they might encounter. With great care he instructed them where they were to go, what they were to preach, and what they were to do. He limited this mission to the Jewish population of Galilee: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

His message was to be their message: "As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Their works were to be patterned on his: "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils." The spirit of their giving was to be as generous and selfless as his: "Freely ye have received, freely give." They were admonished to make no provision for their journey, "for the workman is worthy of his meat," and to enter only the homes and villages which welcomed them.

He fortified them against the persecution they would experience both now and when their mission was more universal in scope. Though brought before councils and kings, the Spirit would teach them what to answer. Jesus spelled out the cost of discipleship—the hatred of men, even of immediate families—but comforted them with the reminder of the enmity and slander he, their Master, had endured. Above all, he assured them that God would reward their courageous service (Mt. 10:16–42).

These formidable challenges did not deter them. During the next three or four months the apostles traveled through the villages of Galilee (according to Josephus, some two hundred forty), preaching and healing everywhere.

They rejoined Jesus somewhere in the neighborhood of Capernaum to report what had been accomplished, but as soon as their presence was known the people gathered in such numbers that the apostles had neither privacy to talk to him nor leisure to eat. Seeing that the Twelve needed sustenance and rest, Jesus pointed out the wisdom of proper self-care: "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while" (Mk. 6:30–32; Lu. 9:10). Quietly they withdrew to a small plain near Bethsaida, some six miles away,

crossing the tip of the Sea of Galilee by boat. Seclusion was doubly desirable—not only because of the press of the multitudes but also because word had just been received from the Baptist's disciples that John had been beheaded by Herod Antipas (Mt. 14:13). It was rumored, too, that Herod was inquiring if Jesus were the Baptist risen from the dead (Mt. 14:1,2).

Feeding the

Five Thousand Mt. 14:13–23; Mk. 6:33–46; Lu. 9:10–17; Jn. 6:1–15

There was little opportunity for seclusion; the people, anticipating Jesus' destination, outran him along the shore. Touched anew by their eagerness to hear, Jesus again fed their spiritual hunger and healed their sick. Though "the day was now far spent" they lingered to hear more, until the Twelve urged, "This is a desert place. . . . Send them away, that they may go into the country round about . . . and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat."

But Jesus vetoed their suggestion, answering, "They need not depart; give ye them to eat." Turning to Philip he asked, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" He said this "to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do." When they told him of the meager supply on hand of but five loaves and two fishes, Jesus commanded that they bring these to him and seat the people. Matthew numbers them "five thousand men, beside women and children," and Mark reports "they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties (a description that certainly suggests an eye-witness report).

Jesus then took the loaves and fishes and, "looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude." The few brief phrases "he himself knew what he would do," "looking up to heaven," and "when he had given thanks" (Jn. 6:11) bespeak his prayer and the source to which he looked for the fulfillment of their needs. He confidently drew on the infinite resources of God, and his knowledge of God's beneficence abundantly multiplied the few loaves and fishes so that when the apostles had distributed them to the people all were filled, and twelve baskets of fragments remained. (These baskets [kophinos] were the handbaskets in which the Hebrews carried their provisions when traveling.)

Moses had fed his people in the wilderness with manna; it was a rabbinical teaching that Israel's Messiah would do the same. The five thousand, seeing this great miracle, were convinced that here was their Messianic King: "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." The expectation of the Messianic kingdom at once excited them. Here was a man, they thought, who could do all things that Moses

did—let us make him king! With him at their head they would surely throw off Roman tyranny. Jesus had long since overcome the temptation to wield worldly power as a means to his ends, so when he “perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king,” he immediately sent his apostles by boat toward Capernaum to take them away from this dangerous excitement; dispersed the multitude; and himself quietly withdrew “into a mountain apart to pray.”

Walking on the Sea

Mt. 14:24–33; Mk. 6:47–52; Jn. 6:16–21

While Jesus remained in prayer, the apostles’ progress across the open stretch of water was hindered by storm—“the wind was contrary.” The significance of the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand was for a time eclipsed in their minds by the commotion they had just witnessed. Although it was night, from his mountain top Jesus “saw” them toiling at their oars. Between three and six o’clock in the morning (the fourth watch of the night) Jesus came to them, “walking on the sea”—giving proof of his dominion over still another form of matter.

The apostles thought they were seeing an apparition, but immediately he reassured them: “Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.” When Peter realized it was the Master, his faith rose to new heights. That he caught a glimpse of this dominion and was eager to exercise it himself is obvious from the Biblical narrative, for at Jesus’ invitation, “Come,” he “walked on the water, to go to Jesus”; he walked until he looked at the turbulent waves, then his faith failed and he began to sink. Jesus immediately caught him by the hand, saying, “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” And “when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.” A new reverence pervaded the hearts of the Twelve and they avowed, “Of a truth thou art the Son of God.”

John alone records another startling miracle coincident with this event: “Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.”

Discourse

Christ the Bread of Life

Jn. 6:22–71

The next day when some of the multitude Jesus had fed discovered he was gone, they pursued him to Capernaum and found him in the synagogue. Aware of their motive, he chided, “Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.” He deliberately discouraged their hopes though he foresaw that he would lose much of his popularity; and, as he had turned the Samaritan woman’s thought from the water of Jacob’s Well to

the “water of life,” so he now turned their thought from the bread which perishes to the “bread of life,” urging “Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.”

When they asked “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” he answered “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.”

Some among them, possibly scribes and Pharisees from Judaea, challenged—“What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee?”—and reminded him of the heavenly manna Moses had given Israel. In reply Jesus declared himself, the Christ, to be the real bread of life: “Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.” When some of his listeners petitioned “Lord, evermore give us this bread,” he declared plainly “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger.” At his assertion that he came from heaven his hearers muttered among themselves, for was he not the son of Joseph and Mary of Nazareth? But he patiently pointed out that those taught of God would understand the truth of his words.

Speaking now almost entirely in the first person, he reiterated his claim that faith in the Son would give a man everlasting life: “I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. . . . He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.”

“How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” they asked. They should have understood him, for the figurative meaning of eating and drinking was familiar to his Jewish listeners. The words nevertheless confused them; they could not see that he meant they must acknowledge that he came from God, that his teachings therefore were from God, and that they must take into their own lives these truths and into their hearts the same spirit of love that motivated him. Still seeing only the person of the man Jesus, many found his words “an hard saying.” “Doth this offend you?” asked Jesus. “What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”

This discourse marked a crisis in Jesus' ministry—a decisive break with the people, for from this time on many disciples turned away. Their short-lived enthusiasm dissipated when it became clear that Jesus' aims were immeasurably beyond nationalistic hopes. His season of popularity with the people was over.

When Jesus asked his apostles, "Will ye also go away?" Peter voiced their unshaken loyalty: "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

Discourse Traditions of the Elders

Mt. 15:1–20; Mk. 7:1–23

The break with the people was followed by a clash between Jesus and hostile Pharisees and scribes sent up from Jerusalem to harass him. They found fault when they saw Jesus' disciples were not observing the prescribed Judaic ritual of washing their hands before eating.

The legal washing of the hands before eating was especially sacred to the Rabbinit; not to do so was a crime as great as to eat the flesh of swine. . . .

It was laid down that the hands were first to be washed clean. The tips of the ten fingers were then joined and lifted up so that the water ran down to the elbows, then turned down so that it might run off to the ground. Fresh water was poured on them as they were lifted up, and twice again as they hung down. The washing itself was to be done by rubbing the fist of one hand in the hollow of the other. When the hands were washed before eating they must be held upwards; when after it, downwards, but so that the water should not run beyond the knuckles. The vessel used must be held first in the right, then in the left hand; the water was to be poured first on the right, then on the left hand, and at every third time the words repeated: "Blessed art Thou who hast given us the command to wash the hands."

. . . Hand-washing before prayer, or touching anything in the morning, was as rigidly observed, for evil spirits might have defiled the hands in the night. To touch the mouth, nose, ear, eyes, or the one hand with the other, before the rite, was to incur the risk of disease in the part touched. The occasions that demanded the observance were countless: it must be done even after cutting the nails, or killing a flea. The more water used, the more piety. . . . If one had not been out it was enough to pour water on the hands; but one coming in from without needed to plunge his hands into the water, for he knew not what uncleanness might have been near him while in the streets, and this plunging could not be done except in a spot where there were not less than sixty gallons of water.³⁷

The Pharisees asked: "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?" Jesus retorted: "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" purposely taking issue with their superficial superstitious concept of what constituted

Washing of the hands before and after eating. *Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopaedia*.



defilement. He openly rebuked this ceremonialism, branding them hypocrites; they were teaching as the Law their own doctrines: "For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do." He pinpointed one of these errors—their hypocritical use of the oath Corban to avoid fulfilling their filial duty—thus making "of none effect" the Fifth Commandment (Mk. 7:10–13). (Corban originally meant a sacrificial offering to God [Lev. 1:2], but by Jesus' time it had become the mere mouthing of a vow.)

Turning to the people, Jesus spoke with authority: "Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand: There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man."

The disciples later reported the Pharisees' displeasure at his words. Jesus was ready with his answer: "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."

When they asked for an explanation of this new principle of what constituted real defilement, he replied, "Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."

With this incident the second Galilean period closed.

Third Period of the Galilean Ministry

This period of approximately seven months began in early summer 29 A.D. and was spent largely in journeys that took Jesus and the Twelve beyond the borders of his own province. Galilee was no longer a fruitful field for evangelization because of the gradual disaffection of the people and the open breach with the Pharisees. For a short while Jesus went north to the coastal cities of Phoenician Tyre and Sidon. Slowly making his way homeward, he went east and south by a circuitous route, passing through Decapolis, a region that included the territory of a league of ten cities originally colonized by the Greeks after Alexander's conquest. These prosperous cities were independently administered but subject to Roman authority, and among their racially mixed inhabitants Jesus found an eager audience.

Again withdrawing from Galilee, this time to the Gentile city of Caesarea Philippi about thirty-five miles north of Capernaum, he turned his full attention to the further training of the apostles and to the strengthening of their faith and understanding of his Messiahship. During this journey came the experience of his transfiguration and his revealing announcements to the disciples of his coming death and resurrection.

After returning to Capernaum, Jesus continued on to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of Tabernacles. Despite the mounting hostility of the Pharisees and Sadducees, he stood boldly in the Temple to teach that he was the Light of the world and the bearer of the truth which sets men free. The Pharisees and chief priests sent officers to seize him, but they could not, "because his hour was not yet come."

Feeding the Four Thousand

Mt. 15:29–38; Mk. 8:1–9

A journey into the Gentile territory of Tyre and Sidon, northwest of Galilee, opened the third period of Jesus' Galilean ministry (Mt. 15:21; Mk. 7:24). These proud Phoenician cities, mentioned often in the Old Testament for their wealth and commerce, were situated some twenty miles apart on the Mediterranean coast. Here Jesus hoped for privacy and time for quiet communion with his apostles, but his fame had preceded him and even here the people sought him out. Mark says "he could not be hid." Shortly after the healing of the Syrophenician woman's daughter (Mt. 15:22–28; Mk. 7:25–30; see p. 363), he turned eastward, crossed the headwaters of the

Jordan, and journeyed slowly through the non-Jewish district of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. Here he healed a deaf man who also had a speech impediment (Mk. 7:31–37; see p. 363). For some months he preached, gathering considerable numbers of adherents. His compassion embraced the new lambs of his flock and he healed their lame, blind, dumb, and maimed.

At the close of this circuit Jesus spent three days preaching to a crowd of four thousand; before dismissing them, he said to his apostles, "I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way." As he had fed five thousand in Galilee, so here he fed four thousand. He commanded his listeners to sit on the ground and, taking the seven loaves and the few small fishes that were at hand, he "gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples . . . and they did set them before the people. . . . So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets." (These baskets [Gk. *spuris*] were the storage hampers used by Gentiles, containers of the size in which Paul made his escape from a window in Damascus [Acts 9:25; compare p. 391].)

Pharisees Require a Sign

Mt. 15:39–16:12; Mk. 8:10–21

Shortly after feeding the four thousand Jesus and his apostles embarked for Magdala, a city on the west shore of the Sea of Galilee. Back once more among the Jews, the Master was again subjected to Pharisaic skepticism. The rabbis sought of him some supernatural sign, shutting their minds to the numerous miracles he had already performed. Jesus' patience was tried by such obduracy and he "sighed deeply in his spirit." His words, his miracles, seemed lost. His rebuke was sharp: "O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times [events that pointed, in accord with Old Testament prophecy, to the presence of the Messiah among them]? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas [the sign of resurrection]" (compare Mt. 12:39–41).

After the Pharisees' stubborn refusal to accept his miracles as sufficient evidence of his claims, Jesus left for Bethsaida, making the ten-mile journey by boat. His spirit was soon tried again, this time by the obtuseness of his own apostles, whose faith was clouded by the Pharisees' resistant attitude.

As the apostles left the boat at Bethsaida they discovered they had brought with them only one loaf of bread. He—who had just given them a "sign from heaven" in the feeding of the four thousand—immediately uttered a warning; they were forgetting the lesson he had taught of God's bounty always at hand: "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees

and of the Sadducees.” They did not grasp his meaning, thinking he spoke of bread leaven. Jesus reminded them of the two feedings of the multitudes. His questions, put in rapid succession, were a rebuke which quickened their perception.

“Why reason ye, because ye have no bread?
 “Perceive ye not yet, neither understand?
 “Have ye your heart yet hardened?
 “Having eyes, see ye not?
 “Having ears, hear ye not?
 “Do ye not remember?
 “When I brake the five loaves among five thousand,
 how many baskets full of fragments took ye up?
 “When the seven among four thousand, how many
 baskets full of fragments took ye up?
 “How is it that ye do not understand?”

At last the apostles realized that the leaven to which he referred was “the doctrine” of the Pharisees and Sadducees—the teachings that deadened trust in God.

*Peter's Confession
 concerning Christ*

Mt. 16:13–20; Mk. 8:27–30; Lu. 9:18–21

After healing a blind man at Bethsaida (Mk. 8:22–26; see p. 364), Jesus again went away from the contentious atmosphere of Galilee, this time setting out northward with his apostles for Caesarea Philippi at the foot of majestic, snowcapped Mount Hermon in the Anti-Lebanon range. As they walked together, he questioned them to determine how much they understood of his real spiritual nature. He had already been called the Messiah or Christ and he had often implied that fact; now he sought their clear and open avowal. Pausing along the way he asked, “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” They enumerated the differing opinions current among the people: John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, one of the prophets. Despite all his miracles and preaching it was evident that few thought of him with certainty as the Messiah.

Desiring from them a higher concept of himself, he persisted: “But whom say ye that I am?” Instantly Simon Peter spoke for them all: “*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*” Commending his perception, Jesus said, “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” Peter’s confession marked a milestone in the advancing understanding of the Twelve. They openly acknowledged Jesus not as a great prophet, not as a national Messiah, but as truly “the Christ of God.” Stirred to a greater comprehension that the *living* Son of the *living* God was with them, they realized that for them there could be no empty profession of faith, no *dead* works.

At this direct acknowledgment Jesus proceeded for the first time to speak of his Church and to ground it on the solid rock of the truth Peter had voiced: “I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

My church, with emphasis on the *My*, signifying that the Church is not a human but a divine institution. In this passage the Church is identified with the Kingdom of Heaven.³⁸

It was inevitable that a new institution should arise to carry forward his gospel, for the Temple and synagogue had proved unequal to the task. That Peter clearly understood the foundation rock of this Church to be the Christ is seen in his early preaching after Pentecost and in his writings (Acts 4:10–12; I Pet. 2:4–8).

“I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,” Jesus promised, “and whatsoever thou shalt bind [forbid] on earth shall be bound [forbidden] in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose [permit] on earth shall be loosed [permitted] in heaven”—the stewardship of the mysteries of the kingdom, later extended to all the apostles (Mt. 18:18). Their understanding of truth would guide them in upholding the heavenly standard in all things.

*First Foretelling
 of Death
 and Resurrection*

Mt. 16:21–28; Mk. 8:31–9:1; Lu. 9:22–27

Almost immediately his teachings took on a new and somber note. Having drawn from the Twelve their deep conviction of himself as the Christ, Jesus deemed them ready to face his disclosure of the sufferings that lay before him and he now announced for the first time his coming death and resurrection. He knew that the future held persecution for him and testing almost beyond endurance for his apostles, so he began carefully to buttress their faith and prepare them to meet the “stumbling block” of the cross: “The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.”

Peter, always the first to speak, rejected this startling new conception: “Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.” The idea of a suffering Messiah, wholly inconsistent with the Jewish hope of a triumphant King, was inconceivable to Peter. With the same command with which Jesus had silenced Satan in the wilderness, the Master instantly reprovved Peter: “Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” This was the voice of

temptation from one of his own trying again to turn him from fulfilling his mission according to the divine plan of salvation—from giving proof of life eternal. He was willing to suffer for mankind and “[pour] out his soul unto death,” for in time he would see “the travail of his soul, and . . . be satisfied” (Is. 53:11,12).

The uncovering of a state of thought that shrank from persecution and suffering presented the Master with an opportunity to teach the apostles an essential requirement of discipleship—his followers must be willing to face and endure suffering, to surrender all for Christ, that they might gain the kingdom. As he was obediently taking up his cross, so they must take up theirs: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.”

He told them that though they would see him subjected to shame and humiliation, they would also see him manifested in glory: “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.” They were not to be reluctant to place him first in their lives: “Whosoever . . . shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

He closed this foreshadowing of his death and resurrection with the assurance that some of those present would see the establishment of the kingdom: “I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.”

The apostles had so recoiled at the idea of their Messiah’s suffering and death that his declaration that he would rise the third day passed almost unheeded. They doubtless held the current general belief of the future resurrection of the dead, a doctrine accepted and taught by the Pharisees, but that Jesus meant a resurrection that would bring him among them again was beyond their immediate credence.

The Transfiguration Mt. 17:1–13; Mk. 9:2–13; Lu. 9:28–36

The Master did not leave the apostles long in contemplation of suffering and sorrow. Six or eight days after Peter’s confession he took Peter, James, and John, the most enlightened of the Twelve, beyond Caesarea Philippi “up into an high mountain”—probably Mount Hermon. There, to strengthen their faith, he accorded them a glimpse of his innate glory as the Son of God. As he prayed, he was transfigured before them, his whole being illumined. “His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light” (Mt.). “The fashion of his countenance was

altered, and his raiment was white and glistening” (Lu.). (See II Pet. 1:16–18.)

The light . . . shone not *upon Him from without*, but *out of Him from within*. . . .³⁹

With his passion now full in view, the very appearance of Jesus was transfigured. For a little while the veil was lifted (Mk. 9:2f.) and the three favored disciples—Peter, James, and John—saw him in the glory of his utter consecration to the will of God, that will that was leading him to Calvary.⁴⁰

As Jesus stood radiant, Moses and Elijah also appeared with him “in glory,” and the three apostles were privileged to hear them talk “of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem”—a conversation which taught the disciples that the experience which lay before their Master was not a fate he was powerless to resist but a voluntary task he was willing to undertake. Luke records that at one point the apostles slept, but “when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.”

He had taken the three with Him, to overcome their dread of His death and repugnance to the thought of it, as unbecoming the Messiah; to strengthen them to bear the sight of His humiliation hereafter; and to give them an earnest of the glory into which He would enter after His decease. . . . Their presence [that of Moses and Elijah] . . . was a symbol that the Law and the Prophets henceforth gave place to a higher Dispensation; but they had also another mission. They had passed through death, or, at least, from life, and knew the triumph that lay beyond mortality to the faithful servants of God. Who could speak to Him as they, of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem, and temper the gloom of its anticipation? Their presence spoke of the grave conquered, and of the eternal glory beyond.⁴¹

“Lord, it is good for us to be here,” Peter exclaimed, “if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles [booths]; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.” While he was still speaking, a luminous cloud overshadowed them—not the thick cloud of Sinai but the Shekinah of God’s presence—and they heard a voice commanding, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” The three apostles prostrated themselves in awe, but Jesus touched them, saying, “Arise, and be not afraid”; and as they “lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.”

Peter, James, and John had seen not only the Son of man, but also the Son of God, coincident. The “Christ of God” Peter had declared was radiantly revealed for a moment unconditioned by time or flesh.

Among its intended lessons may be the following: First, to teach that, in spite of the calumnies which the Pharisees had heaped on Jesus, the old and new dispensations are in harmony with each other. To this end the author and the restorer of the old dispensation talk with the

founder of the new. . . . Secondly, to teach that the new dispensation was superior to the old. Moses and Elias appear as inferior to Jesus, not merely since their faces did not, so far as we know, shine like the sun, but chiefly because the voice from the excellent glory commanded to hear *him*, in preference to them. Thirdly, to gird up the energies of Jesus for the great agony which was so soon to excruciate him. Fourthly, to comfort the hearts of the disciples, who, being destined to see their master, whom they had left all to follow, nailed to a cross, to be themselves persecuted, and to suffer the want of all things, were in danger of despair. But by being eyewitnesses of his majesty they became convinced that his humiliation, even though he descended into the place of the dead, was voluntary, and could not continue long.⁴²

Its value is symbolic. Silence regarding it is enjoined by Jesus, and practiced by the disciples until the Resurrection, with which it is closely connected in significance. The problem of the transfigured body of Jesus and of the Resurrection body is the same. . . .

The great lesson for the disciples was that the dreadful shame of His cross was really glory, and that all suffering is ultimately radiant with heavenly beauty, being perfected in Christ. Peter's suggestion of the three tents is an attempt to materialize and make permanent the vision, to win the crown without the cross. The vision vanished, and they saw "Jesus only." It was real, but only a glimpse and foretaste. By loyalty once more to the Master, in the common ways of life to which they returned, the disciples would come to share the eternal glory of the Risen Lord.⁴³

As they came down from the mountain Jesus directed them: "Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead" (Mt. 17:9). They obeyed, but they pondered among themselves the meaning of his words. Matthew alone includes the word "again" as part of Jesus' statement. It indicates that this was for Jesus a resurrection (compare Mt. 26:32), and his transfigured appearance on Resurrection morning gave sustained and tangible evidence of the glory earlier manifested at his Transfiguration.

Second Foretelling of Death and Resurrection

Mt. 17:22, 23; Mk. 9:30–32; Lu. 9:43–45

The following day when Jesus rejoined the other nine apostles, who had waited at the foot of the mountain, he healed the lunatic child they had failed to cure during his absence (Mt. 17:14–21; Mk. 9:14–29; Lu. 9:37–43; see p. 364).

As they passed unobtrusively through the countryside on their way homeward to Capernaum, Jesus a second time impressed on the Twelve the imminence of his death and resurrection, turning their attention again to the ordeal awaiting him—to the depths he must plumb before he could enter into his full glory:

"The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day." He urged "Let these sayings sink down into your ears."

Still they remained in ignorance of his meaning. They were saddened, "but they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him."

Jesus' Payment of Tribute

Mt. 17:24–27

Shortly after their return to Capernaum Peter was accosted by collectors of the Temple tax, who asked, "Doth not your master pay tribute?" (This tribute was the didrachme—a half-shekel, worth about thirty-three cents, the only silver coin of the Jews—demanded under Mosaic Law and dutifully paid by every male Israelite over the age of twenty.) Regarded as a "ransom for his soul," the tax went toward the maintenance of the Temple and its services (Ex. 30:11–16). It was payable from the first of Adar (March), but was usually collected close to Passover, between the fifteenth and twenty-fifth of Adar, by moneychangers (sent out by the Sanhedrin) who set up their tables in every town in which Jews resided. For a nominal fee these men exchanged foreign currencies into the prescribed half-shekel.

During Passover they set up their tables in the Temple court for the convenience of the thousands of pilgrims, who deposited their money in one of thirteen trumpet-shaped boxes that stood in the Temple treasury, the Court of the Women.

Jesus' payment of this tax may have been overdue, as he had been almost constantly traveling and had not attended the preceding Passover. He was not opposed to Temple worship, as his cleansing of the Temple indicated, nor is there any indication in the Gospels that he had not paid this tax the two years before. To the tax collector's question Peter, acting on his own initiative, replied, "Yea," in quick defense of the Master, unaware that any principle was involved. Jesus, conscious of all matters that related to himself and his work, knew what had transpired; as Peter came into the house where Jesus was staying Jesus put a question to him before Peter could broach the subject: "What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?" At Peter's reply, "Of strangers," Jesus declared, "Then are the children free."

It was not customary for kings to take tribute from, or tax, their own children, and therefore, as Lord of the temple, and Son of the King of heaven, he was exempt from this tax; nevertheless, as he was to fulfil all righteousness as a Jew, he conformed to the custom.⁴⁴

Having made clear to Peter by this simile his exemption from human impositions, Jesus commanded, "Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee." Matthew, the former collector of Roman taxes, alone records this incident.

Discourse

Humility and Forgiveness Mt. 18; Mk. 9:33–50; Lu. 9:46–50

As the apostles had walked with Jesus on the road to Capernaum they had pushed aside his reiterated prophecy of his death; instead they began arguing among themselves as to who would be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, each vying for the highest position in the government of the kingdom. Jesus did not allow this error of rivalry to remain unchallenged. When they reached his headquarters in Capernaum he sat down to instruct the Twelve concerning their true office and service: "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all." He took a little child and, lifting him up in his arms, said to them: "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Conversion must be thorough; not only must the heart be turned to God in general, and from earthly to heavenly things, but in particular, except ye be converted from that carnal ambition which still rankles within you, into that freedom from all such feelings which ye see in this child, ye have neither part nor lot in the kingdom at all; and he who in this feature has most of the child, is highest there.⁴⁵

He spoke of the duties of Christian brotherhood. His disciples were to avoid giving offense, to avoid causing any of his "little ones"—the innocent, the youthful, the immature—to stumble or to sin; they were to eschew by strict self-discipline all that would lead to evil. Every effort was to be made to save those who had left the right path.

Jesus gave clear directives concerning the spirit that should animate them should it be necessary to discipline a fellow Christian: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

Jesus promised his Church the answer to their prayers: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Peter asked the question, "How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" Rabbinical law declared a threefold forgiveness was sufficient, but Jesus swept away all limits: "I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven," and emphasized his point with an unforgettable parable (the only one attributed to the third period of the Galilean ministry).

Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Mt. 18:23–35)

"The kingdom of heaven [is] likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants." One servant who owed the king ten thousand talents could not pay. The king thereupon commanded that he and his household be sold for payment. When the servant petitioned, "Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all," the king compassionately forgave him his debt. But the same servant went out to seek by violence from a fellow servant the trifling sum of one hundred denarii, and when that one could not pay and importuned, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all," the servant, without pity, cast him into prison. When the king heard what that servant had done he was angry and had him imprisoned until he should pay all that he owed.

A talent was computed at approximately one thousand dollars, and ten thousand talents (ten million dollars) indicated a fabulous debt. One hundred denarii amounted to twenty dollars, a denarius equaling about twenty cents. The first servant, therefore, refused to forgive what approximated one five-hundred-thousandth of what he himself had been forgiven. Forgiveness had come to the first petitioner as the result of a prayer for mercy, but when he failed to extend the same charity to his fellow man he cut himself off from that mercy.

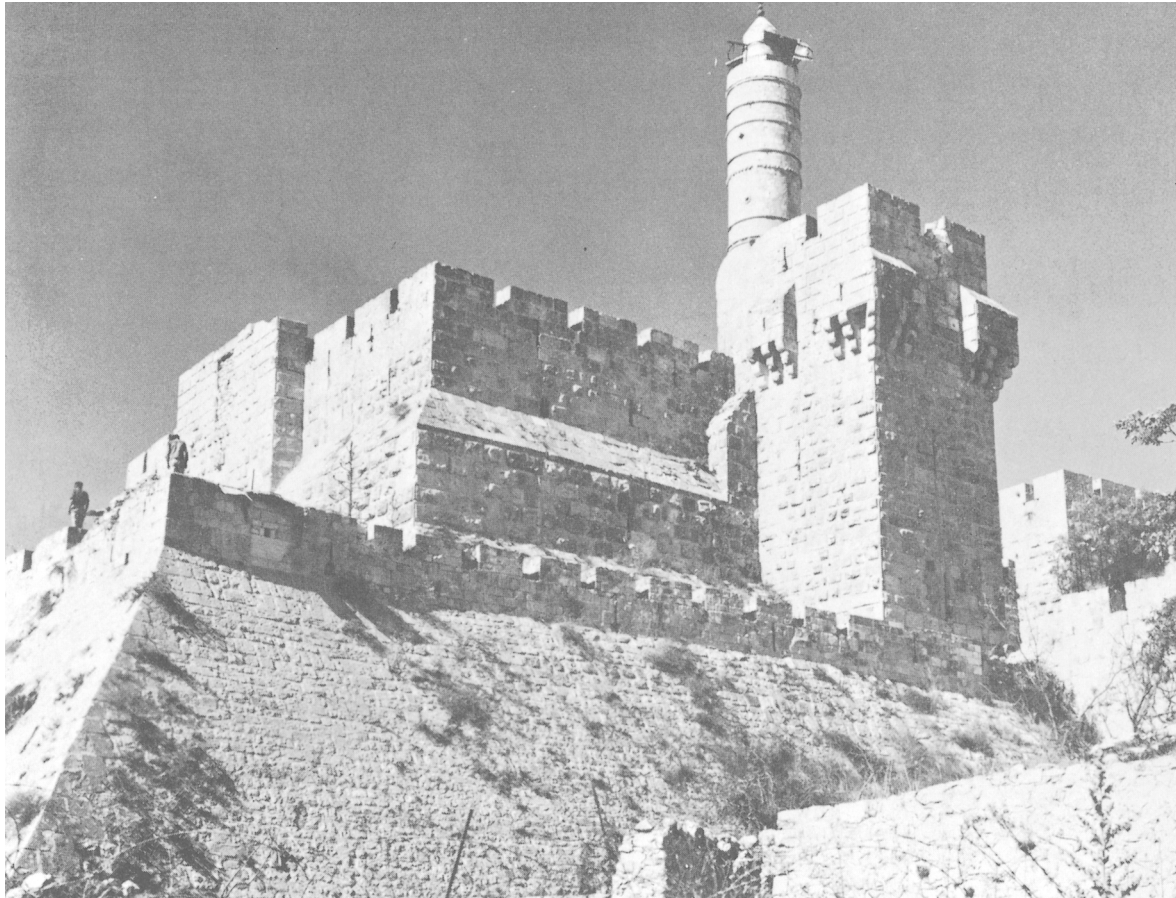
"So likewise," Jesus warned, "shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

Jesus nowhere says that God treats lightly the unfilial and unfraternal spirit—which, in the gospel, is the essence of sinfulness.⁴⁶

By this parable Jesus illustrated how small is the debt man is asked to forgive his fellow man, and how enormous the debt the Father willingly forgives the children of men.

In all the precepts of this vital discourse Jesus

Tower of David, located near the Jaffa Gate entrance to the old walled city of Jerusalem. The lower part of this massive masonry, dating back to the days of King Herod, must have been a familiar sight to Jesus and his disciples. Israel Government Tourist Office.



nourished his Church; and these fundamental Christian principles had direct bearing on its subsequent harmony and brotherhood.

Feast of Tabernacles

Jn. 7:1–8:59

It was autumn (29 A.D.) and the eight-day harvest Feast of Tabernacles (one of the three great annual feasts observed in Jerusalem, see p. 61) was at hand. Jesus' Galilean ministry was over; the break with the people and the Pharisees had not lessened. Jesus had not assumed the kingship over his nation as the people had hoped, and the religious leaders stubbornly resisted the spiritual demands of the kingdom.

More than a year and a half had elapsed since Jesus' last visit to Jerusalem. He had stayed away from the national feasts because on his last visit the Jews had tried to kill him, accusing him of blasphemy and Sabbath-breaking. Jesus' brothers urged him to attend the feast with them, but he demurred: "I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come," but later he did go (in secret to escape public attention, for he knew that his enemies were still seeking to kill him). It required resolute courage to return to Jerusalem to face a powerful, hostile priesthood and a half-believing people, and to assert more forcibly his Messianic claim. The Sanhedrin hoped he would come so he would be within their reach. They searched everywhere for him at the feast, but not until the fourth day did Jesus suddenly

appear and, pressed with the urgency of his message, teach openly in the Temple.

He spoke so authoritatively that the people asked, "Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ . . . When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?"

On each day of this festival the people had lived outdoors in leafy booths—on housetops, in the streets of the city, and on hillsides—to commemorate their wilderness wandering; each morning the priests had drawn water from the Pool of Siloam to pour out on the altar as a reminder of God's provision of water in the wilderness, and had made the required sacrifices. Daily the people had marched in procession around the altar (seven times on the seventh day), carrying in the left hand a citron and in the right a palm branch intertwined with willow and myrtle. Each evening under the great light of the huge candelabra in the Court of the Women they danced and sang in joyous revelry. It was on the last day of the feast, the "great day" that celebrated Israel's entrance into Canaan so abundant in its springs of water, that Jesus lifted the symbolism of the pouring out of water to its full significance. Whereas the priests had poured water, through him would pour the Holy Spirit. On the ears of the multitude fell his arresting voice, "if any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." As he had offered the water of life to the woman of Samaria, so

now he urged his nation to partake of the living water of the Spirit.

Some of his hearers cried, "Of a truth this is the Prophet"; "This is the Christ." When the Pharisees and Sadducees heard these comments they were goaded into action, realizing the threat to their security. They sent Temple officers to seize Jesus; but the soldiers found themselves unable to obey the order, reporting, "Never man spake like this man."

Discourse

The Light of the World

Jn. 8:12-30

As the day drew to a close the great candelabra in the Court of the Women were lighted for the final festivities. Either on this night in the blaze of this illumination or early the following morning after the healing of the woman taken in adultery (Jn. 8:2-11; see p. 369), Jesus made another appeal to the people: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." With this announcement Christ proclaimed himself the pure Light of truth that dispels the world's darkness of sin and ignorance (Is. 42:6; 60:1-3; Lu. 2:32).

This teaching was immediately challenged by the Pharisees. Jesus justified his statement by Jewish law: "Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go. . . . It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true [Deut. 17:6; 19:15]. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me." He rested with confidence on the testimony of these two divine witnesses.

They asked, "Where is thy Father?" Jesus replied, "Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also."

The conflict grew sharper as Jesus warned his listeners that they would perish if they did not believe in him as their God-sent Savior: "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come." Ignoring his warning, they fastened only on that part of his statement that he was going beyond their reach, so Jesus explained, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."

Still it was as though he spoke another language, for they questioned, "Who art thou?" Patiently he answered, "Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. . . . When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always

those things that please him." His words were spoken with such conviction and power that many of the Jews of Jerusalem believed.

Discourse

Spiritual Freedom

Jn. 8:31-59

Jesus' discourse on spiritual freedom followed as a natural sequence his discourse on the light of the world. Turning to those who were persuaded he was the Messiah, he instructed them more fully concerning the saving power and freedom his teachings conferred on those who live according to them: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Some countered "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man." They were thinking of nationalism; he of freedom from the thralldom of sin. His reply explained this deeper concept: "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Pointing out the inconsistency of their claim to be Abraham's seed while they tried to kill him, a man who had told them the truth, he said, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. . . . Ye do the deeds of your father."

When some contended "We have one Father, even God," Jesus replied, "if God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word." With fearsome clarity he denounced them as children of the devil who were following willingly and willfully their own sinful desires: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. . . . If I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not because ye are not of God."

Furiously they threw at him the epithet *Samaritan* and accused him of having a devil. Patiently Jesus replied, "I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth." They had been forced by his works to acknowledge that he possessed a measure of divine power, but they refused to admit that he was the Christ and accord him the dignity and honor due the Son.

Bringing them back to the subject of his discourse—spiritual freedom—Jesus promised the re-

ward of immortality to those who continued in his teachings: "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." At this mention of immortality the Jews retorted, "Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?" Jesus answered, "If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me. . . . Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad."

Immediately they seized on the literal point that his obvious age precluded his having seen Abraham. There was only one answer he could give: his divine pre-existence. Even though he knew this truth would be misunderstood, Jesus unhesitatingly gave it: "I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." This assertion of his eternal existence was a further revelation of the nature of the Christ and explained many of the statements he had already made about himself.

You see me, indeed, now a man like yourselves, and I appear to you of as late origin and as short a life, but before all generations I had a being with him, who told the Israelites his name was, I AM.⁴⁷

Instantly his words were branded the height of blasphemy. Enraged that he dared to employ the same sacred term as that used by God when He revealed Himself as Jehovah to Moses (Ex. 3:14), the Jews picked up stones to stone him to death; "but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by."

Healing of Man Born Blind

Jn. 9

Either on this day or the following Sabbath Jesus, despite Sabbath restrictions against healing, restored the sight of a beggar born blind by anointing his eyes and sending him to wash in the Pool of Siloam—the only healing recorded during this visit to Jerusalem (see p. 365). It was a practical illustration that the "Christ was the light of the world in a double sense, opening the understanding as well as the eyes of mankind."

Word of this astounding miracle on the Sabbath spread rapidly; the restored man was brought before the chief Pharisees and asked to recount his cure. The council was soon hopelessly divided: some said "This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day," while others argued in perplexity "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" Turning again to the man, they asked his opinion of Jesus. He answered without hesitation: "He is a prophet."

The Pharisees refused to believe the beggar had

been born blind; they sent for his parents and questioned them closely, hoping to minimize or refute the miracle. But his parents would admit only that he was their son and that he had been born blind. They feared to say more because before the feast the authorities had threatened to expel from the synagogue any who acknowledged Jesus as Christ—a dreaded censure that spelled social and religious ostracism.

Frustrated in their attempt to discredit the healing, the Pharisees then ordered the man to ascribe it to God, claiming Jesus was a sinner. But the man reaffirmed that Jesus had healed him. Again they interrogated him. The man answered, "I have told you already, and ye did not hear . . . will ye also be his disciples?" In abusive language they accused him of being Jesus' disciple; they were disciples of Moses; as for Jesus, they did not know his origin. (They had been told repeatedly that he was sent from God, but to acknowledge his claim was to admit that he superseded Moses, an admission that would have undermined their authority.) In astonishment the healed man exclaimed, "Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing." Angered at the temerity of the beggar (whom they regarded as a sinner since they believed blindness was a punishment for wickedness), the Pharisees excommunicated him. However, the door of the kingdom of heaven was still open to this son of Abraham, for Jesus later sought him out and revealed himself to him as the Messiah, and the man instantly believed.

Discourse The Good Shepherd

Jn. 10:1–21

After the confession of faith by the healed man, Jesus remarked to the crowd standing by: "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see [Phillips, think they can see] might be made blind." Some of the Pharisees asked, "Are we blind also?" Jesus answered that their blindness was willful, for they claimed to possess light, yet they stubbornly rejected God's Messiah: "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

The incredible blindness of the Pharisees gave rise to Jesus' discourse on the Good Shepherd. Their words and acts illustrated their unfitness to teach or interpret God's love to men. What sort of shepherds could these religious leaders be for the flock of Israel?

Jesus had already proved himself a true shepherd. He had come not to shut men out from God's mercy but to open to them the door of the kingdom: he had come not to condemn men for sin but to save them from it.

In the metaphorical language of two interwoven parables he drew a sharp contrast between a good shepherd and a hireling.

"He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

"But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

"To him the porter [doorkeeper] openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

"And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers."

A peculiar, inherent characteristic of sheep is their loyalty to one shepherd; their response to his voice only; their complete dependence on his care, for unlike other creatures they are unable to protect or fend for themselves. During the day the shepherd led his flock to pasturage and water, watched that none strayed or fell, and cared for the young; at night he tended their wounds and passed them under his rod or stout wooden staff into a sheepfold, a walled enclosure or natural cave, and guarded the door against marauders and the attacks of predators.

Realizing that the Pharisees did not understand this parable, Jesus now spoke in the first person and identified himself as both the Good Shepherd of his Father's flock and the Door of the Sheepfold. By him alone could men enter the kingdom:

"I am the door of the sheep [the way into the sheepfold].

"All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy:

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

"But he that is an hireling . . . whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep."

As he spoke of the sacrifice he would make he envisioned a flock, a fold, a church that would embrace all men, all nations, Jew and Gentile.

"Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

His closing words indicated his wholly voluntary sacrifice of himself, actuated by perfect love for the Father and by the desire to fulfill His will: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

This was a mysterious statement to his hearers; some thought he was mad, and even those who believed him wondered. Its meaning did not become clear until after his death and resurrection.

Feast of Dedication

Jn. 10:22-42

Whether Jesus stayed in Jerusalem after the Feast of Tabernacles or left Judaea is not known, but two months later he was again in Jerusalem, this time to attend the Feast of Dedication (see p. 61), "and it was winter." (Some Gospel harmonies place Jesus' attendance at the Feast of Dedication in the Peraean ministry.)

As he walked in Solomon's Porch, the east portico of the Temple, the Jewish authorities immediately converged on him to demand, "If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus replied, "I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." He went on to tell his attackers that his sheep were the believers he had won and these he could never lose, because they were given him by his omnipotent Father. Their safety was assured, for his work was really the Father's work. "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than

all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."

At his absolute statement of oneness with the Father the Jews were infuriated. They picked up stones, as they had at the Feast of Tabernacles, intending to stone him for blasphemy. He checked them with a quotation from their own Scripture, in which the term gods had been applied to the judges of Israel (Ps. 82:6), then asked, "Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world,

Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" Again Jesus cited his works as evidence of his divinity: "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him." The repeated linking of his name with God's only angered the Jewish religious hierarchy more. An attempt was made to seize him, but he escaped and returned to Galilee.



View across the Kidron Valley to the Mount of Olives east of Jerusalem. Jordan Tourism Office New York

Peraean Ministry

Early in the winter of 29–30 A.D. Jesus left Galilee, never to return. He knew “the time was come that he should be received up,” but he “steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem” whatever the cost (Lu. 9:51). He journeyed slowly by way of Peraea (called in the New Testament the land “beyond Jordan”), a narrow district east of the Jordan extending roughly from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea—the most picturesque part of Palestine, with thickly wooded hills and well-watered fruitful valleys. Brought under Jewish domination during the rule of the Maccabees, Peraea remained predominantly Jewish until the time of Roman rule under the Herods.

Jesus now began to evangelize this semi-Gentile region as he moved toward Jerusalem. Most of the events attributed to this period are recorded in Luke’s Gospel; he provides a number of Jesus’ important discourses and parables not found elsewhere in the Gospels, but is silent regarding Jesus’ exact route through Peraea or the cities visited.

As the Master observed the signs of his coming rejection, his discourses became more forceful, his parables more pointed, and he accelerated his warnings to the nation of judgment to come for disbelief. He lamented for Jerusalem; like the husbandman in the parable of the barren fig tree he patiently labored over this “barren” nation, pressing on to instill in humble hearts the requirements of discipleship. There was so much to tell, so little time in which to tell it. Toward the close of this period of about four months he went to Bethany (in Judaea) to raise Lazarus from the dead. He then went to Ephraim in northern Judaea; from there he traveled again into Peraea; and then—by way of Jericho—to Jerusalem.

Commissioning of the Seventy

Lu. 10:1–24

As Jesus left Galilee for the last time, he started south through Samaria. Repulsed by the inhospitality of a Samaritan village, he changed his course, fording the Jordan (probably near Scythopolis), and chose a road running south through Perea (Mt. 19:1; Mk. 10:1; Lu. 9:51–56).

Knowing his time was short, he felt the necessity of spreading the gospel to as many as possible. He increased the number of his missionaries, appointing seventy disciples (in addition to the Twelve) and sent them in advance by twos into the cities of Perea, where there were many non-Jews as well as Jews. “The harvest truly is great,” he said, “but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.”

The Jews held, agreeably to Gen. 10, that the human race was made up of 70 peoples, 14 descended from Japhet, 30 from Ham, and 26 from Shem.⁴⁸

He [Jesus] determined, therefore, to send out no fewer than seventy, which, in Jewish opinion, was the number of the nations of the world. The lesson could not be doubtful. It was a significant announcement that, for the first time in the history of man, a universal religion was being proclaimed.⁴⁹

His careful instructions to the Seventy were similar to those given the apostles. They too were to heal the sick and to preach that the kingdom of God is at hand; the command to go only to the house of Israel was omitted.

The journey of the Seventy was not an extended one. On their return they reported with joy—“Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.” While they exulted in the immediate fruits of their mission, Jesus perceived the deeper significance of their accomplishment and confided it to them: “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven [Moffatt, Yes, I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning]” (compare Rev. 12:9–12). He saw the sway of Satan broken as his own messengers wielded the power of his teaching, and he foresaw the ultimate triumph of the kingdom.

He not only confirmed their power to heal, but also assured them of authority over all the forces of evil: “Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you” (compare Ps. 91:13, 14). He also directed their thought to the higher attainment and ever-enduring reward: “Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven” (compare Heb. 12:23; Rev. 21:27).

On this same occasion Jesus “rejoiced in spirit” “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.”

Visit to Bethany

Lu. 10: 38–42

Not long after the return of the Seventy, Jesus made a short visit into Judaea to the home of Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus. These three lived in Bethany, a village on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, two miles from Jerusalem. This is the first mention of Jesus’ friendship with this family.

Of the two sisters Mary was the more earnest disciple. Jesus found her an eager listener, for she “sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word,” while “Martha was cumbered about much serving.” At Martha’s complaint that Mary did not help, he gently chided: “Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

Discourse Prayer

Lu. 11:1–13

Once during his Peraean ministry, as Jesus was praying, the disciples asked, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.” In response he taught them a prayer that was a communion with the Father and a petition for His grace, a desire for His kingdom, a yielding to divine will, and a trust in Him to meet daily needs of soul and body. This prayer of our Lord (found in the Sermon on the Mount [Mt. 6:9–13]) appears in Luke’s Gospel, possibly in its original form.

He followed the prayer with the brief parable of the importunate friend (Lu. 11:5–8), illustrating how perseverance in prayer brings its answer. As a man does not turn away from the persistent request of a friend in need or a father give his children a stone when asked for bread, so their heavenly Father will not refuse a suppliant, but will give the highest gift of all—the Holy Spirit—to those who ask.

Discourse Blasphemous Pharisees and Scribes

Lu. 11:15–54

Even in Perea Jesus was not free from the hostility of his enemies, who continued to dog his footsteps. The healing of a dumb man possessed of a devil precipitated a controversy among the Pharisees who witnessed it (Lu. 11:14; compare Mt. 12:22; see p. 361). Some charged that Jesus was casting out devils by Beelzebub; others asked for a spectacular “sign from heaven.”

The accusation that he was in league with Satan drew from Jesus a strong refutation and a warning discourse. "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? . . . But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you." And by the short parable of the binding of the strong man (Lu. 11:21,22; compare Mt. 12:29) he taught that Christ is stronger than Satan and can despoil him of his goods, warning, "He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth."

By another short parable—that of the man with an unclean spirit (Lu. 11:24–26; compare Mt. 12:43–45)—Jesus likened the Pharisaic consciousness, which dared to suggest that his healing work was done in alliance with Satan, to the awful condition of a man's mind that had been emptied of a foul spirit but—because nothing pure and good had been put in its place—the foul spirit had returned, bringing with it "seven other spirits more wicked than himself." Jesus observed: "The last state of that man is worse than the first."

One commentator says of these two parables:

In the one case, Satan is *dislodged by Christ*, and so finds, in all future assaults, the house preoccupied; in the other, he merely goes out and comes in again, finding the house "EMPTY" (Matthew 12:44) of any rival, and all ready to welcome him back. This explains the important saying that comes in *between the two parables*, v. 23. *Neutrality in religion there is none*. The absence of positive attachment to Christ involves hostility to Him.⁵⁰

Referring to their insistence on a sign from heaven, Jesus called them a wicked generation and told them (as he had the Pharisees of Galilee) that no sign would be given but that of Jonah: "As Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation." The queen of Sheba (who had come from far away to hear Solomon) and the Ninevites (who had repented at the preaching of Jonah) would condemn this generation at the judgment, for, "behold, a greater than Solomon is here . . . behold, a greater than Jonas is here."

On the same day that Jesus answered the attacks of the Pharisees he was invited to eat with some of them at one of their homes—probably a light midday meal. His host expressed surprise when his guest sat down to eat without performing the traditional ablutions. The time for plain speaking had come. Unhesitatingly Jesus exposed Pharisaic hypocrisy, upbraiding those present for their foolish adherence to the endless ritual of the washing of hands and food utensils: "Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools, did not he that

made that which is without make that which is within also?" He urged these greedy men to dispense charity to the needy in a spirit of love—thus they would be truly clean within and without: "Rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you."

Jesus went on to rebuke the hypocrisy of their punctilious tithing while they failed miserably in their greater duty to the moral law. "Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

When the scribes who were also present heard themselves included in the strong denunciation of the Pharisees "as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them," they protested, since to them nothing held greater defilement than a corpse or a grave. Their hypocrisy was scathingly exposed. These lawyers who had taken upon themselves the clarification of the Law had instead imposed on the nation a merciless yoke of traditional scribal law. Jesus charged that while their forebears had killed God's prophets, they were killing the spirit of prophecy, shutting the door of the kingdom and taking away "the key of knowledge" from men.

Jesus' indictment marked an open rift with these two parties and incited them to fanatic determination somehow to entrap him.

Discourse

Trust in God's Care

Watchfulness: Christ's Coming

Lu.12

As Jesus left the Pharisee's house he was at once surrounded by a crowd so great that its members trampled each other. Still filled with righteous indignation, he proceeded first to warn his disciples to avoid hypocrisy: "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known." He exhorted them to proclaim their faith openly—had he not just given them a notable example of courage?—to trust God's care in all circumstances, and to be unafraid of what men could do to them for their confession of Christ. "I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him." And with great simplicity he told them that He who valued the smallest sparrow valued the very hairs of their heads and would not forget them (compare Mt. 10:28–31).

Acknowledging him before men was vitally important: "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God." Should they be accused for their faith before the tribunals of men, the Holy Ghost would teach them what to answer.

When a listener interrupted to ask if Jesus would act as judge in a matter of inheritance, he warned against covetousness with the parable of the rich fool (Lu. 12:16–21; see p. 288), and against preoccupation with self-preservation (Lu. 12:22–24; compare Mt. 6:25–34). Guiding them away from the concerns of daily life, he urged the people to seek their spiritual inheritance, the kingdom whose treasures are imperishable, and reminded them in three short parables that they were to be as servants continually watchful and prepared.

Parable of the Watchful Servants

In the first (Lu. 12:35–38) he said, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately." Those vigilant servants who could joyously open the door instantly to hail that return—regardless the hour—would be honored by the lord of the house at a repast at which he himself would serve them. Christ would exalt the faithful and himself serve them at the feast of heaven.

Parable of the Goodman of the House

Because his coming would be secret and sudden, like that of a "thief," this second parable (Lu. 12:39,40; compare Mt. 24:43,44) warned them to watch and not be like the goodman (householder) who failed to guard his house and allowed it to be broken into.

Parable of the Faithful and Faithless Stewards

Peter asked, "Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?" Jesus responded indirectly with a third parable (Lu. 12:42–48; compare Mt. 24:45–51) implying that he referred to those who would minister to his Church. This parable contrasted a faithful steward with an unfaithful one. The former wisely performed the duties of caring for the master's household during his master's absence; the latter neglected his responsibilities, indulged himself, and abused his fellow servants. Of the faithful steward Jesus remarked, "Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath"; and of the unfaithful steward, who knew his master's wishes and yet was disobedient, "That servant . . . shall be beaten with many stripes." To the servant who did not carry out his duties

because he lacked knowledge of his lord's will, the penalty was less severe.

On a note of urgency Jesus foretold the conflict and division his gospel would engender (Lu. 12:49–59): "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?" He foresaw that the spirituality of his gospel would in time destroy all the world's evil. In full consciousness of the cup of sorrow he would have to drink to finish his mission, he was now anxious to hasten its accomplishment. In this solemn moment he confided to them the weight upon his spirit: "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"

Referring again to the purging effect of his gospel on the lives of men, Jesus warned that it would bring conflict that would sever even men's closest relationships: "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law."

In the closing words of the discourse Jesus appealed to his hearers to choose now the salvation he offered, else they would remain in bondage to the world until they had paid "the very last mite" (Lu. 12:54–59).

Parables of the Peraean Ministry

At this point let us examine the principal parables of Jesus during his Peraean ministry. They had differing subjects: grace, redemption, salvation, Christian conduct, warning, judgment. With one exception (Mt. 20:1–16) they are found only in Luke's Gospel. These memorable parables had direct application to the nation as well as to the individual; they are not only effective concrete illustrations of Jesus' gospel, but when seen in their order and mounting significance they are also strong links in the chain of his spiritual logic, amplifying his teachings of the Sermon on the Mount.

Good Samaritan

Lu. 10:25–37

Somewhere near the beginning of the Peraean ministry Jesus spoke the parable of the Good Samaritan. When a certain lawyer tested Jesus—"Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"—Jesus caused him to answer

his own question out of the Law. The man replied that one must love God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself. When Jesus then responded, "This do, and thou shalt live," the lawyer began to justify himself: "And who is my neighbour?" Like most of the Jews of his time, he held a circumscribed view of his fellow man, seeing only the Israelite as his neighbor.

This very question, like Peter's (Mt. xviii:21), was one involving a wrong condition of mind. He who asked, "Whom shall I love?" proved that he did not understand what love meant; for he wished to have it known beforehand where he should be at liberty to stop, while the very essence of love is, that it has no limit, except in its own inability to proceed further, that it is a debt which we must be forever paying (Rom. xiii:8).⁵¹

Jesus answered the lawyer's question with a parable. "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead." Three travelers saw him as they journeyed: the first two, a priest and a Levite, "came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side"; but the third, a Samaritan, "came where he was" and with compassion bound up his wounds, poured in wine to cleanse and oil to heal, put him on his own beast and "brought him to an inn, and took care of him." The following day, as he departed, the Samaritan directed the innkeeper to tend the wounded man, promising to defray the cost.

Jesus' choice of travelers was trenchant. The priest and the Levite were respected religionists of the lawyer's own nation, while the Samaritan was both cursed and hated by the Jews; yet only the Samaritan, moved by the true spirit of brotherhood, practiced the mercy and benevolence that should have sprung naturally from the other two. Jesus implied that one's neighbor is the man in need, wherever he may be, but his principal emphasis was on the necessity of unqualified neighborliness. "Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?" asked Jesus. And when the lawyer admitted, "He that shewed mercy on him," Jesus enjoined, "Go, and do thou likewise."

Throughout his ministry this was the quality of love Jesus exemplified toward suffering humanity, robbed of its spiritual heritage, stripped of righteousness, wounded by transgressions. Christ bound up the brokenhearted, healed the sick, and abundantly poured the balm of the Spirit into the human heart.

Importunate Friend

This parable (Lu. 11:5-8) is treated in the discourse on prayer (see p. 285).

Rich Fool

Lu. 12:16-21

One of Jesus' important discourses to a large audience was interrupted by a petty personal request from one of his listeners: "Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me." Following his invariable rule, Jesus refused to pass judgment in a civil matter; understanding the underlying motive behind the man's petition, he rebuked self-gratification: "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

He emphasized the point with the parable of the rich fool: "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?" He thought to pull down his barns and build greater that he might store his surplus and say to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." But God said to him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"

Jesus summed up the futility of such worldly reasoning: "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." He did not condemn normal thrift, industry, comfort, or even wealth; he did condemn self-indulgence and trust in perishable material possessions, sins detrimental to the natural yearnings of the soul toward God. Always the burden of the Master's message was that men should concern themselves with the kingdom of God and set about the laying up of "treasures in heaven" (Mt. 6:20; Lu. 12:33).

Barren Fig Tree

Lu. 13:6-9

When Jesus was informed and questioned about Pilate's slaying of certain Galileans (possibly for suspected sedition), as they were offering sacrifices, he touched on the viewpoint common among the Jews that great calamities were inflicted in divine vengeance as punishment for great sin (Lu. 13:1-5): "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? . . . Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them (an incident about which nothing is known), think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

A forceful parable of warning to his nation followed this exhortation to repent. "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he

unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" Israel had been set apart from the nations, spiritually nourished and cared for through the Law and the Prophets, yet had failed to bring forth the fruit of faith in the season of its Messiah's advent. Jesus' compassionate long-suffering for his nation is evident in the answer of the gardener: "Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."

The warning of this parable was later illustrated in the miracle of the withering of the fruitless fig tree (see pp. 301–302), and openly stated in the Master's teaching, at the Last Supper, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered" (Jn. 15:6).

Wedding Guest

Lu. 14:7–11

Once when Jesus dined as a guest in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he noted how the Pharisees and scribes elbowed each other for the choice seats at the tables (the custom was for each guest to seat himself according to his own estimate of his social standing unless escorted to his seat by the host). Without hesitation Jesus rebuked their self-exaltation and pretension to honor: "When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that . . . he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee." George A. Buttrick comments: "Under the guise of a lesson in table manners, Jesus explains that in heaven's household humility is a lovely and essential grace."⁵² Jesus' concluding statement on the value of humility was "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

In New Testament times it was often the custom for an entire village, including the handicapped and the poor, to be invited to an elaborate feast. Perhaps it was with this charitable practice in mind that Jesus went on to teach of the true hospitality of a host—not a generosity that included one's friends and brethren capable of repaying the invitation, but rather a mercy that extended to the poor, the maimed, and the blind who might never repay (Lu. 14:12–14). Such hospitality would have full recompense "at the resurrection of the just."

Great Supper

Lu. 14:15–24; compare Mt. 22:1–14

When one of the men who sat at the table heard Jesus speak of the recompense that would come at the resurrection of the righteous, it brought to his mind the great feast which the Jews anticipated at the opening of the Messianic kingdom. Believing that every righteous son of Abraham would participate (compare Mt. 8:11), he observed piously, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God."

Jesus' answer was designed to shake the complacent attitude of this man and of those who shared the same idea. In figurative language he told them the kingdom had come; the feast was already prepared by the Son's presence among them, but they were refusing the Father's invitation to participate. "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse." No one refused outright, but each put first his own interests and cares.

One said, "I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it."

Another said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them."

Another said, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come."

Then the master of the house, angered by the slights to his invitation, commanded his servant, "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind." And these physically and spiritually needy willingly came. When he heard there was yet room at his table the host said to his servant, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." The invitation to those in "the highways and hedges" outside the city foreshadowed the extension of Christ's gospel to the world and the inclusion of Gentiles in the kingdom.

Turning from the parable to his own mission and openly calling that supper his own, Jesus spoke of those who refused to receive his teaching: "I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." (Compare Rev. 19:9: "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.")

Counting Cost of Discipleship

Lu. 14:25–35

Crowds of people followed Jesus as he journeyed through Peraea, some drawn to him because of his

popularity and their hope of worldly benefits, some curious, some believing, some half-believing. In the strongest terms he enjoined them to take serious thought about the exacting requirements of "following" him, for he wanted as disciples only those who sought him with spiritual motives. "If any man come to me, and hate [*Strong's Concordance*, love less] not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (compare Mt. 10:37-39). A man must put his allegiance to Christ above all human affections; yea, he must put it before life itself.

To follow him in the Way required complete self-abnegation; to underline his point Jesus urged, in a twofold parable, that every professing disciple consider most earnestly the cost of enduring to the end, lest his work count for nothing. "Which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish."

Continuing, Jesus admonished his would-be followers to remember that in this world the odds against them would be great. They must first ask themselves if their faith was sufficient to enable them to stand against the foe or if they would be forced to compromise: "Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace."

Jesus concluded this parable with a warning to his followers to exercise a living faith: "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out." One commentator notes: "'The salt which has lost its savour' is here the discipleship which refuses to make the sacrifices which Christ demands (vv. 26, 27, 33)."⁵³

Lost Sheep

Lu. 15:1-7

On one occasion the Pharisees and scribes were incensed when many publicans and sinners came to hear Jesus speak. They looked haughtily on these degraded outcasts of their nation as outside the duties of their ministry, whereas Jesus regarded the saving of sinners as an integral part of his. To them it was

pollution to be with such people, but this great teacher loved them; he hesitated neither to associate publicly with them nor to eat at their tables, claiming them for his kingdom.

When the Pharisees and scribes complained, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them," Jesus told three parables that challenged their bigoted and arrogant exclusiveness and illustrated the precious value to the Father of every "lost" or repentant sinner and the joy in heaven over his return to spiritual life. "The first two parables set forth mainly the *seeking* love of God; while the third describes to us rather the rise and growth of repentance responsive to that love."⁵⁴

The first parable was a pastoral one; the loss of a single sheep that had wandered from the flock was of vital concern to the shepherd and he spared no effort in the search for his own. "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have *found* my sheep which was lost."

Jesus drew an analogy. "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."

Lost Piece of Silver

Lu. 15:8-10

The second parable, with its simple domestic setting, restated the truth of the first and emphasized again that all should participate in the joy of others' good. "Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have *found* the piece which I had lost."

Again he concluded, "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

Prodigal Son

Lu. 15:11-32

The narrative of the prodigal son is one of Jesus' most beautiful and poignant parables. This time the sinner was a beloved son who had gone astray—claimed his inheritance before the rightful time and willfully left his father's house.

"A certain man had two sons. . . . And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his

substance with riotous living.” Only when he was reduced to dire want in body and soul—to the extremity of hiring himself out to feed swine and craving their food—did he come to himself. Remembering that the servants in his father’s house fared far better, he determined, “I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.”

“And he arose, and came to his father.” He made the long journey back from that “far country.” “But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.” Humbly this repentant son confessed his guilt and desired only that he be made a servant within his father’s house. But his father received him with love and joy and honor, and commanded all the household to rejoice: “Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is *found*.”

The elder son was angry that his prodigal brother had been lovingly received and welcomed with a feast. Thinking only of his faithful labors in his father’s service through many years, unaware of the purging through which his brother had passed, he would not rejoice. He saw not a brother but a sinner. The father gently reminded him of the inheritance already his: “Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.” He added, “It was meet [fitting] that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.”

The implication was clear in this vignette of parental love. God regards every man as His son; and though a mortal may sin, in God’s sight a man never loses his status as a son. Although he is seemingly lost for a time to the Father—and even to himself—when he turns in repentance from sin he finds himself forgiven and restored to favor. If there was great joy at the return of one prodigal son, should Jesus’ proud listeners begrudge the teaching of the gospel of God’s love to humanity’s outcasts or deny to repentant sinners their place in the kingdom?

Only of another Elder Brother [Jesus] was it true that he never disobeyed one of the Father’s commands, and that all that the Father had was his (cf. Jn. 17:10); he did not grudge his brethren their welcome home, but went into the far country (cf. 19:12) to live with them and die for them, to show them what home was like.⁵⁵

Unjust Steward

Lu. 16:1–13

The parable of the unjust steward, told by Jesus to his disciples, differed from many of his other parables in both approach and subject matter. In it a dishonest steward was rebuked by his master for abusing his office and wasting the wealth entrusted to his care but commended for the diligence he exercised in protecting his selfish personal interests. From the practices of the worldly minded Jesus drew a lesson for the “children of light.”

“A certain rich man . . . called [his steward], and said . . . give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.” So he sent for each one of his master’s debtors, and asked the first, “How much owest thou unto my lord?” He answered, “An hundred measures of oil.” The steward commanded him to “sit down quickly, and write fifty.” To another he asked, “How much owest thou?” and that one answered, “An hundred measures of wheat.” To him the steward said, “Take thy bill, and write fourscore.” The rich man “commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.”

It must not be supposed that our Saviour here meant to commend the practice of deceit and breach of trust. He only recommended the same attention to our heavenly interest as the unjust steward had shewed to his worldly advantage.⁵⁶

While the worldly used the things of this world and the privileged responsibilities afforded them to their own selfish purposes, Jesus’ followers must use theirs for the one high purpose of winning the kingdom; so he urged upon his hearers a right and wise stewardship in the new dispensation. “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon [deceitful riches], who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters. . . . Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” (Judas Iscariot is a classic example of the truth of this parable.)

Unable to refute his teaching, covetous Pharisees standing by sneered at Jesus, suspecting correctly that this parable was directed toward them. His blow at the sin of the love of money struck too close to home, and the more the gospel standard was accepted the more

their deficiencies were exposed. Jesus rebuked them sharply: "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. . . ." (Lu. 16:14–16)

Rich Man and Lazarus

Lu. 16:19–31

To make the immediate truth of his words still clearer to the insolent, unbelieving Pharisees, Jesus gave the parable of Dives ("rich man") and Lazarus, for the Pharisees, relying on their wealth and Abrahamic descent, were not pressing into the kingdom as were the humble. This parable held the sharpest reproof of the unfeeling rich who could countenance, without any stirrings of conscience, the misery of the poor daily before their eyes. Speaking in the eschatological terms of his day, Jesus carried the moral of this highly figurative narrative from the visible world to the invisible.

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores." Lazarus died and "was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." The rich man also died, and "in hell [Gr. *Hades*, Heb. *Sheol*: the underworld] he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." Hopefully relying on his Abrahamic descent, the rich man sought Abraham's mercy, though he himself had showed none, asking that Lazarus be sent to relieve his suffering. Abraham reminded him that he had been blessed in his lifetime, and Lazarus had had a life of hardship; that now Lazarus was comforted; "and beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence."

The rich man then prayed that Abraham send Lazarus to his five brothers to save them; but Abraham said, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." But he remonstrated, "Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." Abraham replied, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

It ought never to be forgotten, that it is not the primary purpose of the parable to teach the fearful consequences which will follow the abuse of wealth and contempt of the poor, but the fearful consequences of unbelief, of having the heart set on this world, and refusing to believe in that

invisible world, here known only to faith, until by a miserable and too late experience of such an unseen world has been discovered. The sin of Dives in its roots is unbelief: the squandering on self, and contempt of the poor, are only the forms which it takes. His unbelief also shows itself in supposing that his brethren, while refusing to give heed to the sure word of God, would heed a ghost. This is of the very essence of unbelief, that it gives that credence to portents which it refuses to the truths of God.⁵⁷

Later another Lazarus did come from the dead, but the nation did not hear (Jn. 11), nor did Jesus Christ's own signal resurrection awaken them.

Unprofitable Servant

Lu. 17:7–10

To the apostles' "Increase our faith," Jesus answered: "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree [black mulberry], Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you." Knowing they needed to manifest a continuous obedience to the will of God, he taught them more about the stringent requirements of discipleship by means of a parable of an unprofitable servant, one that pertained to unremitting selfless service. The faith they so greatly desired would be advanced and strengthened by persistent willing performance of duty.

At first this parable seems harsh and peremptory. "Which of you, having a servant [bond servant] plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable [unmeritorious] servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."

"So likewise ye." Servants were accorded no special merit for discharging their appointed tasks; neither should Jesus' disciples be vainglorious of their achievements; nor should they look for cessation from their labors for the kingdom. "There is no respite: a man can never say, 'For an hour I am not under obligation.' However honorably he may live, or imagine himself to live, the only verdict he can render is, 'I have done only my duty.'"⁵⁸

Importunate Widow, or Unjust Judge

Lu. 18:1–8

In the background of this parable is Jesus' teaching concerning the coming of the kingdom (Lu. 17:20–37). When the Pharisees asked the time of its coming Jesus told them plainly it was here and now—an invisible spiritual kingdom "within" the

hearts of men—but its full revelation he related to his Second Advent. Warning that the coming of the Son of man would bring sudden judgment on a heedless world, he stressed the necessity for unceasing prayer.

To urge that “men ought always to pray, and not to faint,” he told the parable of the importunate widow. (Poor widows were often pitiable objects in Hebrew society, even though protected and provided for in some measure by special Mosaic legislation [Deut. 24:17,19; 26:12; 27:19]. To exercise kindness and mercy to widows was an esteemed virtue certain to ensure a blessing [Job 31:16; Is. 1:17; Jer. 7:6,7; 22:3,4].) This parable carries its impact by comparison and contrast; and teaches the lesson of persistence. If an unjust judge would finally yield to the importunities of a helpless widow, how much more surely would a just God hear the prayers of His elect and avenge wrongs done them?

“There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.” Although the judge kept putting her off, the woman continued to press her claims until at last he rendered judgment in her favor.

Jesus ended the proverb: “Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”

Pharisee and Publican

Lu. 18:9–14

The parable of the Pharisee and the publican was perhaps given while Jesus was still on the subject of prayer. It taught that true prayer must come from a humble heart and was directed toward “certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.”

It was customary for the Jew of Jesus’ day to pray at set hours (to repeat his “prayers of the phylacteries”^{*} morning and evening, except on Sabbaths and feast days); wherever he was he stood facing

^{*}Phylacteries were small square leather bags or pouches (*tephillin*) fashioned from the skin of a clean animal, which contained certain Scriptural passages written on small rolls (Ex. 13:1–16; Deut. 6:4–9; 11:13–21). These, fastened to leather bands, were worn at prayer time, one on the forehead and one on the inside of the upper left arm near the heart. Whether the wearing of these phylacteries was an actual practice in earlier Israelitish history is not known, but it is certain that it had become an established Judaic institution by the second century B.C. Phylacteries were highly venerated, and were regarded as a protection against demons and the “evil eye.” (The only New Testament reference to them is found in Matthew 23:5.)

Jerusalem in an attitude of reverence with eyes cast down. His prayers were often audible, and the overly devout Pharisee frequently made lengthy supplications “standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets” to attract the admiration of others. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus had already rebuked such ostentatious praying (Mt. 6:5,6).

“Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are,” and extolled his virtues, both moral and religious; but the publican “standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.” One spoke arrogantly, the other contritely.

Jesus commended the humility of the publican and condemned the self-righteousness of the Pharisee, “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” As in the parable of the good Samaritan, Jesus’ choice of characters was intentional. His vivid contrast between the two and his bold commendation of the prayer of a sinner could not fail to antagonize the religious leaders and make them aware of the great gulf between their teachings and his.

Laborers in the Vineyard

Mt. 20:1–16

The parable of the laborers in the vineyard followed immediately the incident of the rich young ruler’s refusal to give up his great possessions to follow Jesus and Peter’s consequent question, “Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?” (Mt. 19:16–30). Jesus promised that they would be enthroned in his kingdom and also that “every one” who left all for him would receive a hundredfold blessing and the infinite recompense of everlasting life. But by way of warning he declared, “Many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.” It was not their province to judge themselves first, for his followers would receive their due according to heaven’s appraisal. To correct the calculating “What shall we have?,” Jesus told this parable:

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.” At the third hour the householder found others “standing idle in the marketplace,” and these he hired. Again at the sixth, ninth, and even the eleventh hour he found others;

these also he sent to his vineyard, saying, "Whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive." At evening every man was recompensed a penny, "beginning from the last unto the first." Those who had entered the vineyard early in the morning complained because they did not receive more, having "borne the burden and heat of the day." They were told that the wage was just and equitable, "Didst not thou agree with me for a penny?" They were further told, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?"

Jesus' closing statement (which some versions omit) reiterated his earlier warning: "So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen."

Those who served in the Father's vineyard from early morning had no cause for murmuring, for serving was a recompense in itself and they who were called were spared the differing degrees of frustration, delay, and remorse of "standing idle in the marketplace."

[This] parable, amid its other lessons, involved the truth that, while all who serve God should not be defrauded of their just and full and rich reward, there could be in heaven no murmuring, no envyings, no jealous comparison of respective merits, no base strugglings for precedency, no miserable disputings as to who had performed the maximum of service, or who had received the minimum of grace.⁵⁹

He who works in my kingdom for the sake of a reward hereafter may do his work well, but he honors me less than others who trust in me without thinking of future gain. The spirit in which you labour for me gives your service its value.⁶⁰

(The life of Paul, the final apostle to be called by Jesus Christ, is a signal illustration of that of a man who did not enter the vineyard until the "eleventh hour" and yet received full recompense. Paul said: "Last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. . . . and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" [I Cor. 15:8, 10].)

Ten Pounds

Lu. 19:11–27

The parable of the ten pounds was given at the very close of the Peraean ministry on the occasion of the feast in Zacchaeus' house in Jericho or shortly thereafter. A joyous hope ran high among Jesus' listeners because he was on his way to Jerusalem, and many of them were anticipating the immediate appearance of the kingdom. Instead, Jesus knew he was soon to be rejected in Jerusalem. His parable was a poignant statement pervaded by sadness that some of his own nation, failing to make use of the truth he, their Messiah, had given them, were themselves to be rejected.

"A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us." The nobleman, "when he was returned, having received the kingdom," called each servant to him for an accounting. Jesus illustrated his point with the fate of three of the ten: the servant who had increased one pound to ten was made ruler of ten cities, another the ruler of five. Concerning the servant who had made no use of his opportunity, the nobleman ordered: "Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. . . . For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him." And of the citizens who had refused his reign, he said, "Bring hither, and slay them before me."

So imminent was the experience of the cross that Jesus scarcely veiled his message: the coming of the kingdom would be delayed. He was leaving the world to go to the Father. Before his departure he was entrusting an equal measure of spiritual knowledge to his followers and commanding that it be put to use. He knew that after his ascension disbelievers would refuse to serve him. But at his Second Coming in glory—"having received the kingdom" from his Father—there would be an accounting of every man's work: a royal reward for the faithful who improved their opportunities, the loss of the gift to those who failed to use it, and swift judgment on those who rejected him.

Raising of Lazarus

Jn. 11:1–44

During the few months Jesus was in Peraea, in addition to his teaching, he healed on the Sabbath the woman stooped for eighteen years and the man with dropsy (Lu. 13:10–17; 14:1–6; see p. 366). Then, toward the close of this period, he went to Bethany where he worked the spectacular miracle that precipitated the events of Passion Week. Many months earlier, far from Judaea he had raised from the dead the son of the widow of Nain and the daughter of Jairus. Now, in full view of unbelieving Jerusalem, Jesus restored to life his friend Lazarus, a man of a family prominent in Jerusalem.

The Master was still in Peraea when he received word from Mary and Martha that their brother Lazarus ("he whom thou lovest") was sick. At once he informed the apostles, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." He did not, however, start immediately for Bethany, but remained in prayer two days where he was. "He desired not only to manifest His power to His friends, but to make a signal appeal

to impenitent Jerusalem, by working a miracle which would attest His Messiahship beyond all question."⁶¹

When he did determine to go, the apostles were worried for his safety, remembering that the Pharisees had tried to stone him on his last visit to Jerusalem scarcely two months before. Jesus confided, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." But seeing they thought he spoke of Lazarus as taking rest in sleep, he stated plainly, "Lazarus is dead." "And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there," he added, "to the intent ye may believe"—that your faith may be strengthened. By the time he reached Bethany Lazarus had been in the grave four days and his family and friends were in deep mourning.

In that sultry climate burial followed immediately on death, and it sometimes happened that a swoon was mistaken for death, and the buried man came to life again. The Jewish belief was that the soul hovered about the sepulchre for three days, fain to re-animate its clay. On the fourth day decomposition set in, and hope was then abandoned. Jesus arrived on the fourth day, and there was no doubt of the reality of Lazarus' death and of the ensuing miracle. It was not a recovery from a trance, but a veritable resurrection.⁶²

Martha went out to meet Jesus, "but Mary sat still in the house." Martha greeted him, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." When he comforted her, "Thy brother shall rise again," she replied, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Lifting her thought above the common Jewish hope of a future resurrection, he who had declared himself the water of life and the bread of life now revealed himself—the Christ—as the present quickening power of all resurrection: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." (Peter and Paul in their Christian ministry proved the quickening power of this truth: Peter in the raising of Dorcas, Paul in the raising of Eutychus.) Jesus questioned Martha, "Believest thou this?" And she affirmed, as had the woman of Samaria, "Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

Mary, like Martha, greeted him with the words "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Jesus, seeing her and her friends weeping, "groaned in the spirit, and was troubled." He asked, "Where have ye laid him?" Upon their answer, "Come and see," he wept, not—as they thought—in sorrow for Lazarus but in compassion for their unbelief. They led him to the grave, probably a tomb hewn in the limestone rock of the hillside. Before its entrance a heavy circular stone had been rolled, as was the custom for protection against profanation of the dead

and defilement of the living. Giving no heed to the Jewish belief of ceremonial pollution from contact with the dead, Jesus commanded, "Take ye away the stone." Martha remonstrated, "Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days." Seeking a deeper faith and a more expectant hope, Jesus reminded her, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"

Then "*they* took away the stone." In absolute conviction Jesus prayed out loud, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." "Lazarus, come forth," he summoned; when Lazarus, still swathed in graveclothes, came out of the tomb, Jesus commanded, "Loose him, and let him go."

Sanhedrin's Plot against Jesus

Jn. 11:45-54, 57

On witnessing this extraordinary miracle many of those who had come to weep with the family were constrained to believe in Jesus, but some hastened to report to the rulers that Jesus was again in Judaea working great miracles, even to the raising of the dead. The Pharisees, alarmed lest Jesus' movement sweep all before it, met in council with the Sadducees to take action: "What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." Jesus' whole concern was that men might believe in the Son of God; theirs, in defiance of God's will, was that men should not believe.

Caiaphas, high priest and official head of the Sanhedrin, cut them short. "Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." By such callous reasoning he justified their determination to maintain the religious and political *status quo*. These ecclesiastics were certain that if the people rose up to proclaim Jesus as king the Romans would strike swiftly, the hierarchy would fall, and the Jewish nation itself might cease to exist. From that day the Pharisees and the Sadducees united to bring about Jesus' downfall and death. The Sanhedrin issued a decree that if anyone knew his whereabouts, he was to report it immediately that they might arrest Jesus.

"Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness"—a withdrawal with his disciples to Ephraim, a city some fifteen miles north of Jerusalem.

Leaving Ephraim after a few weeks, perhaps for reasons of safety, Jesus went again to Peraea, taking a circuitous route northward and eastward along the borders of Samaria and Galilee, and crossing the Jordan (probably at Scythopolis). Somewhere along the way he heard a heart-rending cry for mercy from a company of ten lepers (Lu. 17:11–19; see p. 366). These outcasts, suffering from one of the most dread diseases of the East, were forbidden by law to approach their countrymen but must announce their presence with the cry, “Unclean, unclean!” The Savior responded, “Go shew yourselves unto the priests” (Lev. 14). “And . . . as they went, they were cleansed.” Only one of the ten—a Gentile, a Samaritan—had sufficient gratitude to return to kneel at Jesus’ feet and give thanks to God. All were cleansed in body, only one in soul.

*Discourse
Coming of the Kingdom
and of the Son of Man*

Lu. 17:20–18:8

In Peraea Jesus was continually harassed by the rabbis, whose hostility was daily growing more bitter. Repeatedly they attempted to compromise him with the authorities. On one of the last days of his journey toward Jerusalem they confronted him with the question of when the kingdom of God would come. The Jewish expectation was that a powerful temporal monarch would free the nation from Roman domination and establish a Jewish empire with its capital at Jerusalem. If they could prove he was fomenting political revolution there would be grounds for civil action.

Correcting the prevalent erroneous view concerning the kingdom, Jesus explained that it was far different from what they were expecting—it was neither political nor temporal; it was a moral and spiritual kingdom the establishment of which had already begun: “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.”

Later, addressing only the disciples, Jesus linked the consummation of the kingdom with his Second Coming: “As the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.” As to the time, his prophecy was indefinite; he said only that that day could not come prior to his sufferings and rejection. But he warned that it would come suddenly and devastatingly on a worldly generation as judgment had struck in the days of Noah and Lot, and when it did come it would separate the prepared from the unprepared. They asked, “Where, Lord?” and his answer was enigmatic: “Wheresoever

the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.”

As birds of prey scent out the carrion, so wherever is found a mass of incurable moral and spiritual corruption, there will be seen alighting the ministers of Divine judgment. . . .⁶³

Jesus closed this discourse with an admonition to pray persistently and not to lose heart, illustrating his point with the parable of the importunate widow who persevered in prayer and faith until she obtained justice (see p. 292).

*Jesus’ Answer
to Pharisees
concerning Divorce*

Mt. 19:3–12; Mk. 10:2–12

While Jesus was still in Peraea, the Pharisees, taking advantage of the custom of the day to appeal to any rabbi on disputed religious questions, tried to maneuver him into some contradiction of Mosaic Law that might arouse popular feeling against him.

They chose the controversial subject of divorce, a corruptive practice for which he had rebuked them some two months earlier (Lu. 16:14–18): “Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause [Weymouth, whenever he chooses]?” This was a delicate question beset by many complexities. Under Mosaic Law a husband was granted the right to dissolve the marriage and send his wife back to her family with a written bill of divorcement if “she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her” (Deut. 24:1, 2). The two rival rabbinical schools of Hillel and Shammai held sharply divergent views as to the interpretation of this passage: that of Hillel sanctioned divorce for any cause, however trivial, where a wife’s disposition or faults might displease her husband; that of Shammai sanctioned it only on the grounds of adultery. The opinions of both schools were regulating its current practice among the Jews. Furthermore, when this question was posed Jesus was in Peraea, the domain of Herod Antipas, the tyrant who had imprisoned and beheaded John the Baptist for his denunciation of Herod’s conduct in divorcing his wife to marry his niece Herodias.

Giving the moral question of divorce the weight it deserved, Jesus directed his listeners’ thought not to the Mosaic institution that permitted it but to the ordained constitution of marriage given in their Scripture (Gen. 2:24). “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder,” he told them.

The Pharisees’ next question was natural: “Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?” He explained that

Mosaic Law did not abrogate the sacred primitive provision, but made a concession to ease the marriage bond in order to prevent greater evils: "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so." He rendered his judgment: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." This principle, which restrained excessive divorce, had already been laid down in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5:32). According to Mark's Gospel, Jesus' condemnation of this social evil was unqualified, forbidding divorce without exception (compare Lu. 16:18), but this absolute he confided only to his disciples in private. (By teaching the sanctity of marriage Jesus raised woman to a higher and more respected position in family life; she was not chattel to be put aside lightly.)

Alone with the Master, the disciples commented that if a man were bound to his wife as Jesus had said, then it seemed to them it was not good to marry. "All men cannot receive this saying," he replied, "save they to whom it [Weymouth, the grace] is given." He mentioned three cases where the unmarried state—celibacy—was better: "There are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

Third Foretelling of Death and Resurrection

Mt. 20:17–19; Mk. 10:32–34; Lu. 18:31–34

The time of the Passover season was approaching as Jesus began his last journey to Jerusalem, going from Peraea by way of Jericho and Bethany. Foreseeing the outcome of the swelling tide of hatred directed against him (see p. 352), he fully understood what this visit held in store. On two previous occasions he had explicitly predicted his coming death and resurrection: "the *Son of man* must suffer many things," and "the *Son of man* shall be delivered into the hands of men." This visit would bring to a climax the seething forces of evil, but it would also bring into view the greater forces of spiritual love and power which as the Christ he possessed. He knew that men could not make assault on his eternal life as the Son of God; they could only touch that which was of his "earthly house of this tabernacle."

The whole situation was under his control. He set the time; he chose the hour. He knew he was ready. Months before had come his prophecy, "I lay down my life for the sheep. . . . I have power to lay it down,

and I have power to take it again." He did not avoid the experience, evade it, flee from it; he faced it with calm resolution.

As he walked with his apostles, "Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid." So weighted with significance was this journey that the Master took them aside a third time to teach them again, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the *Son of man* shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again." For the first time mention was made of the part the Gentiles would play in his humiliation and crucifixion. But still they understood none of the things he told them.

As Jesus went on his way to Jerusalem—the Jerusalem that killed her prophets and stoned the messengers God sent her—he no longer walked with his disciples as of old in friendly intercourse. He walked in front of them, alone, the physical distance between them faintly shadowing forth the gulf that separated his thought from theirs (Mk. 10:32). Following after, the disciples were amazed and frightened at the changed mood of their Master. When he did speak to them, it was of the fate that awaited him in Jerusalem.⁶⁴

So far were the apostles from comprehending the terrible import of his words that James and John asked for the posts of honor in his coming kingdom: "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory." Jesus answered: "Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" It was as though he had said, "Can you withstand such suffering and humiliation as I must endure?" They said, "We can." Then Jesus told them: "Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared" (Mk. 10:37ff.; compare Mt. 20:20ff.). (James later laid down his life as the first martyr of the apostle band [Acts 12:1,2], and John throughout the first century faithfully labored in the Church and triumphantly endured the persecutions directed against it.)

The other apostles were indignant at the request of the two, but Jesus reminded them again that their mission, like his, was to be one of selfless service: "Whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mk. 10:43–45).

Conversion of Zacchaeus

Lu. 19:1–10

Crossing the Jordan from Perea, Jesus approached the city of Jericho in the verdant plain of the Jordan valley, six miles northwest of the Dead Sea. On its outskirts he healed the blind beggar Bartimaeus who called out to him for help (Mt. 20:29–34; Mk. 10:46–52; Lu. 18:35–43; see p. 367).

As Jesus walked through the streets of Jericho, crowds surrounded him; for some this was the first glimpse of the miracle-working Galilean. In Jericho lived Zacchaeus, a wealthy publican who, like the rest, was eager to see Jesus. A short man, he ran ahead of the crowd and climbed into a sycamore-fig tree to wait for Jesus to pass. When the Master reached the tree he looked up and said, “Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.” Zacchaeus climbed quickly down and welcomed him to his house, but some of the crowd grumbled because Jesus went to be the guest of a publican. Publicans were hated for their service to Rome and classed as sinners; they were also hated for their extortionary practices against the people of their own nation.

What Jesus said to his host that day is not known, but Zacchaeus’ heart was wholly changed. So complete was the transformation that Zacchaeus offered to redress all his wrongs: “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have

taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.”

Jesus blessed him: “This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

*Anointing of Jesus
by Mary of Bethany*

Mt. 26:6–13; Mk. 14:3–9; Jn. 12:1–8

John notes in his Gospel that six days before Passover Jesus came to Bethany, sixteen miles southwest of Jericho. There his friends made him a supper in the home of Simon the leper; and Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were present. Only one special incident is mentioned—a tender display of outpouring love in which Mary anointed Jesus’ feet with spikenard (a costly aromatic oil extracted from the nard plant) and wiped them with her hair. “And the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.”

Judas Iscariot objected. “Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence [approximately sixty dollars], and given to the poor?” Jesus alone knew the significance of Mary’s act: “Ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.” He commended her pure love: “Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.”

The Week Preceding Resurrection (Passion Week)

Jesus at last entered Jerusalem openly as the Messianic King. Heretofore he had come quietly, even secretly, taking steps to avoid any open clash with the religious leaders that might have ended his mission prematurely. Now he took the offensive. Jesus' every act during the week was done in the knowledge that his crucifixion was imminent.

The Master moved through these final days with absolute authority, no longer muting his message in the citadel of his enemies. Unopposed he cleansed the Temple of its corruption and, standing acclaimed in its courts, taught the people. Once and for all he silenced the specious reasoning of the religious leaders and assailed them with a withering denunciation. But chiefly his efforts during this last week were directed toward strengthening the faith of his apostles—foretelling the destruction of all evil, the continuity and spread of his gospel, his Second Advent, and the coming of the Comforter. With sublime equanimity he faced the mockery of two unjust trials and endured the dread humiliation and suffering of the cross.

From men who walked with Jesus and treasured his every word and deed have come intimate details of this week. Of such significance to man's salvation are these that they are recounted in detail day by day, sometimes hour by hour. We know much of what Jesus thought: his sorrow over his nation's impenitence, his unswerving fidelity to the spiritual and the ideal in every conflict with his foes, his anguish of soul concerning his betrayer. We are permitted to hear his intercessory prayers for his disciples and for his Church, to glimpse his agony of soul, and to sense his complete surrender of will in Gethsemane. Finally, we feel something of his inviolable peace throughout the trials, and his sublime forgiving love and trust on the cross; we are aware above all of his absolute conviction that he would endure and triumph.

Sunday

The first day of the week, now called Sunday, was a day of triumph in which Jesus was openly acknowledged Israel's God-sent Messiah. It was Passover season and hundreds of thousands of pilgrims had come to the Holy City from Galilee, Judaea, Peraea, and foreign lands to celebrate the great annual festival. (According to Josephus [*Wars of the Jews*, vi, 9.3], writing in the first century A.D., at least 2.7 million persons came annually to Jerusalem to observe the Passover.) Jesus calmly and deliberately chose this moment when national and religious fervor was at its peak to enter Jerusalem publicly and thus formally present his claim as the Christ.

Word spread rapidly that Jesus was in Bethany—only two miles away—and was coming to Jerusalem. The recent raising of Lazarus had stirred great excitement among the Jerusalem Jews and many were anticipating his arrival. Some attending the feast, who had heard the gospel from the Master's own lips or been healed by him, were anxious to see him again. Others, who had never seen him, were eager for a sight of this remarkable being. The hope of what he might do filled their minds—would he dare to speak openly inasmuch as the hierarchy had only recently issued orders for his arrest? would he set up the kingdom and assume the kingship? would he free them from Roman tyranny? When Jesus appeared on this day he was greeted with wild enthusiasm as the son of David—the Messiah-King.

Triumphal

Entry

Mt. 21:1–11; Mk. 11:1–11; Lu. 19:29–44; Jn. 12:12–19

Sunday morning Jesus left Bethany with his apostles, accompanied by a following of Galilean and Peraean pilgrims, by Jews who had seen him raise Lazarus, and by guests who had been at the Sabbath feast in Bethany. As he approached Bethphage near the Mount of Olives he sent two of his disciples into the village. There they would find tied by the side of the road a young donkey that had never been ridden. He would this day enter Jerusalem in consonance with Zechariah's prophecy (9:9): "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." Heretofore he had entered on foot; this time he would ride on an ass—the symbol of Jewish royalty as well as an emblem of peace. When the apostles returned with the colt they threw their cloaks onto its back and Jesus mounted.

Jesus' route took him south of the Mount of Olives into the well-traveled caravan road from Jericho to Jerusalem; and when word reached the city that he was on his way, a great crowd surged out, joined by thousands of the pilgrims encamped outside the city's walls. They threw their outer garments in his pathway and strewed palm fronds before him (signs of special honor), shouting, "Hosanna [save now] to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest" (compare Ps. 118:25,26). As the procession began the rocky descent toward Jerusalem, the southeastern corner of the city and the Temple flashed briefly into view and the acclaim became a chant.

It was a triumph in wondrous contrast with that of earthly monarchs. No spoils of towns or villages adorned it; no trains of captives destined to slavery or death; the spoil of His sword and His spear were seen only in trophies of healing and love—for the lame whom He had cured ran before, the dumb sang His praises, and the blind, sightless no longer, crowded to gaze on their benefactor.⁶⁵

The popular ovation alarmed the leading Pharisees of the Sanhedrin who had mingled with the crowd, and they said to each other, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him." Some of them demanded, "Master, rebuke thy disciples." But he refused. "I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."

The road began a rugged ascent to a ledge of smooth rock. In an instant the proud city, with its gleaming Temple courts, white flat-roofed houses, and tall palm trees, came into full view of the winding procession. The chants of praise grew louder at this vista of magnificence; Jesus, seeing instead an impenitent city that would not relinquish its hopes for a temporal king and kingdom, wept for it: "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." The Jews of Jerusalem and its hierarchy had stood at the threshold of spiritual opportunity throughout his ministry; had their sight been clear, they would have understood that God had indeed visited His people in the person of His Son.

Jesus foresaw Jerusalem's tragic fate—"The days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation" (Lu. 19:43,44)—a prophecy fulfilled to the letter in the fall of the city in 70 A.D. (see p. 468).

The road curved north and then west over the bridge that spanned the deep rocky declivity of the

Kidron Valley, which ran along the east wall of the city. In the river bed below, dry many months of the year, raced the brook Kidron swollen by winter rains. The procession entered Jerusalem through the east gate, today called St. Stephen's Gate, and wound its way along narrow streets festive with flags and banners for the Passover feast. Inhabitant and pilgrim alike asked "Who is this?" The crowds replied "This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee."

Jesus went first to the Temple, leaving the people to disperse. In silent appraisal he "looked round about upon all things" (Mk. 11:11)—a moral and spiritual measurement of the sanctuary—and found them wanting. And, because evening was approaching and because the chief priests and Pharisees were still conspiring to take his life, Jesus withdrew from Jerusalem to safety outside the city's walls, to Bethany, and lodged there that night and each succeeding night.

Monday

Monday was a day of undisputed public demonstration of the Master's authority. He moved among the people as the recognized Messiah. On this day he pronounced judgment against the barren fig tree and in the presence of the Passover crowds a second time cleansed the Temple of its abuses. Unmolested, he taught openly in the courtyard of the Temple, so many rallying to his cause so enthusiastically that the Sanhedrin dared not touch him yet.

Barren Fig Tree Cursed

Mt. 21:18, 19; Mk. 11:12–14

As the Master returned to Jerusalem from Bethany this Monday morning, he was hungry. "He saw a fig tree in the way . . . and found nothing thereon, but leaves only. . . . It was not the season for figs, but nevertheless a productive tree should have borne some early figs or given promise of a later harvest. The fruit of this tree appears before its leaves; one in full leaf without fruit is thus considered barren for the season. Fruitlessness was anathema to the Master, so he said to the fig tree: "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever." This act had deep significance; Jesus had indeed hungered through nearly three years of ministry to be recognized by his own nation as their promised Messiah, yet their professed love of God had borne no fruit of faith. The import of this incident is heightened by the fact that several months earlier in Peraea Jesus had told the prophetic parable of the barren fig tree (Lu. 13:6–9; see p. 288). In it the master of the vineyard had said, "Behold, these three

years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" "That word [to the fig tree] did not *make* the tree barren, but sealed it up in its own barrenness."⁶⁶

Second Cleansing of the Temple

Mt. 21:12–17; Mk. 11:15–19; Lu. 19:45–48

Upon entering Jerusalem Jesus' first overt act was to cleanse the Temple. Nearly three years before he had purged it as a warning, but the Temple authorities had not during the intervening years corrected the corruption he had exposed. Now he purged it again, this time as a judgment. Rebuking the avarice of the priests, he demanded scathingly, "Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves." As he had found the fig tree barren, so he found the Temple barren of its proper fruits.

Jesus spent the remainder of Monday teaching in the Temple courts. And when the common people present saw his fearlessness and heard his reprimand of the Temple authorities, they forgot for the moment their dread of the Sanhedrin and brought to him their lame and blind. With growing jubilation they witnessed one extraordinary healing after another as he made his Father's house a true house of prayer, till the Temple rang with praise and even the children cried "Hosanna to the son of David."

The scribes and chief priests, angered at this popular demonstration, remonstrated, "Hearest thou what these say?" Jesus answered, "Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" While the rulers went away to devise some means of destroying him, he left the Temple and quietly returned to Bethany.

Tuesday

On Tuesday Jesus concluded his public teaching to his nation, making a last appeal for Israel's repentance. The day was marked by repeated controversy and conflict with the religious authorities. The Sanhedrin had had time to reflect on the events of the preceding day; as guardians of the Temple their prestige had suffered woefully, their wealth had been threatened, and with increasing fear they realized that so long as this man was at large their ecclesiastical and even their political position under Rome was imperiled. They reassembled their scattered forces for a verbal attack on Jesus. First they questioned his rabbinical authority, then each party in turn—the Pharisees, Sadducees,

and scribes—put to him a seemingly innocuous question, hoping to implicate him. But each time they failed to involve him and themselves suffered loss of prestige. Instead Jesus challenged his questioners, warning of the consequences of rejecting him; and when they refused to repent, Jesus publicly denounced them as hypocrites and fools. Their frustration and fury resulted in a secret conspiracy with Judas against his life. This day ended with a somber discourse in which Jesus prophesied to his apostles the destruction of the Temple, the fall of Jerusalem, and God's final judgment on the world's ungodliness.

Fig Tree Withered

Mt. 21:20–22; Mk. 11:20–26

Tuesday morning as Jesus and the Twelve again came along the road from Bethany to Jerusalem, they saw the fruitless fig tree dried up from the roots—Jesus' only miracle of judgment. When Peter exclaimed, "Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away," Jesus replied, "Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart . . . he shall have whatsoever he saith." The reply must at first have seemed almost irrelevant, but in reality he was teaching them an added lesson: that unwavering faith and trust in God would remove any obstacle, however great, that might stand in the way of their labors for the kingdom. He taught them also that this faith must be coupled with love and forgiveness for their fellow men, else their prayers would not be answered: "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

Questioning of Jesus' Authority

Mt. 21:23–27; Mk. 11:27–33; Lu. 20:1–8

Jesus went directly to the Temple to teach the people once more. He was accosted almost immediately by a delegation from the Sanhedrin, who demanded, "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" Jesus countered their question with one of his own, "I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me."

With this question these masters of Israel suddenly found themselves both on the defensive and in a serious quandary. They had failed to respond to the teachings of the Baptist, though the people had flocked to him. They argued among themselves: "If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not? But and if we say, Of men; all

the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet." They had no intention of according Jesus recognition, but to deny John as a God-sent prophet would rouse the anger of the people. Their prestige as teachers of the Law was more important to them than truth. A straight answer would endanger their position; on the other hand, to admit before the people that they could not discern the Baptist's spiritual stature would cover them with shame. Therefore they replied evasively. "We cannot tell." Because of their dishonest answer Jesus refused further discussion: "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things."

Parable Two Sons

Mt. 21:28–32

Jesus knew his time was short; now without concern for the consequences his words would produce, he boldly challenged before all who were present the moral right of the chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees to teach their nation. He told three parables, unmistakable in meaning, in which he reproved priestly hypocrisy and iniquity and warned the nation of the fearful aftermath of rejecting him.

In the first parable he stripped them of all pretension as qualified leaders and teachers: "A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not." Jesus asked, "Whether of them twain did the will of his father?" And they said, "The first," by their own admission condemning themselves.

Jesus related his words to his listeners: "Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him."

Parable The Vineyard

Mt. 21:33–46; Mk. 12:1–12; Lu. 20:9–19

In the second parable Jesus exposed the enormity of the wickedness of the nation's leaders in resisting the will of God and in repudiating His prophets and His Son. He drew upon the beautiful language of the Old Testament parable of Isaiah 5:1–7. "There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and

went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants . . . and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him."

Turning to the chief priests and scribes, Jesus asked, "What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do?" According to Mark and Luke, he answered his own question. "He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others." The implication was clear: the kingdom of God would be taken from their keeping and would pass into the stewardship of others. That they understood his meaning was apparent in their answer: "God forbid."

Jesus resumed his interpretation of the parable: "Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?" Here he identified himself with the Stone, the Old Testament figure for the Messiah or Christ of Psalms 118:22,23, Isaiah 28:16, and Daniel 2:34,35. They had rejected the cornerstone of the kingdom; now they were rejected. "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

Parable

Marriage of the King's Son

Mt. 22:1-14

Jesus' third parable restated and amplified the warning of the second, and emphasized his royalty and dignity as God's Son. Underlying this vivid parable was Christ's conviction that the Father's plan of redemption, though rejected by His chosen people, would assuredly be accomplished; there would be others who would accept the Father's invitation and so prove worthy to partake of His grace and truth.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son. . . . Summoned by the royal servants to the wedding, his subjects would not come. The king sent other servants to tell of the bountiful preparation and provision—"all things are ready: come unto the marriage." But the invited still "made light of" this great privilege and thoughtlessly went their own ways. Some not only

ignored the royal command but also committed treason by mistreating and killing the king's servants. "When the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city," a judgment fulfilled historically in the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

Though the guests chosen had not proved worthy, the wedding feast was ready and waiting, so the king sent his servants to find new guests. They went out "into the highways, and gathered . . . both bad and good"—including without discrimination all who would come.

When the king came in to greet his guests, he found among them a man without a wedding garment; he rebuked his unpreparedness and insensibility to this special opportunity. "Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?" And the man was speechless! "Bind him hand and foot," the king commanded, "and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness." Jesus concluded, "Many are called, but few are chosen."

It was customary in the east, while the weather was hot, to offer a change of raiment to every guest invited, by way of refreshment, and their garments were suited to the occasion of the festival. Now as a change of raiment had undoubtedly been offered to this man, as well as the rest, and he neglected or refused to put it on, the king had reason to be offended at his unsuitable appearance.

The application of this parable is certainly very plain; whoever receives the gospel receives the wedding-garment of true holiness, to be worn by every one that expects to be admitted to the marriage of the Lamb; and whoever presents himself without this, connected with his faith in Christ, will be cast into darkness.⁶⁷

The morning's teaching was clear. Jesus' enemies knew he spoke of them, but their fear of the people kept them from taking any overt action against him. Even so, within the hour they were again plotting violence.

Pharisees' Question about Tribute

Mt. 22:15-22; Mk. 12:13-17; Lu. 20:20-26

Defeated in their attempt to implicate Jesus on the ecclesiastical charge of teaching without proper rabbinical authority, the Pharisees—joined by the Herodians (a minor political party supporting Herod's dynasty)—tried next to involve him under civil law. Hoping to trick him into some damaging statement which would bring him under the jurisdiction of the Roman governor, they sent out spies who asked, "Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no?" Should he oppose the Roman tax he could be accused of rebellion.

Jesus was neither deceived by their craftiness nor

thrown off guard; calling for a Roman coin, he pointed out Caesar's image on its face and said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." This lifted the issue far above human dispute into a realm of reasoning where there was no conflict between a man's obligation to men and a man's debt to God. Startled by his words, the Pharisees fell silent and went away.

***Sadducees' Question
about Resurrection***

Mt. 22:23–33; Mk. 12:18–27; Lu. 20:27–40

Jesus was approached next by some of the aristocratic and influential Sadducean priesthood. Heretofore they had paid scant attention to him and his claims. Now they determined to discredit him and at the same time cast doubt on the cherished beliefs of their rivals, the Pharisees, by a cunningly devised question pertaining to the resurrection of the dead, one they were positive he could not answer.

The Pharisees taught the resurrection of the body, the immortality of the soul, and future reward and punishment. Although a few rabbis entertained a spiritual conception of this future state, the majority held the materialistic view that the present body would be reanimated exactly as it had been before death, with all its carnal desires and imperfections. Men would continue to eat, drink, marry wives, and beget children. The Sadducees believed in no future state whatever and called the doctrine of resurrection absurd—they found no support for it in the Pentateuch, the only portion of Scripture they considered binding.

The Sadducees introduced their question by citing Mosaic Law (Deut. 25:5): "Master, Moses wrote unto us, if a man's brother die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother." Then they posed the case of a woman who had been married in turn to seven brothers, each of whom had died leaving her childless; and then she herself had died: "Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven?"—a facetious query, in the answer to which they hoped to find basis for ridicule.

"Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God," answered Jesus, dealing with the matter seriously. "The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." Jesus' reply refuted the current conception of bodily resur-

rection and revealed that it is to a higher plane of existence the dead are raised.

He then went on to disprove the Sadducees' adamant belief that there is no immortality. By testimony from Moses—whose authority alone they accepted—Jesus showed that Moses himself believed in resurrection and immortality: "And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err."

His questioners could find nothing more to say.

Scribes' Question

about the Great Commandment Mt. 22:34–40; Mk. 12:28–34

When the scribes saw that the Sadducees had been reduced to silence, one of them inquired, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus answered from Scripture: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (compare Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18). Although the scribe had asked for one great commandment, Jesus gave him two and declared their inseparability. All the Law was summarized in two concise commands; in both exist one basic imperative—"thou shalt love."

The scribe was completely satisfied with this interpretation, and exclaimed, "Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart . . . and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." The scribe's discerning comment brought quick commendation from Jesus: "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

In these controversies, as in all others, Jesus proved himself a master teacher. He met his opponents' questions practically, but in every instance he also lifted their thought to a higher plane. They could not find a shred of evidence against him on either civil or religious grounds, "and no man after that durst ask him any question."

Jesus'

Irrefutable Question Mt. 22:41–46; Mk. 12:35–37; Lu. 20:41–44

While the deputation of priests and rabbis was still present in the Temple, Jesus made one more attempt

to prevail upon them to exchange their earthly view of the Messiah for a more spiritual one, as they had never comprehended the twofold nature of the Savior God had sent them. Now he put the question "What think ye of Christ [the promised and expected Messiah]? whose son is he?"

In consonance with the common Jewish expectation, they quickly replied, "The son of David"—so different an answer from Peter's (Mt. 16:16). Their reply was scripturally correct regarding the Messiah's human lineage, but Jesus was not satisfied to let them think the Messiah was merely the son of David. So, quoting to them the Messianic passage from Psalm 110, he asked, "How then doth David in spirit call him Lord [Moffatt, How is it then that David is inspired to call him *Lord*?], saying, "The Lord [God] said unto my Lord [Messiah], Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" This scriptural authority clearly indicated Christ's superiority to David; he antedated David. The Christ was far more than the Son of man; he pre-existed as the Son of God, ruling in power with Him.

The ecclesiastics could not answer. Although their eschatological beliefs had prepared them to some extent for the truth that their Savior would be more than human, yet they could not see or would not admit this man as the fulfillment of their Messianic hope. They had cried "Blasphemy!" whenever he asserted that he was the Son of God; having rejected him, they remained obdurate. By contrast, "the common people heard him gladly."

The New Testament writers understood this twofold nature—the humanity and divinity of Christ—and the spirituality of his kingdom, and inculcated these teachings in the early Church (Jn. 1:1,14; Acts 2:22–36; Rom. 1:3,4; I Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:1–3).

Discourse

Pharisees and Scribes

Mt. 23; Mk. 12:38–40; Lu. 20:45–47

Jesus now took the offensive against the scribes and Pharisees. Addressing his disciples and the crowd in the Temple, he pronounced a withering judgment on these hypocritical teachers: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers."

As he had whipped out the buyers and sellers from the Temple, so he now whipped out all that pertained to the Pharisaic sins of oppression, pride, blind erudition, ostentation, and greed. His opening

denunciation was a terrible indictment, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." Eight times Jesus declared, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! . . . Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."

He called them "fools" and "blind guides," denouncing the casuistry of their swearing of oaths, their punctilious attention to trifles while neglecting the moral requirements of the Law, their extortions and excesses. He termed them "whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness"; he charged that while they claimed to honor the ancient prophets, they were in fact persecuting and killing the prophets of their own day. Branding them a "generation of vipers," he foretold their doom—"the damnation of hell."

Jesus met only hardness of heart and cold hostility, but he lamented compassionately for the whole house of Israel, addressing it by a name that represented to every Jew all that was distinctive and precious in his religion. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." They themselves had shut out the divine Light, and without the Christ their religion was empty of meaning. They had not come to him; therefore he must go from them. He concluded significantly: "For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Not until they could see and acknowledge him "whom they pierced" as the Messiah sent from God would they be blessed by his grace and salvation (see Zech. 12:10; Rom. 11:26; II Cor. 3:15,16).

Gentiles Seek Jesus

Jn. 12:20–36

Even as Jesus grieved for Jerusalem, his heart was gladdened by a new development. His apostles Andrew and Philip came to him with the message that some of the Greek proselytes to the Jewish faith had asked to see him. These were men who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover. Jesus recognized instantly that these were serious seekers after truth, whose inquiry foreshadowed the wider spread of the gospel. The door of faith was opening to the Western world and through it to all humanity. The time was now at hand for him to demonstrate his complete dominion over death—the

last enemy of mankind. Some months earlier he had said "My time is not yet full come." Now his answer to Andrew and Philip was: "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified."

His thought turned to his imminent crucifixion. He alluded to it delicately, likening his sacrifice to a planting and a harvest: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." His answer disclosed the manner of his glorification—the surrender of his human life, which was to result in resurrection. He went on to encourage his followers to the same spirit of self-renunciation, promising it would lead to glory: "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me . . . him will my Father honour."

The path to his exaltation lay through humiliation; that he should shrink from dying at the hands of sinful men was humanly natural. He prayed aloud: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name." While he recoiled at the impending shadow of the cross, he shrank immeasurably more from the thought of any failure on his part to fulfill the Father's plan; but his instant acknowledgment that his sacrifice could only glorify God banished the momentary uncertainty that he would not endure. This inner struggle was a forerunner of the mental agony of Gethsemane.

As he was speaking, a voice from heaven—the same that had spoken at his Baptism and Transfiguration—was heard: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." Some of the crowd thought they heard thunder; others thought an angel spoke to him. "This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes," Jesus explained. "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out [a judgment of doom on Satan's kingdom to come simultaneously with Jesus' 'hour' of glorification]. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

Puzzled, the people asked, "We have heard out of the law [Old Testament] that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?" (compare Ps. 110:4; Is. 9:7; Dan. 2:44; 7:13,14). Jesus did not explain; they would not have understood; rather he urged them to believe in him: "Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you . . . believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light."

Jews' Rejection of Jesus

Jn. 12:37–50

The Master's public teaching was finished. Though he had a large following among the common people, the nation as a whole still refused to accept him, and the secret disciples he had won among the rulers dared not admit their faith openly for fear of excommunication by the Pharisees. The nation's unbelief is summed up by John in the words of Isaiah: "Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? . . . He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them" (see Is. 53:1; 6:10).

He left the Temple, never to enter its precincts again, warning that rejection of him was essentially a rejection of God and that such denial would come under judgment: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

Discourse Destruction of Jerusalem Signs of Christ's Coming Last Judgment

Mt. 24–25; Mk. 13; Lu. 21:5–38

As they were leaving the Temple the apostles drew Jesus' attention to its magnificent buildings, still in construction. The Temple was a gleaming structure of white marble and plated gold; according to Josephus some of its massive slabs were 35 to 60 feet long, seven and a half feet high, and nine feet broad. All of this gave an impression of strength and impregnability. But Jesus did not look on this spectacular beauty with eyes of admiration. Had not the Temple rejected its true high priest (Heb. 8)? Instead, "As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Through the east gate Jesus and the Twelve left Jerusalem. Descending the steep side of the Kidron ravine, they crossed over and climbed the stony ascent of the Mount of Olives. From its summit the city spread before them, the huge dome of the sanctuary shining in the last rays of the setting sun. Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Jesus privately for an explanation of his recent words about the Temple: "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [RV (marg.) the consummation of the age]?"

Underlying this question were centuries of Jewish inquiry as to the final condition of man and the world—eschatological views that reflected developing

Jewish reasoning on the end of the present world order, the coming of the Messianic kingdom, the resurrection of the dead, judgment of the righteous and the wicked, and the consummation of all things (see Messianic Hope, p. 220). An accepted part of these beliefs, fostered by apocalyptic Jewish writers of the intertestamental period and briefly alluded to in the Old Testament, was the idea that the Messianic age would be preceded by a time of travail and by cataclysmic events. It was therefore natural that Jesus' answer should make use of these current ideas and terms when imparting his own moral and spiritual views on the many phases of this important subject.

Heretofore Jesus had made only veiled reference to his Second Coming (*Parousia*, a Greek term denoting Christ's future advent [Mt. 24:3,27,37,39]); the apostles' twofold question had brought the topic to the fore. He now began to teach them the "when" and the "what" of his Coming, but he spoke in apocalyptic language of the signs that would precede it. The time period relating to each was intentionally indefinite and the order of events mentioned not necessarily chronological; they were signs of the end of the present world age, which would mark the birth pangs of the Messianic Age. The first portion of his discourse might be said to fall into four parts: (1) False Christs (Mt. 24:4-8; Mk. 13:5-8; Lu. 21:8-11); (2) Persecution, Apostasy, World-wide Preaching (Mt. 24:9-14; Mk. 13:9-13; Lu. 21:12-19); (3) Fall of Jerusalem, the Great Tribulation (Mt. 24:15-22; Mk. 13:14-20; Lu. 21:20-24); (4) Coming of the Son of Man (Mt. 24:23-36; Mk. 13:21-32; Lu. 21:25-33; see Lu. 17:22-24).

False Christs

The Jews expected that their Messiah would restore Israel's greatness, subdue the Gentile nations, and establish the triumphant reign of God over the earth. The chief reason for their rejection of Jesus was political: he had not fulfilled these hopes. Consequently Jesus foresaw the rise of false claimants to the Messiahship after his departure, so he began his answer with a warning: "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." (Several of the false Christs who soon arose are mentioned in Acts—Theudas, Judas of Galilee, and "the Egyptian" [Acts 5:36,37; 21:38]—and referred to by Josephus [*Antiquities of the Jews*, xx, 5.1; *Wars of the Jews*, ii, 8.1; *Antiq.* xx, 8.6].) He drew a graphic picture of the unrest and upheaval to occur before the full splendor of the kingdom could be made manifest: "Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but

the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation . . . and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows [RV of travail]."

Persecutions, Apostasy, World-wide Preaching

He forewarned the disciples of conflict, external and internal, against his Church: persecutions civil and ecclesiastical, hatred, betrayal of brother by brother, son by father, parents by children. He prophesied that the love of many for Christ would "wax cold," but promised that "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." While believers were enduring the period of apostasy, the gospel was to be preached "in all the world for a witness . . . and then shall the end come."

Fall of Jerusalem, the Great Tribulation

Becoming more precise in his predictions, Jesus forecast the historical event that was imminent in the apostles' lifetime—the destruction of Jerusalem, which would be attended and followed by a period of great distress and suffering. This would transpire (according to Matthew and Mark) when the "abomination of desolation" should "stand in the holy place" (Mt.), "standing where it ought not" (Mk.)—a desecration of the Temple greater than that of Antiochus Epiphanes spoken of by Daniel (Dan. 8:13; 11:31; compare I Macc. 1:35-67; see also p. 214). Luke alone quotes Jesus as saying "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh" (Lu. 21:20).

This prophecy has been interpreted by scholars as referring to the desecration of the Temple by the Zealots in 66-67 A.D., its profanation by the presence of the ensigns of the Roman army in the Holy Place, or (because of its apocalyptic imagery) to a form of antichrist.

In the period of tribulation to follow, the infant Church would be in jeopardy. Jesus told them that when Jerusalem became the arena of conflict his followers were to escape to safety: "Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains. . . . For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled . . . for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Lu.). (Compare Rom. 11:25,26.) "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be

shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Mt.).

Within the lifetime of some of the apostles these prophecies began to be fulfilled: in the flight of the apostles and the Jerusalem church to Pella in Peraea in 66 A.D., in the siege and fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in 70 (see p. 468), in the harsh enslavement of those who survived, in the predominance of the Gentile role in the spreading of the gospel. The great tribulation of which Jesus spoke as beginning in his generation still goes on in human experience, for prophetic history has not yet been fully consummated; but in Christ's promise that the time would be shortened, Christians have long found, and can still find, comfort.

The Coming of the Son of Man

Because the final coming of the Son of man would not be immediate, Jesus repeated his warning concerning false Christs and their deceiving works. His coming in the Spirit would not be secret or localized, but open and manifest—"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." These things had been told them for their protection, to put them on guard against the doctrines of spurious leaders. Jesus therefore added this admonition: "Take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things." It was essential that his apostles and the Church understand that these signs were not to be feared but to be recognized as signs of overturning "until he come whose right it is" (Ezek. 21:27).

Rapidly he summarized the last signs to precede his Coming: "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."

That the apostles' faith might remain strong, Jesus immediately led their thought beyond the tribulation and overturning to the saving sign of his coming in glory: "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Coincident with Christ's coming his angels would sound the trumpet to assemble the whole body of faithful believers: "He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (compare I Th. 4:16,17).

Because his words (in Matthew 24) relating to the "when" of his Coming have a metaphorical as well as a historical meaning, interpretations of them have great latitude:

"the end is not yet" (v. 6)

"these are the beginning" (v. 8)

"then shall the end come" (v. 14)

"When ye . . . shall see the abomination of desolation . . . stand in the holy place. . . . Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains" (vv. 15,16)

"then shall be great tribulation . . . but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (vv. 21,22)

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven" (vv. 29,30)

Parable of the Fig Tree and Young Leaves

To encourage his followers to press on during the dark hours before his Second Advent, by the parable of a fig tree Jesus translated the signs of tribulation into symbols of hope, for as this tree putting forth leaves portends summer, so these signs would mark his return: "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." With absolute conviction he reaffirmed that all he had spoken would come to pass, but revealed that even he did not know the exact time: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."

The two questions [concerning the Parousia] that are really left open are those of the time and the manner. The view that seems best to cover the admittedly wide diversity of the N.T. teaching on the question may be stated as follows: (1) He has already returned in that life of the Spirit which sprang up among believing men, best exemplified in the Church. (2) He is still in process of returning according as men see more clearly and apply more consistently what he can mean for the world. (3) He is yet to return in still greater power as men surrender more completely to his Spirit. (4) There will be a final consummation in the recognition of his universal Lordship, described by Paul as the time when "all things shall have been made subject to Christ" see I Cor. 15:23-28).⁶⁸

The second portion of this discourse also falls into four sections: (1) Admonitions to Watch (Mt. 24:37-51; Mk. 13:33-37; Lu. 21:34-36); (2) Parable of the Ten Virgins (Mt. 25:1-13); (3) Parable of the Talents (Mt. 25:14-30); (4) Description of Last Judgment (Mt. 25:31-46). Here Jesus further emphasized the paramount necessity of preparation for "that day" and "that hour" of the Coming he had just proph-

esied. It would come suddenly and swiftly—a day of judgment, a day of redemption of the righteous and of vengeance to the wicked.

Admonitions to Watch

Using parable language, Jesus urged his disciples, and by implication his Church, to constant vigilance that they might “be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”

“If the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”

“Who then is a faithful and wise servant,” Jesus asked, “whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season [to feed the church of God, Acts 20:28]?” He answered his own question with the parable of the faithful and unfaithful servants who were summarily rewarded according to their service (Mt. 24:46–51; compare Lu. 12:42–46).

Parable of the Ten Virgins

Vigilance was not enough; Jesus therefore warned them yet more emphatically “against the peril of the drowsy life and the smouldering lamp.”⁶⁹ Individual preparation was also essential, for to see Christ in his glory each of his followers must be enlightened and ready. He compared his Second Advent to the happy occasion of a marriage during which the bridesmaids went out to welcome the bridegroom as he came to the marriage feast. “Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.”

All were virgins. All possessed lamps. All went forth to meet the bridegroom, but the bridegroom did not come immediately. All slept. All heard the midnight cry: “Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.” All arose and trimmed their lamps; all were willing to meet the bridegroom, but not all were ready. The foolish had made no provision for the delay and were unaware of their defection until the test of endurance came. Their oil was exhausted and they could not borrow from the wise: “Go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.” While they went to do that which should already have been done, the bridegroom came; “and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.” As the wise man of Matthew 7:24 built his house on a rock to withstand the adversities of life, so the wise virgins laid up strong reserves of spiritual character to

endure the delay of the bridegroom’s coming. Too late the foolish virgins came again, beseeching “Lord, Lord, open to us,” only to receive the answer “Verily I say unto you, I know you not.”

. . . the real difference between the two classes who profess to love the Lord’s appearing is a *radical* one—the possession by the one class of *an enduring principle of spiritual life*, and the want of it by the other.⁷⁰

The Master desired that all enter the kingdom; he foresaw the burden of disappointment, sorrow, and remorse of those on whom the door would be shut. He closed this parable with the warning “Watch therefore. . . .”

Parable of the Talents

The parable of the ten virgins represents the servants of Christ as awaiting his coming; this parable represents them as active in his service. Laying stress on the interval of absence before the Second Advent, Jesus emphasized the disciples’ duty to make full use of their natural abilities and of their moral and spiritual capabilities.

“The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.” He gave eight talents—to every man according to his several ability—to one five, to another two, and to another one (see Talent, p. 278). After a long time the servants’ master returned and demanded an accounting; he found that while seven talents had been put to use and multiplied, one had been buried in the earth. The two servants who had doubled their talents received the blessing “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.” To the fearful servant who returned his talent unused came the rebuke “Thou wicked and slothful servant. . . . Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. . . . And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness.”

The teaching was plain. Though each man’s gift was distinctive and peculiar to him, each was afforded the same measure of privilege, opportunity, and responsibility for service to Christ in the establishment of his kingdom on earth. Those who proved faithful to Christ’s demands and appropriated their gifts for good were accorded the full measure of Christ’s love and joy, while he who allowed his talent to lie dormant lost it, excluding himself from the joy of the kingdom. Paul later wrote “Be instant in season, out of season . . . do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (II Tim. 4:2,5).

Description of the Last Judgment

Jesus passed now to the subject of the final judgment that would take place at the end of the age or present world order (a judgment later to be fully developed and portrayed prophetically in Revelation). Again he clothed his message in parable form—the parable of the sheep and the goats. As the exalted King-Messiah, supreme in power and attended by the radiant hosts of heaven, the Son of man would judge the righteous and the wicked according to their works. From his position of majesty he would honor all those worthy to inherit the kingdom and invite them to partake of its joys; upon the wicked he would pronounce the retribution of “everlasting punishment.”

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.”

To those on his right hand the King said: “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. . . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

To those on his left hand: “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. . . . Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

The severe judgment pronounced on the wicked at Christ’s Coming is not an arbitrary one on the part of the judge; it is the punishment men have brought upon themselves by their failure to love God and practice brotherhood, whereas the righteous have earned redemption and eternal life by their practice of the love of Christ.

The liberal view of modern theology is that the eschatological outlook of Jesus [regarding the kingdom] was borrowed from, or accommodated to, temporary forms of Jewish thought, and that the valuable and enduring element is the conception of the Kingdom as entering into the life of mankind in this world, growing in range and power, and destined to permeate society and all its institutions with its Divine spirit. From this point of view the Second Coming, the central event of the history, is to be understood as a spiritual return which has been taking place in the events of history from Pentecost down to the present hour. Similarly the Last Judgment is interpreted as a continuous process

which runs parallel with the history of nations and churches.⁷¹

The Conspiracy Mt. 26:1–5, 14–16; Mk. 14:1, 2, 10, 11; Lu. 22:1–6

After Jesus had finished these tremendous eschatological revelations, his thought reverted to his coming death. Aware of the wickedness fermenting in the minds of his enemies and of the fact that his time was now very short, he confided to the apostles the time of his betrayal: “Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.”

Perhaps even as he was speaking, the chief priests, scribes, and elders met in the house of the high priest Caiaphas to plot Jesus’ death. But they must take him without arousing the populace. This could not be easily accomplished, for the city was crowded with pilgrims and strangers who regarded the Galilean either as a great prophet or as the promised Messiah. There were no open grounds for attack—his righteousness was above reproach—but from Jesus’ own band a disloyal apostle provided a way to apprehend him. Judas Iscariot, seething with dissatisfactions heretofore latent, stole away from the apostles sometime during that evening and, bargaining with the chief priests, agreed to betray his Master for thirty pieces of silver (an amount equivalent to about nineteen dollars, the price of a slave; see Ex. 21:32; Zech. 11:12, 13). From that moment he watched for an opportunity to betray Jesus when the people were not there. This act set in motion a series of events from which there was no turning back.

Judas, the only Judean of the Twelve, may have joined the group in the first place from political motives, and the betrayal may have been due to personal disappointment. But this in nowise excuses Judas. For weeks and months he lived in the presence of Jesus and had the greatest opportunity ever offered to any man to come to a proper understanding of the true nature of the kingdom of God. So far was Judas from being a victim of divine predestination that the utmost God could do to save a man—show him Jesus Christ—was done for him. Judas destroyed himself physically because he came to realize that he had already destroyed himself morally. . . . The idea that he was a necessary step in God’s plan to save the world is utterly false. Jesus was not crucified because Judas betrayed him. He went to Jerusalem expressly to suffer death, and he made no effort to escape it once he was convinced it was the Father’s will.⁷²

Wednesday

The Gospels are silent concerning Wednesday, which Jesus apparently spent in complete seclusion in Bethany. This day of rest has been called “a Sabbath to His Soul.” It has its analogy in Revelation (8:1) in the “silence in heaven about the space of half an hour” that followed the opening of the seven seals. That it was a day filled with prayer and communion and a full realization of his oneness with the Father was attested by Jesus’ serenity on the two succeeding days as he bade farewell to his beloved apostles and submitted heroically to the death of the cross.

Thursday

The next day, Thursday, marked Jesus’ last day with his own, and was one of fellowship and intimate communion with them. At its close he observed the Passover and instituted a new sacrament. He summarized for the apostles the essence of his ministry; however, even in his final discourses he continued to speak almost wholly by figure and parable. Jesus’ closest companions still apprehended little of what lay ahead. Thinking only of their need—“[loving] them unto the end”—he strengthened them for the terrible hours of coming crisis, leading them as far into the holy of holies of his consciousness as they could follow. Far from being left without hope, they were encouraged by his certainty of ultimate triumph and by his promise of another Comforter, “the Spirit of truth,” which would remain with them forever.

Last Supper Mt. 26:17–35; Mk, 14:12–31; Lu. 22:7–38; Jn. 13–17

The Passover Meal

This feast was to be held in the early evening of this Thursday, and it was necessary to make ready for it before sunset.* At noon all labor ceased, and every family in Jerusalem and environs was engaged in its preparation: the paschal lamb was slain; its sacrificial parts—the blood and the fat—were taken to the

*There is a question as to whether Jesus observed the actual Passover meal on this day as the Synoptics state or an anticipatory one because of his coming death, for, according to John, the Passover did not take place until Friday (Jn. 18:28).

Temple to be presented at the altar, while the remainder was to be eaten in the home with unleavened bread and bitter herbs (see Feasts, p. 60).

“Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?” Jesus’ apostles asked. Since Bethany was considered within the limits of Jerusalem, the Passover could have been observed in Bethany, but he chose to observe it in the Holy City. The true Lamb of God would close his mission where it had begun and there eat with his disciples the paschal lamb, which prefigured in type his sacrifice for “the sinfulness of human sin.” He directed Peter and John to “Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples” (Mt.) “And he will shew you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us” (Mk.).

The Passover meal began shortly after six o’clock; only the Twelve were present with him.* As they reclined on low couches at the table (see Meals, p. 44), Jesus, with the sorrowful and yet glorious knowledge that he was soon to leave them, said, “With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.”

Sometime during this supper a contention arose among the apostles. Unable properly to evaluate the Master’s triumphs and confidences of this week and not yet having relinquished their hopes of a worldly Messianic kingdom, they began to argue as to who should be greatest—a subject that should never have intruded itself into this sacred hour. Jesus silenced them with a question: “Whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.” He promised each would receive a kingdom and a throne, and be accorded the honor of eating and drinking at his table in his kingdom because they had served with him throughout the many trials of his ministry.

Jesus enforced the lesson of selfless service with a symbolic act. He took a towel, and girding himself, washed the feet of each of his apostles. Peter shrank from this act of humility on the Master’s part (feet-washing was the function of a slave), but Jesus pointed out the true significance of his act: “What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. . . . If I wash thee not, thou hast no part

*The probable order of the Passover feast: (1) The first cup of wine was blessed. (2) The hands were washed and a prayer offered. (3) Bitter herbs dipped in vinegar and fruit juice were eaten, and the paschal lamb was placed on the table. (4) The father of the house was asked by the eldest son to explain the meaning of the Passover (Ex. 12:26,27). (5) The second cup of wine was blessed. (6) The first part of the Hallel was sung (Pss. 113,114). (7) The lamb was eaten, with unleavened bread and thank offerings. (8) The third cup of wine (the cup of blessing) was blessed. (9) The fourth cup of wine was served. (10) The second part of the Hallel was sung (Pss. 115–118).

with me." When Peter realized that he meant purification of heart, he welcomed the cleansing. Mindful that he had just washed the feet of his betrayer, Jesus added, "Ye are clean, but not all." Only Judas could have understood these words. Jesus continued, "Know ye what I have done to you? . . . If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

As the paschal supper proceeded Jesus was troubled about Judas, and he declared, "One of you shall betray me." Sorrowfully, one by one, they asked, "Lord, is it I?" Finally he answered: "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me . . . woe unto that man . . . it had been good for that man if he had not been born" (Mt.). "He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it" (Jn.). Dipping a thin piece of bread into the main dish, he gave it to Judas Iscariot; after that Satan entered into Judas. Jesus had been aware that Judas was conspiring against him, yet he had continued to cherish him as his disciple until, at this feast, Judas showed himself barren of any response.

At once Jesus dismissed him: "That thou doest, do quickly." John records that none of the others knew for what purpose this was said. Judas immediately went out, and "it was night"—not only a point in time but also a spiritual darkness in Judas.

Institution of the Lord's Supper

The observance of the Passover meal was now concluded. Jesus' homage to the ritual of this ancient ceremony had been given for the last time. Reverently turning from the past, Jesus instituted a new spiritual communion in the presence of the faithful eleven. Using bread and wine as symbols of that communion, he took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to his apostles with the words "Take, eat; this is my body [Luke adds 'which is given for you']." Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament [new covenant], which is shed for many [RV poured out for you] for the remission of sins" (Mt.). "This do in remembrance of me" (Lu.). "And they all drank of it," dedicating themselves to the new covenant he was inaugurating (Heb. 8:8–10; 10:5–9). Thus simply did the Master set the pattern of a sacrament that would continually bring to the mind of the Christian his supreme offering of selfless love. This sacrament has since been called the Lord's Supper or the Eucharist.

In the intimacy of this Last Supper Jesus did indeed commune with them, and give of his "body," continuing to pour out that life-giving stream of truth and love that had animated his whole ministry and would inspire theirs.

With the traitor no longer in their midst, Jesus opened his heart to these closest friends, sharing unrestrainedly what was uppermost in his thought—that he was going to the Father. Though the time was a sad one because he was leaving them, it was nevertheless an exalting one as he drew them nearer to himself and to each other in bonds of love and as he spoke freely of his unique relationship to God.

In the hour that followed Jesus revealed that his parting from them was imminent, and that the sorrowful experience before him was in reality a glorification of both himself and the Father: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." He looked with anticipation to his return to the Father, which would follow his overcoming of the cross, a triumph in which he would magnify the Father and the Father would exalt him; and in this joy the suffering and humiliation of the cross would become as a thing of no account. He urged them to the practice of love:

"Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. A *new* commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; *as I have loved you, that ye also love one another*. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

For the moment they did not heed the new commandment, thinking only of their separation from him. In dismay Peter asked: "Lord, whither goest thou?" and Jesus replied, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards." Peter protested: "Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake." "Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake?" Jesus asked searchingly. "I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice."

Knowing that the loyalty of this impetuous disciple would soon be tested, Jesus comforted him. "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." He knew the depths of Peter's love, but he knew his faith was still vulnerable. He knew also that Peter would be chastened, that he would falter but not fail. "Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death," Peter asserted vehemently. Having loved and served the Master, he could not conceive of any ordeal that would cause him to forsake him. (According to Matthew, this assertion of loyalty was made later, on the walk to Gethsemane, by the other apostles as well.)

*Discourse
Christ the Way
the Truth, the Life*

Jn.14

Perceiving that the separation loomed large in their thought, Jesus admonished them to trust:

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.”

Thomas protested: “Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?” In one succinct statement Jesus summarized his lifework for Thomas and clarified anew the oneness of the Father and the Son.

“I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.”

Philip, too, failing still fully to understand the like nature of God and His Christ, entreated: “Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.” Jesus answered patiently. “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.”

From queries such as these of Peter, Thomas, and Philip, Jesus saw his disciples’ need for continued help and instruction. His next words reassured them that his and the Father’s love would always be with them. It was only within this hour of parting that he told them of the Comforter (Paraclete; from the Gk. *parakletos* “advocate,” “helper”), which would replace his human presence. Henceforth his presence would be in their hearts as a living force, strengthening them with grace and power.

“He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I

do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. . . .

“If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. . . . Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.”

Judas (not Iscariot) asked earnestly, “Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?” Jesus explained it was because they loved him and were receptive to his teachings. “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” Here again is his assertion that the Father and the Son are inseparable. (The same truth is seen in its fulfillment in Revelation in the relationship of God and the Lamb [Rev. 21:22,23; 22:3].)

Carrying his revelation further, Jesus now spoke of the office of the Comforter in the Father’s plan. As the Father had sent the Son to represent Him, so the Father would send the Holy Ghost to continue His Son’s work and interpret his teachings to generations to come. The meaning of all that the Son had imparted would in due time be fully understood as men grew in spiritual stature.

“These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

Jesus urged his apostles not to look on his departure with sorrow, but rather with peace, joy, and expectant hope, for his return to the Father would mark the perfect completion of his work.

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.”

There remained before him one more task to accomplish for the world—the overcoming of Satan’s last temptation, death.

“Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in

me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.”

Discourse

The Vine and the Branches

Jn. 15

Even as Jesus urged them to gird their thought and hasten toward the experience with him—“Arise, let us go hence”—he did not bring his confidences to an end. He pressed on to tell them more. Using the appropriate figure of a vine and its branches, he emphasized the paramount truth that to bear the fruit of the Spirit his disciples must continue to live in closest union with him, Christ. As branches of a vine are pruned to vitalize them for greater fruitfulness, so they too must be willing to let all unworthiness be stripped away to quicken them to greater spiritual fruit. If not, they would be barren and useless.

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. . . .

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered. . . . Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”

Feeling his apostles now responsive, he gave to love a new dimension.

“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, *as I have loved you*. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. . . . Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain. . . .”

Up to this time the world’s hatred had been focused chiefly on him, but Jesus knew that that enmity would now be directed against these, his representatives. He well knew how men reacted under hatred of truth. So Jesus again forewarned of persecution. But he also assured his disciples that the illuminating presence of the Comforter and their own authoritative witness to the truth would triumph over the world’s hatred.

“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. . . . If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you. . . . But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not him that sent me. . . .”

Discourse

His Going and Returning

Jn.16

They sat sad and silent as Jesus explained the necessity of his departure.

“It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.”

It was better for them that Christ’s personal presence should be withdrawn, in order that His spiritual presence might be nearer to them than ever, or, rather, might for the first time truly begin. This would be effected by the coming of the Holy Ghost, when He who was now “with” them, would be ever “in” them.⁷³

In this Comforter his followers would have an Advocate whose coming would indict the world on three counts:

“Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”

He will **convince** it of **righteousness**, for whereas his enemies thought that Jesus was discredited by the shameful death on the Cross, it would become evident that his death was a return to the Father, who had welcomed him as “the Holy and Righteous One” (cf. Acts 3:14; 2:36; 5:30–32). The Resurrection cancels the shame of the Cross and vindicates the righteousness of Jesus.⁷⁴

The work of the Advocate was also to reveal the “many things” Jesus had to leave unsaid.

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”

The Master now encouraged them with the promise that their sorrow would be brief and that it would be followed by a lasting joy, for they would see him again.

“A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. . . . Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. . . . I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.”

He further declared that in that day when they were taught by the Spirit of truth they would find they could pray directly to the Father, and through the Comforter’s teachings understand all that he had been telling them.

“These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.”

As he affirmed this truth the apostles responded quickly: “Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb [parable] . . . by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.” But Jesus, foreseeing their terrified desertion within the hour, searched their thought again with a penetrating question: “Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.” And he concluded his discourse with a promise of victory:

“These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

Jesus’ Intercessory Prayer

Jn.17

The Savior brought his hour of communion to a close with a threefold prayer of intercession. He prayed for himself, for his apostles, and for his future followers.

For himself: “Father, the hour is come; glorify [Wycliffe, clarify] thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. . . . I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”

For his apostles: “Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. . . . I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil [RV the evil one]. . . . Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.”

For his future disciples: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one. . . .

When they had sung a psalm, they left the upper room to make their way toward the Mount of Olives. Shortly before Thursday midnight Jesus crossed the valley of the Kidron with his apostles and approached the garden of Gethsemane.

Friday

Friday was a day of suffering. It began with Jesus’ agonizing struggle in Gethsemane as he awaited his impending crucifixion. From victorious prayer he went forth to face arrest by his enemies; to be tried without mercy or justice, once by the Jewish authorities, once by the Roman; to be subjected to indignity and mockery; and to be crucified like a common thief. Voluntarily he laid down his life that “he might take it again” in his Father’s good time.



*In Garden
of Gethsemane*

Mt. 26:30,36–46; Mk. 14:26,
32–42; Lu. 22:39–46; Jn. 18:1

In the dark hours of Friday morning Jesus came to Gethsemane (“oil press”), a small grove of olive trees at the foot of the Mount of Olives. At its entrance he directed eight of the apostles “Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.” He advanced beyond the eight in every sense of the term—into a realm they were yet unaware of. He took with him into the garden Peter, James, and John, the three of his disciples who could at that point in time walk with him a bit further in understanding. With his thought weighted by the coming crisis of the cross, he confided, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.”

Withdrawing even from these three, he went “a little farther”—“about a stone’s cast.” As he had gone many times to a mountain top to pray, so now he went “farther” to a new altitude of consecration and self-surrender. At the beginning of his ministry he had faced the temptation of Satan and repudiated worldly policy; now in Gethsemane he faced the temptation of avoiding the cross. Three times he knelt down with his face to the ground and prayed for strength and willingness to do the Father’s will. The first time he said, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” An angel appeared “strengthening him,” but “being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was

These ancient olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane (if not the originals then their offshoots) still stand sentinel, silent testimonials to the scene of the Master’s agony on the eve of his crucifixion.



as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” While he prayed, the apostles slept. When he found them sleeping, he said to Peter: “What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” These three, so dear and so close to him, failed to grasp this crucial opportunity to stand by him and uphold his cause.

Withdrawing again, his entreaty mounted in earnestness and self-immolation: “O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.” When he turned again to the three for the support of their prayers, he found them asleep once more. Mark appends the definitive statement “for their eyes were heavy,” while Luke explains they were “sleeping for sorrow.” (At the Transfiguration they had been “heavy with sleep.”) And a third time from his lips came the same intense cry: as the Son of





These venerable trees reproduce for the visitor today the seclusion and simplicity of the traditional site of Gethsemane.

man he entreated that the cup pass from him; as the Son of God he acknowledged "Thy will be done."

The conflict was over, the temptation overcome. He said to his apostles: "Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand."

Betrayal and Arrest

Mt. 26:47-56; Mk. 14:43-52; Lu. 22:47-53; Jn. 18:2-12

While Jesus was still speaking of the betrayer, Judas Iscariot appeared at the gate of the garden leading a company of Levites of the Temple guard provided by

the Sanhedrin and with them Roman officers appointed to keep order during the arrest. Judas had little difficulty finding his Master, for Jesus often came to this quiet sanctuary for prayer, but lest he escape in the darkness of the morning hour the force had been provided lanterns and torches, swords and staves.

Jesus went forward. "Whom seek ye?" "Jesus of Nazareth." At his calm, fearless "I am he," they recoiled for a moment in confusion. A kiss (the usual salutation by a disciple to a rabbi) had been agreed upon by Judas and the chief priests as the sign of identification—an infamous abuse of his apostleship—so Judas approached and greeted him, "Master, master," and kissed him. Judas' moment of triumph was shattered by Jesus' penetrating question which forced Judas to look within himself at the awful evil he was perpetrating, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"

Jesus' immediate concern was for the safety of the apostles—"If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way"—but as the soldiers seized Jesus, Peter resisted, drew his sword, and cut off the ear of Malchus, the high priest's servant. Strong in the spiritual freedom he had just won in Gethsemane, Jesus reproached Peter: "Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (Jn.) ". . . all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Mt.) (One Roman legion numbered about 6000 infantry. Jesus undoubtedly used the figure of twelve legions, representing an overwhelming force, to teach Peter that God's help superior to all else, was ever available.)

In the midst of the violence of arrest he touched the ear of Malchus and healed him, his love still reaching out to forgive an enemy. This compassionate act also shielded Peter and the other apostles from the danger of retaliation and seizure. The prophecy of desertion made only a few hours before came to pass, for as the soldiers bound Jesus to take him away, all the apostles forsook him and fled.

Jewish Ecclesiastical Trial

Jesus before Annas

(Jn. 18:13–23) Jesus faced two trials: one Jewish, the other Roman. The Jewish trial before the Sanhedrin was ecclesiastical; the Roman trial before Pilate was civil and political. The Sanhedrin had almost complete jurisdiction over the religious life of the Jew and could pronounce the sentence of death upon anyone guilty

of certain violations of Mosaic Law, particularly those of blasphemy, Sabbath-breaking, and heresy (see p. 219). Jesus was arraigned before this powerful body as a blasphemer and false prophet who was drawing the people away from orthodox rabbinical teachings.

The Jewish trial, in which Jesus was taken before Annas, Caiaphas, and the Sanhedrin, began long before dawn. According to John's Gospel he was brought first to the palatial residence of Caiaphas in Jerusalem to face an unofficial hearing before Caiaphas' father-in-law Annas. Peter and another disciple, who had fled only to a safe distance from the soldiers, retraced their steps and followed Jesus, still at a distance. "That disciple [John] was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace." Matthew records: "Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace." But John returned to speak to the serving maid at the door so Peter might be admitted into the building's courtyard.

Annas had been high priest from 7 to 15 A.D., but had long since been deposed by the Romans. He had, however, succeeded by political influence and intrigue in keeping the office within his family, and had continued to wield great power even though his son-in-law was titular high priest. Devoid of legal authority, he nevertheless examined Jesus about his disciples and his doctrine in the attempt to obtain some incriminating statement.

Jesus refused to answer Annas' questions: "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me." At this answer one of the Temple guards struck him for insolence. Annas then sent him to Caiaphas, who awaited his arrival in another part of the building.

Jesus before Caiaphas

(Mt. 26:57–75; Mk. 14:53–72; Lu. 22:54–65; Jn. 18:24–27) Jesus was held under close guard in a room above the courtyard while as many as possible of the members of the Sanhedrin were hastily summoned, for rabbinical law required the presence of at least twenty-three for a quorum. Although the trial they were about to hold had a semblance of legal form, it ruthlessly violated the established rules for the just trial of prisoners. Their purpose, which should have been to work for the prisoner's acquittal, was in this case wholly bent upon his destruction. The law provided that a capital trial could not be held at night or immediately preceding a feast day or the Sabbath; the prisoner was to be adjudged innocent until at least two witnesses had testified and their testimony had been confirmed, and if the prisoner were proven guilty the judges were still required to fast and pray for a full day before pronouncing sentence. This preliminary

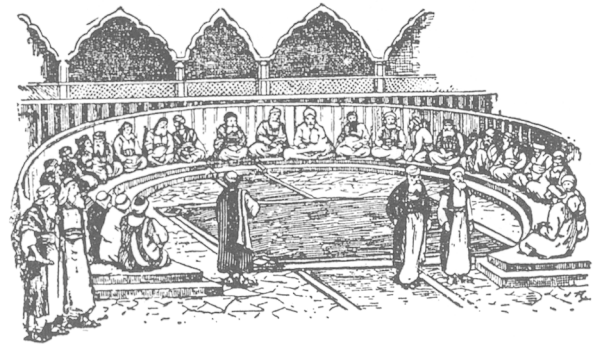
trial was thus a mockery from the outset, a malicious perversion of justice.

As the members of the Sanhedrin sat cross-legged in a semicircle, the high priest in the center, Jesus was placed bound before them. As he stood entirely at their mercy—or so they thought in their ignorance—they examined witness after witness, trying to find those whose testimony agreed. At last they found two false witnesses who, misquoting his statement in the Temple nearly three years before, testified: “We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands” (see Jn. 2:19–21). But even their testimony was not in full agreement, so no indictment could be made.

Instead of releasing Jesus, Caiaphas further violated the legality of the trial by asking a direct question that would cause the prisoner to testify against himself. “Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?” But Jesus “held his peace, and answered nothing.” Frustrated in his attempt to obtain conclusive evidence but still determined to incriminate Jesus, Caiaphas put a second direct question, to which he demanded an answer: “I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.” This was even more dangerous to Jesus’ case, for it concerned his claim to Messiahship, one the hierarchy had been resisting with every weapon at their command.

Jesus need not have complied. Nevertheless he did answer—“I am,” and added without restraint a further claim to honor: “Ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” Instantly the elated high priest charged him with blasphemy: “What further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye?” The Sanhedrin concurred: “He is guilty of death.” Gloating over their success, they subjected Jesus to the personal indignities he had foretold: they spat in his face, and blindfolded and struck him—some with their fists, others with their open palms—and taunted: “Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?”

During this trial Peter sat with the household servants and officers of the guard in the courtyard below, awaiting the outcome. As he warmed himself by the fire that had been kindled against the cold night air, a maidservant recognized him and asked: “Art not thou also one of his disciples?” Suddenly frightened, Peter disclaimed any knowledge of his Master: “I am not,” and withdrew to the gateway of the courtyard. Questioned a second time, he denied with an oath. The third time he began to curse and to swear “I know not the man.” At his third denial a rooster crowed, and “the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter.” Peter remembered his Master’s words; his



Sanhedrin in session. Before this Council Jesus’ ecclesiastical trial took place, and before it the apostles faced arraignment for preaching in Jesus’ name. *Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopaedia*.

remorse was immediate and terrible. “He went out, and wept bitterly.”

Jesus before the Sanhedrin (Mt. 27:1,2; Mk. 15:1; Lu. 22:66–71) Driven by the pressure of time, the Sanhedrin hastened formally to legalize its action of the preceding night. Ignoring the Judaic regulation that a day intervene before trial and pronouncement of a capital sentence, it convened in full shortly after daybreak—before Jerusalem was awake—to ratify the death sentence. This meeting was held in its own chambers, the Hall of Hewn Stones within the Temple area. Jesus was arraigned before the council and interrogated again—“Art thou the Christ? tell us.” His answer: “If I tell you, ye will not believe: And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go.” Calmly he reaffirmed his coming glorification, a declaration they had branded blasphemous the night before. “Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.” These words from his own lips were all they wanted to hear: “What need we any further witness?” Before the highest governing body of the Jews Jesus thus formally asserted his Messiahship, and the ruling council thus formally rejected their Messiah by pronouncing his claim blasphemous.

The Sanhedrin could pronounce the death sentence but it could not carry it out without the authorization of the Roman governor; so, still in the early morning hours, Jesus was bound and taken before Pontius Pilate.

Meanwhile the traitor had had time to reflect on the enormity of his offense. Gone were the excitement and glamor of priestly recognition. Shunned and alone, Judas awaited the outcome of the trial. When he saw the Master actually led away, he rushed frightened and conscience-stricken to the Temple to

return the blood money to the Sanhedrists. "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood!" But Judas was no longer of use to the priests; now he was only an odious reminder of their own corruption. "What is that to us? see thou to that" was their contemptuous retort. Judas' remorse came too late to turn back the tide of events he had set in motion. He threw the thirty silver shekels to the marble pavement, and went out and hanged himself (Mt. 27:3–10; compare Acts 1:18).

Roman Civil Trial

Jesus before Pilate

(Mt. 27:2,11–14; Mk. 15:1–5; Lu. 23:1–5; Jn. 18:28–38) The ecclesiastical trial was over. Before Jesus lay a civil trial that would also result in tragic injustice. The man he faced was Pilate, Roman Procurator appointed by the Emperor Tiberius as governor of the troublesome and restless province of Judaea. Pilate regarded his Jewish subjects with contempt, and his rule was marked by corruption and cruelty. He made no attempt to understand the Jewish mind and continually offended the Jews by his disregard of their theocratic beliefs; he was therefore unable to cope with their fanatic fervor. They had successfully bested him several times—on one occasion forcing him to remove the imperial image of Caesar (to them an emblem of idolatry) from the standards of the Roman troops in Jerusalem, on another occasion forcing him to take down from Herod's palace in Jerusalem tablets bearing prayers to the Emperor. The animosity that existed between the Jewish priesthood and the Roman governor lay close to the surface.

Pilate had come from his official residence at Caesarea to maintain order at the Passover feast, and he was in the Praetorium, hall of judgment, in the Castle of Antonia when the chief priests brought Jesus to him between six and nine o'clock on this decisive Friday morning. Still piously observant of Judaic ceremonialism, they would not enter the hall itself for fear of defilement, since it was a heathen building not purged of leaven for the feast—an uncleanness that would have prevented their eating the Passover (see footnote, p. 311). Pilate came out to inquire what the accusation against their prisoner was. At first they reported Jesus an evildoer. Pilate, not unaware of the nature of Jesus' activities, would have dismissed the case to their jurisdiction—"Take ye him, and judge him according to your law." When they answered "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death," he saw clearly their determination to obtain a death sentence. They then brought the charge of treason: "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King." This was not the charge on which the Sanhedrin had condemned him, but they knew Pilate

would give no credence to the religious indictment of blasphemy; he would naturally be vitally concerned if Jesus were a threat to Rome.

Pilate went back into the palace to question Jesus and to determine for himself whether this political charge was true. "Art thou the King of the Jews?" he asked. Jesus answered: "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?" He disarmed Pilate's fears of treason with the explanation that his claim to kingship pertained to a spiritual kingdom—"My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."

His reply caused Pilate to ask again: "Art thou a king then?" Jesus responded: "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." Not comprehending the quality of the man but idly curious as to his philosophy, Pilate queried, "What is truth?" Jesus made no reply. After this Pilate brought Jesus into the open court and reported to the Sanhedrin: "I find in him no fault at all."

Seeing that Pilate was about to acquit him, the Sanhedrin hurled many other accusations; to strengthen their original charge they added the allegation of sedition, saying he was stirring up the Jews from Galilee to Judaea. Jesus stood silent. The governor was amazed at his silence: "Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee."

Jesus before Herod

(Lu. 23:6–12) Pilate now realized with alarm that the case was assuming serious proportions. His attention was caught by the name *Galilee*, a province not under his jurisdiction, and he asked if the prisoner were a Galilean. He knew Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, was in Jerusalem for the Passover season, and learning Jesus belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, Pilate sent Jesus to him. Herod (son of Herod the Great, who had attempted to slay the Messiah at birth) was glad to see Jesus. Having heard many reports about him, he hoped to see him perform a miracle in his presence, but Jesus remained completely silent under the questioning of this dissolute ruler. Herod's curiosity quickly turned to anger; he and his soldiers treated Jesus with contempt and mockery, and after arraying him in a bright-colored robe, returned him to the Roman governor. By his action he implicated himself morally in the condemnation of Jesus; on this day he and Pilate, formerly enemies, became friends.

Jesus before Pilate

(Mt. 27:15–31; Mk. 15:6–20; Lu. 23:13–25; Jn. 18:38–19:16) Forced now to make some decision,

Pilate summoned the Jewish authorities to the judgment seat, which stood in the large open pavement, Gabbatha, in front of the Praetorium. Hoping to end the matter quickly and at the same time to placate these powerful Jews, he announced to the chief priests and to the rapidly gathering crowd: "I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: No, nor yet Herod. . . . I will therefore chastise him, and release him."

Pilate could have acquitted Jesus, but he feared the wrath of the Jewish rulers. He decided to appeal to the gathering crowd for a sign of mercy, hoping to gain the people's support and thus defeat the avowed intention of the Sanhedrin. It was the Roman governor's custom to release one prisoner of their choice to the people during the Passover season; and he was holding in chains an insurrectionist named Barabbas, a robber and murderer. "Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?" he asked. Before Pilate's proposal could make an impact on the minds of the people, the chief priests raised a cry for Barabbas, and soon a concerted shout arose: "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas." (The Sinaitic Syriac and Armenian New Testament versions, Moffatt's translation, and an RSV footnote give the name as Jesus Bar-Abbas. If this was the man's full name, as it might have been, the fact sharpens the contrast between the murderer Jesus Bar-Abbas [the son of the father, i.e., Rabbi] and Jesus the Messiah [the Son of the Father].)

While Pilate sat in the judgment seat and heard with dismay the mounting furor, his wife sent a disturbing message—"Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." As he hesitated, the cry of the mob for Barabbas became more insistent. Torn between his wish to pacify the Jews and his desire to save Jesus, Pilate vacillated. "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" As with one voice came the cry: "Crucify him, crucify him." Again he appealed for some sign of mercy: "Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go." But the mood of the crowd had now been fanned into fury, and they were "instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified."

Mindful of his failures in the past to change the Jewish mind, Pilate saw that he could break down neither their implacable hatred nor their determination to destroy Jesus. Throwing off the responsibility, he took a basin of water and washed his hands before them, declaring: "I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it." The people cried: "His blood be on us, and on our children." So Pilate released Barabbas and surrendered Jesus to a detach-

ment of Roman soldiers for scourging, a customary punishment before crucifixion. The soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and called the rest of their cohort together to make sport of him. As judge, Pilate watched. The prisoner was flogged cruelly with a whip of leather thongs that had been knotted or tipped with lead. The soldiers mockingly clothed Jesus in a scarlet mantle, placed a plaited thorn crown on his head and a reed in his right hand, and knelt before him taunting: "Hail, King of the Jews!" Adding indignity to indignity, they spat on him, and struck him on the head.

Pilate brought the prisoner out before the crowd once more, still hoping for some compassionate response, but his appeal went unheeded amid shouts of "Crucify him, crucify him." At this fresh outcry, Pilate yielded to their desires even though he continued to maintain "I find no fault in him."

Elated at their success, the chief priests blurted out to the governor their actual charge against Jesus: "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." Frightened by this disclosure, Pilate returned to the judgment hall to examine Jesus further: "Whence art thou?" But Jesus did not answer. When Pilate demanded, "Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" he did answer, since he could not allow this claim to pass unchallenged. "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." (Three days later at Resurrection he gave sublime proof of this statement.)

In great alarm Pilate again tried to reason with the Jews until they said to him, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar." At this threat to his political position and his own interest, Pilate again yielded. He who had so often corrupted power to his own ends found himself impotent to perform the one act of justice he truly desired. His decision was a blot on Rome's imperial justice.

Bringing Jesus before the people for the last time, he mounted the judgment seat, saying: "Behold your King!" The maddened crowd shouted, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him." With the question "Shall I crucify your King?" Pilate capitulated and pronounced the death sentence.* Jesus' rejection was complete. The leaders of the nation had repudiated their Messiah; now they disowned their King—"the King that cometh in the name of the Lord."

*Josephus says that charges were brought against Pilate by the Samaritans before Vitellius, governor of Syria in 35 A.D. for the wanton slaughter of certain of their number. Vitellius ordered him to Rome for trial before the Emperor Tiberias, but Tiberias died before Pilate reached the capital. Pilate's further history is not known, but according to tradition he committed suicide.

Mt. 27:31–56; Mk. 15:20–41;
Lu. 23:26–49; Jn. 19:17–37

Crucifixion

The site of the crucifixion was Golgotha (Lat. Calvary), a slight rise of land outside the city walls. As Jesus was led along the road in the forenoon of Friday, he carried his own cross, aided at the last by Simon of Cyrene. The scarlet mantle had been replaced by his own plain garments. He was flanked by four Roman soldiers and preceded by a herald bearing a tablet that named his crime. The way was long, the streets were narrow and crowded with hostile or silent spectators; the cross was heavy, and as he bent beneath its weight the women of Jerusalem wept in sorrow. With his ever-present compassion, Jesus turned to say: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. . . . For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

At Golgotha Jesus was offered vinegar mixed with gall, a potion customarily given to criminals before execution; but after tasting it he refused to drink. "A single touch of humanity was permitted during these preparations—the offer of a draught of the common sour wine drunk by the soldiers, mingled with some stupefying bitter drug, usually myrrh. . . . But Jesus would take nothing to cloud His faculties, even though it might mitigate His pain."⁷⁵

Jesus was stripped of all but his loincloth and nailed to the cross, a thief to his right and another to his left; above his head was placed Pilate's inscription in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek: JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Crucifixion, this cruel and degrading form of capital punishment practiced by the Greeks and Romans, was inflicted only on slaves and criminals. The experience of the cross has been called Jesus' "humiliation," but it was in truth men's humiliation for it was they who stooped to shame, not he. The soldiers at the foot of the cross, insensitive to his suffering, divided his garments among them and cast lots for his seamless robe, fulfilling the Hebrew prophecy "They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots" (compare Ps. 22:18).

To add to the desecration of this hour the chief priests, scribes, and elders ridiculed Jesus with the very charges made against him at the trial: "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. . . . He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God." And the

thieves who hung beside him "cast the same in his teeth."

As Jesus hung on the cross he made a number of statements, sometimes termed "the seven last words." His first words were "*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do*" (Lu. 23:34). Deserted by his disciples and repudiated by the world's hatred of all he represented, no bitter or rebellious expression escaped him. Only pure love for God and man could have prompted so selfless a prayer.

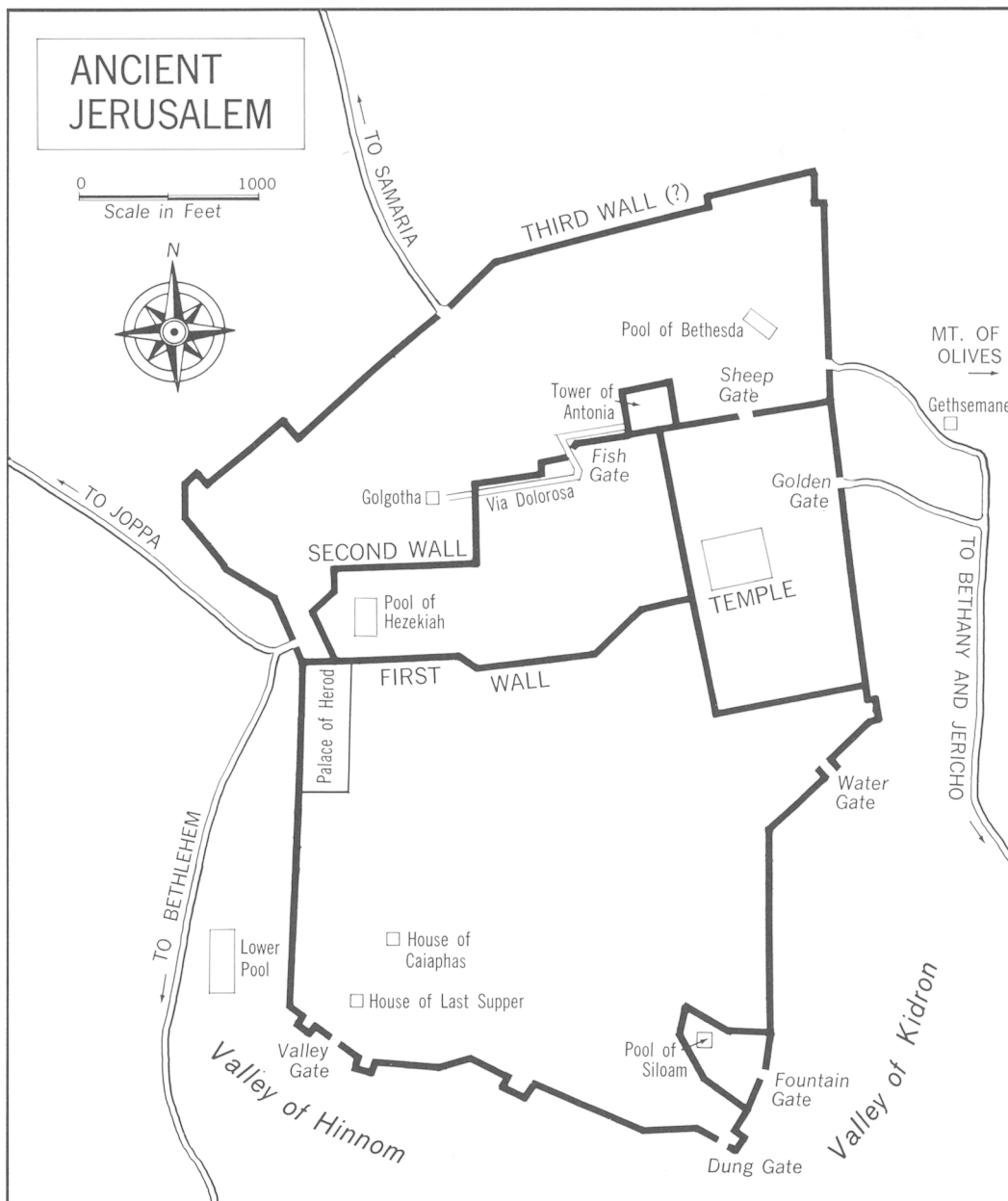
One of the malefactors who hung beside him reviled him; but the other rebuked such rashness and confessed his own guilt: "We receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss." "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," he entreated. With calm assurance Jesus promised: "*Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise*" (Lu. 23:43). The criminal had barely turned from his evil deeds, had admitted his sin only a moment before, yet Jesus was sensitive to this sinner's cry for help. Here was the first suppliant of the cross! Even before Jesus' own triumph was apparent came its first redemptive victory. The thief had not earned paradise or its peace, but through Christ's forgiveness and grace he at once stood on its threshold.

Jesus' mother, with Mary Magdalene and two other faithful women, stood near the cross in the company of John (Jn. 19:25). John's love for his Master had outweighed fear for himself; he alone of the eleven was so close to the Master's spirit that he could love enough to stand at his cross. Seeing Mary and John, Jesus said, "*Woman, behold thy son!*" and to John, "*Behold thy mother!*" (Jn. 19:26,27). No single duty or responsibility, human or divine, had Jesus ever neglected; he made provision for his mother by entrusting her to the care of John and at the same time honored the beloved apostle who had qualified. Jesus bestowed on him an outward sign of inward sonship, an act foreshadowing the spiritual sonship John later beheld and declared in his writings.

According to John's Gospel Jesus was crucified at the sixth hour, or noon (Jn. 19:14); according to Mark it was the third hour, nine o'clock in the morning (Mk. 15:25). From the sixth to the ninth hour (twelve to three o'clock) a strange darkness fell over the land, and at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice: "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? . . . My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" (Mt. 27:46), the first words of the Twenty-second Psalm. Jesus had reached the heights of exaltation at his Transfiguration; he touched the depths of anguish at his Crucifixion. The burden of the world's blindness and opposition pressed upon him, and mankind's future hope of salvation lay cradled in this crucial moment. Up to this point he had vanquished every evil assault of "the



Aerial view of the Old City, Jerusalem. Center right shows the Temple area. The Moslem Dome of the Rock marks the former site of Solomon's Temple. To its right lies the deep wadi of the Kidron Valley. Jordan Tourism Office — New York.



prince of this world." Were he to fail to overcome the last onslaught of Satan, all for which he had labored would be lost. His whole lifework of service for the Father and for his fellow men appeared to hang in the balance as he bore the strain of this hour, but in patient suffering he endured.

"*I thirst*" (Jn. 19:28). This Jesus said, "knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled" (compare Ps. 69:21). His enemies had already given him the vinegar and gall of insolence and scorn. While the soldiers held to his mouth a sponge filled with wine vinegar, his Father alone was slaking his true thirst for righteousness. In the depths of this almost bottomless pit of travail he was sustained with the water of Life.

A triumphant cry now sprang from his lips: "*It is finished*" (Jn. 19:30). His love had been tried to the last fiber of endurance—and had endured. He was proving to men, though they did not yet understand it, that the prince of this world had found "nothing" in him.

Then Jesus prayed "*Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*" (Lu. 23:46). This prayer was the ultimate in obedience, expressing a sublime trust that out of what appeared to be overwhelming defeat would come, in God's own time, a glorious victory and resumption of his work. With this last declaration he "bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

Jesus' first and last words on the cross affirmed the divine relationship of Father and Son and maintained it untarnished. This was the real spiritual victory which he had won.

The outstanding feature of His life was its deliberate and unceasing submission to the will of His Father in every point. . . . His life was, all through, the complete representation, the perfect realization, of the will of God. . . . The sinful passions of man, which could not bend Christ to yield to them, rose against Him in hatred, and put Him to death. Thus, on the part of men, the Crucifixion was a murder. But on the part of Christ, the death of the Cross was the culmination of His righteous life, the crowning act of assent to the will of God. It was a "death unto sin." It was the refusal of sin carried to its last and victorious extremity.

Looked at in this way, then, the death of Christ was the perfect display of righteousness, the complete achievement of union with the Divine will, the absolute condemnation of human sin.⁷⁶

Jesus had seen clearly the necessary outcome of this journey to Jerusalem. . . . Deliberately he planned the Jerusalem visit, and calmly he placed himself into the hands of those who sought his life. His teaching would thus be consummated and glorified. . . .

Jesus realized that his own death at the hands of the Jews did not mean the destruction of his work nor the failure of his cause. . . . The Kingdom of God would live and triumph, notwithstanding his death—indeed, in a measure because of his death. . . .

Nor would he by that experience which men call death lay down the work of his life. He knew that shortly, in God's own good time, he would resume it (Matt. xvi:21,25; comp. Hos. vi:2). The soul which draws its life from God forever lives. "There is no death: what seems so is transition." The crucifixion was an incident in the life of an immortal being. What we term death is but the point at which the relation of the living soul to the physical body changes from that to which we are accustomed. Jesus lived and Jesus lives. He did not die. Shall we deny immortality to him, when we hold to it for ourselves? The Christian does not die: he rises to a larger, better life. Jesus "brought life and immortality to light." He taught us that there is no death, but only transition to a higher sphere of existence.⁷⁷

The unnatural pall of darkness over the land during the hours of crucifixion was not the only marvel which took place in the physical world around Jesus. At his death the veil in the Temple, the two great tapestried curtains of purple and gold (said to have been 60 feet long and 30 feet wide, each the thickness of the palm of the hand) that hung 18 inches apart between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, was "rent in twain from top to the bottom," a sign to men that henceforth they would have free access to the Father through the atoning sacrifice of His Son (Heb. 10:19–22). One commentary remarks: ". . . that thick veil which for so many ages had been the dread symbol of *separation between God and guilty men* was, without a hand touching it, mysteriously 'rent in twain from top to bottom'—'the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was now made manifest!' . . . Before, it was death *to go in*, now it is *death to stay out*."⁷⁸ (In the Revelation that Jesus Christ later gave to John, "the temple of God was opened in heaven" and the seer beheld "the ark of his testament [covenant]," the Old Testament tabernacle symbol of the presence of God, without a concealing veil [Rev. 11:19].)

Only Matthew records that the earth quaked and the rocks nearby were split, and many tombs of the saints were opened. The Roman centurion and the soldiers with him at the cross who witnessed the earthquake and the things which had happened exclaimed: "Truly this was the Son of God." The multitude slowly returned to Jerusalem, beating their breasts as, sobered and guilt-stricken, they began to comprehend the enormity of the crime to which they had given assent.

The Sabbath began at sundown. This was a high Sabbath, the opening day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread; so that the bodies of Jesus and the two with him should not hang on the cross after sunset (Deut. 21:23) the Jews asked of Pilate that the prisoners' legs be broken, a Roman method of hastening death, and that the bodies be taken down. So the soldiers broke

the legs of the two thieves, but when they saw that Jesus was already dead “they brake not his legs.” However, a soldier took his spear and pierced Jesus’ side, and “forthwith came there out blood and water.” Thus Scripture was again fulfilled: “A bone of him shall not be broken” (compare Ex. 12:46; Ps. 34:20); “They shall look on him whom they pierced” (compare Ps. 22:16; Zech. 12:10).

Burial

Mt. 27:57–61; Mk. 15:42–47;
Lu. 23:50–56; Jn. 19:38–42

It was almost evening and burial must take place before the Jewish Sabbath began. Joseph of Arimathaea, a highly respected member of the Sanhedrin who had long been a secret disciple of Jesus and who had not consented to the sentencing, summoned his courage and went openly to Pilate to ask for Jesus’ body. With the procurator’s permission, Joseph took the body from the cross and, assisted by the Nicodemus who had sought out Jesus by night at the beginning of his ministry, prepared it for burial, winding it in linen sprinkled with spices. Joseph’s own tomb hewn out of rock was near at hand—“a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.” There they placed Jesus’ body. A great stone was rolled before its entrance, and Mary Magdalene and many other women who had followed him from Galilee marked where the body was entombed. Thus tragically the work and life of Jesus the Christ appeared to end.

Saturday

Saturday was for Jesus’ enemies one of apprehension as they waited for the close of the Jewish Sabbath to take further precautionary measures to ensure the certainty of his death. Remembering his remarkable miracles and fearing his possible resurrection and its consequences since he had said, “After three days I will rise again,” the Sanhedrin deliberately took steps to thwart it.

Sealing of the Tomb

Mt. 27:62–66

Immediately after sunset some of the council hurried to Pilate to ask that a Roman guard seal the sepulcher until the third day to prevent Jesus’ disciples from stealing his body by night and claiming his resurrection, for then, said they, “The last error shall be worse than the first.” Pilate gave them authority; so they sealed the stone (stretching across it a strong cord whose ends were made fast by clay stamped with an official impress) and stationed Roman soldiers to stand guard.

The Forty Days from Resurrection to Ascension

Three days after Crucifixion Jesus rose from the dead. The veil of the flesh had been rent. The Father brought him forth triumphant as His forever-living witness. He totally vindicated His Son and crowned his Messiahship with immortality. Ten meetings of Jesus with his disciples occurred in the next forty days, during which he “shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs” and further instructed them in “the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” As the Risen Christ he taught them step by step the full significance of his resurrection in relation to his Messiahship, and prepared them for the higher glory of his ascension.

Resurrection

No “stone” set or sealed by the authority of men could keep the Christ entombed, and early in the morning on the first day of the week came Jesus’ glorious resurrection. The four Gospels report with restraint and simplicity the events surrounding the Resurrection, letting this miracle speak eloquently for itself. There was no human witness to Jesus’ resurrection, only the angelic declaration of that fact. Peculiar to Matthew is the record that “the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.” Jesus had been in the tomb three days. The Jews reckoned days from sundown to sundown; thus he was in the tomb part of Friday, all of Saturday, and part of the following day. On this first day of the week Jesus Christ walked through the open door as the one “alive for evermore” (Rev. 1:18), proving his power over death for himself and for us. He walked away from mortality—the tomb—into eternal life.

Had the Ruler of the Universe given no sign when the spotless and loving Christ was made away with by His murderers, the problem of evil would have been well-nigh overwhelming, and faith in the supremacy of a moral order would have lacked one of its strongest supports.⁷⁹

The Resurrection, confirmed by Jesus’ subsequent appearances, revived the fainting faith of the apostles and filled them with renewed spiritual strength and confidence. His physical presence convinced them of his resurrection and he became to them the Risen Christ. This rising gave incontrovertible evidence of the truth of his teachings and authenticated every precept he had uttered. From the inception of the Church his followers made this dynamic of resurrection the focal point of all Christian hope and ministry.

*The Empty Tomb*Mt. 28:1-8; Mk. 16:1-8;
Lu. 24:1-8; Jn. 20:1-10

Toward dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Salome, and the other women—those who had stood at the cross—came to the tomb with spices to anoint the body of Jesus. They asked one another: “Who shall roll us away the stone from the door?” But when they reached the tomb they found the stone already rolled away. When the women entered the tomb they found it empty of the body of Jesus. Instead, an awaiting angel asked: “Why seek ye the living among the dead?” (Lu.). “Ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said” (Mt.). “Go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him.”

Mary Magdalene ran to tell Peter and John. “They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.” The two disciples hurried to the tomb to see for themselves. John outran Peter, looked in and saw the linen clothes, but did not enter. Peter went in “and seeth the linen clothes lie, And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.” When John did enter, “he saw, and believed,” reading correctly the meaning of the empty graveclothes. He returned to Jerusalem with the dawning conviction that his Master had risen; but Peter went away “wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.”

At birth the Christ child had been wrapped in swaddling clothes. After Resurrection the linen wrappings that swathed the body of Jesus for burial were laid aside in quiet order. He had himself removed the strictures of mortal life with which he had been bound.

Report of Roman Guard

Mt. 28:11-15

The Roman guard came into the city to report to the chief priests the startling events of the morning. The Sanhedrin met in hurried conclave; their precautionary measures had failed and the question now was how to prevent the people from believing that Jesus had risen from the dead and was therefore all he had professed himself to be. Denial was the only course open to them, so with a large sum of money they bribed the soldiers to spread a false report: “Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.” For a Roman soldier to sleep while on guard was a capital offense, but the Sanhedrin promised that if the matter came to the attention of Pilate they would

persuade him to grant immunity. So the soldiers “took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.”

Justin Martyr, who flourished about A.D. 170, says, in his ‘Dialogue with Trypho the Jew,’ that the Jews dispersed the story by means of special messengers sent to every country.⁸⁰

*Ten Appearances
during Forty Days*

That Jesus was seen by his disciples during the forty days following his resurrection is a fact carefully authenticated and verified by the Gospel writers. By tarrying on earth the Master gave proof of his resurrection. Ten appearances are specifically recorded as having occurred during this period, five of these taking place on the day of Resurrection.

In each of these five appearances he sounded out the understanding of those to whom he appeared. He found them slow to believe. The acceptance for centuries of the inevitability of death was so predominant that the realization of his living presence was almost beyond their grasp. To them he appeared, disappeared, reappeared, but the glory of his true being, glimpsed by Peter, James, and John at the Transfiguration, they all began to understand more clearly. At first they could only recognize his presence briefly—sometimes when they were together, sometimes when alone; but with each reappearance, they gained a stronger conviction of the reality of his resurrection and of his unquestionable victory over the flesh.

There has been much discussion among theologians regarding the mode of Jesus’ existence after his resurrection. The Gospels specifically state that his appearance was such that his followers often did not recognize him at once. Mary Magdalene did not know him; the two disciples walking to Emmaus did not know him, nor did the seven apostles at the Sea of Galilee.

There are two sets of notices [concerning the risen Christ’s manner of existence] which are not easily combined in an intelligible conception. On the one hand, there are several statements which create the impression that Jesus resumed the same mode of bodily existence which was interrupted at His death upon the cross. The story of the empty tomb (Mk. 16:1-8) meant that the body which had hung upon the cross was revived. That it was a body of flesh and blood, capable of being handled, and sustained by food and drink—not an apparition of a spiritualistic kind—is a point which is specially emphasized in details of the

narratives (Jn. 20:27, Lu. 24:30). On the other hand, it is far from being a normal life in the body. His face and form have a strange aspect. He appears suddenly in the midst, the doors being shut (Jn. 20:26), and as suddenly vanishes out of their sight (Lu. 24:31). To this series belong the references of St. Paul, who places the appearance to himself on a level with the others, and speaks of Christ as possessing a body which is not of flesh and blood, but has been transfigured and glorified (I Co. 15:50, Ph. 3:21).

The explanation of the phenomena, according to Schleiermacher, is that in the one set of statements we have the matter described from the side of the risen Christ, in the other an account of the impression which He made on the disciples (*Leben Jesu*). Others conceive that while after the Resurrection He existed as a spiritual being, He yet assumed material substance and form at special moments for special purposes (Rothe, *Theologische Ethik*). The primitive theory probably was that after the Resurrection His mode of existence was the same as during the ministry, with an augmentation of the power over His body which He even then possessed (Mk. 6:45–50), and that only at the Ascension was the body transformed. Some modern theologians hold that the body was raised from the grave as a spiritual body, others that it was gradually spiritualized in the period between the Resurrection and the Ascension.⁸¹

1. To Mary Magdalene

Mk. 16:9–11; Jn. 20:11–18

On Resurrection morning, after Mary Magdalene had told Peter and John of the disappearance of Jesus' body, she returned weeping to the tomb. She had not grasped the angel's message that her Master was risen. "As she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre"; and saw two angels guarding the place where the body had lain. They asked: "Woman, why weepest thou?" In anguished grief she answered: "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." Still not perceiving the significance of their question, she turned away. As she did so, Jesus stood before her, but she "knew not that it was Jesus."

At once he led her thought beyond the man Jesus to the Risen Christ and his first words to her were like those of the angels—"Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" Mary, supposing him to be the gardener, entreated: "Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus addressed her by name. This time she knew him. In gladness she cried, "Rabboni [my great master]."

As she approached to assure herself of his physical presence, Jesus stopped her: "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." He carefully guarded the victory he had just won, allowing neither human joy nor affection to hold him in the flesh. His whole spiritual impulsion was upward—to rise to his full stature as the ascended

Christ, thus completing his earthly mission. His words "*my* Father, and *your* Father" and "*my* God, and *your* God" implied significantly that his union with the Father would be a blessing to them and that the God-given power he manifested was theirs also. As his resurrection was to men "the resurrection, and the life," so his ascension above matter would be to them ascension and life.

Mary hastened to the mourning apostles to tell them she had seen Jesus and had talked with him, but they did not believe her.

2. To the Women

Mt. 28:9,10; Lu. 24:9–11

As the other women went from the sepulcher on Resurrection morning to carry the angel's message to the apostles, Jesus met them; and at his "All hail" they fell at his feet to worship him. "Be not afraid," he reassured them. This admonition was familiar to them, for these words had been spoken to the Twelve when Jesus walked on the water, and to Peter, James, and John at the Transfiguration. He confirmed the angel's message. "Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me." In awe and joy they ran to tell the disciples, but "their words seemed to them as idle tales."

3. To Two Disciples

Mk. 16:12,13; Lu. 24:13–35

In the afternoon of this same momentous day Cleopas, a disciple, with another whose name is not known, walked along the road to Emmaus, a town about seven miles distant from Jerusalem. As they talked of the events of the past three days, Jesus drew near and journeyed with them. "But their eyes were holden that they should not know him."

"What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?" Jesus questioned. Cleopas replied: "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?" Jesus persisted: "What things?" They told him they had been talking of Jesus of Nazareth, a great prophet and teacher, a mighty worker of miracles. The priests and rabbis had condemned him and caused him to be crucified, though his followers had hoped he would be the Messiah who would redeem Israel. But now it was the third day following his death. Some of the women of their company had startled them with a report that they had visited the tomb at daybreak and found the body gone. The women declared also that they had had a vision of angels who said that Jesus was alive. These two disciples had themselves gone to the tomb and found it empty, but Jesus they had not seen.

Their unbelief brought quick reproof: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these

things, and to enter into his glory?" Then "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." Quoting passage after passage, he traced the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah and his kingdom, making plain that the whole spirit and content of the Scriptures foretold a suffering Messiah, whose kingdom was a spiritual kingdom to be manifested by precisely the way of loving self-sacrifice the Nazarene had taken. How illumined were the Messianic passages of Scripture as they walked with him, not alone from Jerusalem to Emmaus, but from Moses and the prophets to Christ and his glory.

Nearing the village, Cleopas and his companion urged: "Abide with us: for it is toward evening." As Jacob had maintained his hold on the angel until he received a blessing, so these two constrained the Stranger to remain with them; they yearned to hear more. While he broke bread with them, "their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight." With sudden elation they realized they had been communing with the Master: "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" They had not at first recognized him, yet the Word he had spoken had filled them with inspiration and comfort. "So, then, they had learned to the full the Resurrection-lesson—not only that He was risen indeed, but that it needed not His seen Bodily Presence, if only He opened up to the heart and mind all the Scriptures concerning Himself. . . . This is the great lesson concerning the Risen One, which the Church fully learned in the Day of Pentecost."⁸² They hastily returned to Jerusalem to testify to the apostles that they had seen Jesus.

4. To Peter

Lu. 24:34 (1 Cor. 15:5)

Cleopas and his companion found the apostles with other disciples gathered together, but before they could relate their thrilling news they were greeted with joyous testimony—"The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." But what passed between the Master and Peter at this appearance is not told us. Jesus' prayer for the strengthening of Peter's faith (Lu. 22:32) and Peter's love for Christ had brought him through the dark days of remorse and purging. This penitent apostle, sorrowing over the bitter memory of his denial, must indeed have been comforted by the appearance vouchsafed him on this Resurrection day.

5. To the Apostles (Thomas Absent)

Mk. 16:14; Lu. 24:36-48; Jn. 20:19-25

The same evening, as the apostles (except Thomas, Jn. 20:25) met together behind closed doors because of their fear of the authorities, Jesus suddenly stood

among them. His first words were "Peace be unto you," but they were terrified; they thought he was an apparition. Despite the fact that the apostles had thrice seen their Master raise the dead and had heard his own promise that he would himself rise again, they could neither wholly credit the testimony of those who had seen him nor readily admit the evidence of his physical presence even when he stood before them. He "upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart"; showed them his hands and his feet: "Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have"; and before them all he ate fish and honeycomb. This tangible proof of his bodily presence convinced the apostles of his resurrection. They yielded up their disbelief with their realization of his victory over death, and their souls were flooded with joy.

He had explained the Old Testament prophecies of the suffering Messiah to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus; now he expounded them again to the apostles, clarifying God's Messianic plan of redemption: "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things." (This manner of teaching—of drawing on Old Testament prophecies which related to Christ—was later adopted by the apostles and Paul in the early Church for the propagation of the gospel.)

Again Jesus blessed them: "Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." As his Father had authorized him, so he authorized them to carry forward his work. Then "he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost"—imparting to them symbolically the earnest of his own spirit, a token of that power which was to appear in its fullness at Pentecost.

There is no gospel record of any ministry to the common people or of any physical healings by Jesus on this day or during the ensuing forty days, but Matthew records that the mighty power of his resurrection was felt—that from the tombs opened by the earthquake at Jesus' crucifixion "many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many" (Mt. 27:52,53), a foreshadowing of the resurrection of all men.

6. To the Apostles (Thomas Present)

Jn. 20:26-29

Eight days elapsed before the apostles saw their Master again. As they were gathered together in Jerusalem, once more he appeared among them, although the doors were closed. Thomas had been absent at Jesus' previous appearance; he had not been convinced by

the report of the others. "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe," he had asserted.

Jesus acted at once to dispel Thomas' doubt by permitting him to touch his wounded hands and side, saying "Be not faithless, but believing." Convinced at last, Thomas acknowledged "My Lord and my God." Continuing to teach, not alone for Thomas but for future followers, Jesus responded: "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed"; he sought faith that rested on spiritual insight and conviction.

7. To Seven Apostles

Jn. 21:1-23

Jesus' next appearance took place in Galilee. The apostles at his bidding had returned to their home province to await his coming. One evening as seven of them—Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James, John, and two others—stood by the Sea of Galilee, uncertain what to do since he had not yet come, Peter decided to go fishing. They all agreed to go with him, "and that night they caught nothing." When morning dawned Jesus stood on the shore, but they did not know him. When he asked: "Children, have ye any meat?" they answered, "No." "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find," he commanded. Obediently they made the cast and found the waters teeming with fish, their net so full they could scarcely drag it along. John, seeing the miraculous abundance where before there seemed to be nothing, was the first to recognize the presence of the Christ. "It is the Lord," he exclaimed to Peter. And Peter instantly girded his fisherman's coat about him and swam ashore.

As the others dragged the full net the short distance to land they saw fish and bread laid ready on a fire of coals and heard Jesus say: "Bring of the fish which ye have now caught." Peter drew the net up on the beach, and "for all there were so many [a hundred fifty-three], yet was not the net broken." Jesus gave of his, they brought of theirs. "Come and dine," he invited, and none dared ask "Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord." The Master's invitation marked a joyful reunion and communion. The apostles came to this morning repast with a renewed awareness of divine power, and Christ fed them afresh.

By the living parable of the great draft of fishes nearly three years before Jesus had illustrated to his first disciples their coming ministry. In that experience they had toiled all night in vain, but at his word they trustfully let down their net and launched out into the deep to gather the firstfruits of their faith. Their net broke, however, and they could not retain all they had caught. In the ensuing years Jesus had carefully taught and trained them to be "fishers of men," but after

Resurrection, foundering without his personal leadership, they returned to their old occupation of fishing, and that night—as before—they had caught nothing. When at his word they again trustfully let down their net, they instantly gathered fruits of their faith and obedience, and this time they lost nothing of the fullness of their labors. This miracle made a marked impression on the apostles. It quickened them to the responsibilities and possibilities of their fast-approaching ministry; it was a new summons to their high calling. Henceforth they must launch out to use the power of the resurrected Christ.

The glad morning meal was finished but more special teaching was needed. So seldom was Jesus with them now in person that every word he uttered was doubly precious. He addressed to Peter a searching threefold question and afforded him, in the presence of the others, the opportunity to cancel the three denials by which this apostle had so dishonored the Christ and his own apostleship. He knew Peter's devotion, but it was imperative that Peter himself look to the very core of his own being to see whether he truly put Christ above all else. Jesus asked "Lovest thou me *more than these*? . . . Lovest thou *me*? . . . Lovest thou *me*?" (Two Greek words for *love* are used here: *agapao*, which appears in Jesus' first two questions; *phileo* in his third question and in Peter's three answers.)

Phileo . . . *have affection* for (denoting *personal* attachment, as a matter of sentiment or feeling; while [*agapao*] is wider, embracing especially the judgment and the *deliberate* assent of the will as a matter of principle, duty and propriety).⁸³

In the old dispensation God had set a "plumb-line" of justice and righteousness in the midst of His people; in the new dispensation Jesus set for Christians this plumbline of love and consecration. Each time the question was asked, Peter affirmed his love; each time Jesus gave him the charge to shepherd his flock: "Feed my lambs. . . . Feed my sheep. . . . Feed my sheep." The three denials were annulled, and a contrite apostle was wholly forgiven and restored to favor. A warning followed the thrice-repeated charge to Peter—his service would lead to martyrdom—but the Master sealed him to himself with an explicit "Follow me."

Seeing his friend John standing nearby, Peter asked: "Lord, and what shall this man do?" Jesus answered: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me." (John adds a note to this incident: "Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?") After Pentecost Peter faithfully discharged his Master's trust and suffered willingly for the Church.

8. To the Apostles and Others

Mt. 28:16–20;
Mk. 16:15–18 (I Cor. 15:6)

Jesus' fourth appearance to the apostles took place on a mountain top in Galilee. (Others may have been present, for Paul notes in his writings that Jesus was seen on one occasion by more than five hundred brethren.) Now the Christ gave them their final commission, referring to himself in the most absolute sense—from the standpoint of his place in the Godhead: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." This high commission opened with the grandeur and assurance of his authority—"all power . . . in heaven and in earth"—and emphasized the universal nature of their labors in the Church they were to found. All that he was and had he placed at their command. In his name they were to go forth to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the nature and grace of God, His Son, and the Holy Spirit.

To encourage them to undertake this mission and to carry it out, he pledged: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Always, by means of the Holy Spirit, he would be with them and those who would continue after them to the consummation of the age, till his gospel was established triumphant throughout the world.

To every believer Jesus Christ promised the same signs of Christian healing that had accompanied his own ministry: "These signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

9. To James

(I Cor. 15:7)

"After that, he was seen of James," the Lord's brother. Only Paul, himself at one time an obstinate disbeliever, mentions the appearance to James. James had not believed in Jesus' Messiahship during the ministry, but he became a convert after this resurrection appearance. He later occupied an active and authoritative place in the early Apostolic Church in Jerusalem, the only member of Jesus' family known to advance his cause publicly (Gal. 1:19).

10. To the Apostles

Mk. 16:19; Lu. 24:49–53
(Acts 1:4–11; I Cor. 15:7)

Forty days after resurrection Jesus again met with his apostles in Jerusalem. In this interval he had trans-

formed to joy and certainty every state of consciousness among them which needed assurance—the sorrowing and despairing, the bewildered, the agonizing, the terrified, the doubtful, the hesitant, and the resistant. It was fitting and significant that the final stage of his personal ministry should close in Jerusalem, and that the outpouring of the Spirit soon to occur should take place in Zion (Is. 2:3). During this fifth and last appearance to all his apostles he commanded them to remain in Jerusalem till they were baptized with the Holy Ghost: "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (compare Acts 1:4,5).

The question of the kingdom was still before the apostles' thought: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus replied: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." But his further words implied that the full coming of the kingdom awaited the spread of the gospel over the whole earth: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

When he had finished all these sayings, he walked with his apostles to the Mount of Olives—"he led them out as far as to Bethany." At Bethany they had witnessed his miracle of the raising of Lazarus. From Bethany he had gone forth to his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. From Bethany he had gone forth to the communion of the Last Supper, to Gethsemane, to Golgotha—and to the glory of Resurrection. In the searching light and perspective of these events Bethany takes on a spiritual dimension. "As far as to Bethany" indicates the spiritual altitude to which Christ led his apostles and to which they were able to walk with him.

Ascension

Mk. 16:19; Lu. 24:50, 51 (Acts 1:9–11)

Then came that transcendent step, when Jesus Christ passed beyond the sight of men. As he stood with his apostles on the summit of Olivet "he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And . . . while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." His words at the Last Supper had been "Now I go my way to him that sent me." His departure from the world of matter and of the flesh was fulfilled in the manifest act of the Ascension. The lifted hands betokened not only a blessing but also a ceaseless pouring out of love and grace. Parting from those to whom he was entrusting the dedicated purpose of his lifework, his blessing came not alone from his farewell benediction but also from his own perfect exemplification of selfless obedience.

In Acts Luke further records: "while they beheld,

he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight." The apostles had briefly glimpsed Christ's glory at Transfiguration; they had seen his changed form after Resurrection; but the full glory of Ascension they could not perceive through human sight. Even as they looked upward, two angels stood by them: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Angels had announced the Savior's birth; now angels attended his departure from the earth and confirmed his word of a glorious Second Coming (Mt. 24:30). With joy the eleven returned to Jerusalem to await the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

The angels' promise rests not on time, for when the Christian disciple walks, through prayer, faith, and

overcoming to the spiritual heights of Olivet, he will see Christ "come in like manner"—in power and glory—as the apostles saw him go. The Ascension fulfilled Jesus' own words: "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" (Jn. 6:62) and was the natural and final step in his overcoming of the world. Mark's Gospel records the great truth of the Master's Ascension in these words: "He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God"—in his rightful place of highest honor and power, to reign with his Father in heaven and on earth. While his visible being went beyond human sight, his invisible presence remains with us, and his words "Lo, I am with you alway" echo down the ages as the Christ-spirit continues to redeem and regenerate the lives of mankind.

Jesus' Miracles

OPENING OF PUBLIC MINISTRY

Turning of Water into Wine (Jn. 2:1–11)

GALILEAN MINISTRY (First Period)

Healing of Nobleman's Son (Jn. 4:46–54)

Draft of Fishes (Lu. 5:1–11)

Healing of Man with the Unclean Spirit (Mk. 1:21–28; Lu. 4:31–37)

Healing of Peter's Wife's Mother (Mt. 8:14, 15; Mk. 1:29–31; Lu. 4:38,39)

Healing of a Leper (Mt. 8:2–4; Mk. 1:40–45; Lu. 5:12–14)

Healing of a Paralytic (Mt. 9:2–8; Mk. 2:3–12; Lu. 5:17–26)

Healing of an Infirm Man (Jn. 5:1–15)

Healing of a Man with a Withered Hand (Mt. 12:9–13; Mk. 3:1–5; Lu. 6:6–10)

GALILEAN MINISTRY (Second Period)

Healing of the Centurion's Servant (Mt. 8:5–13; Lu. 7:1–10)

Raising of the Widow's Son (Lu. 7:11–16)

Healing of a Penitent Sinner (Lu. 7:36–50)

Healing of Man Both Blind and Dumb (Mt. 12:22; Lu. 11:14?)

Stilling the Tempest (Mt. 8:23–27; Mk. 4:35–41; Lu. 8:22–25)

Healing of the Gadarene Demoniac (Mt. 8:28–34; Mk. 5:1–20; Lu. 8:26–39)

Raising of Jairus' Daughter (Mt. 9:18,19,23–26; Mk. 5:22–24,35–43; Lu. 8:41,42,49–56)

Healing of a Woman Having an Issue of Blood (Mt. 9:20–22; Mk. 5:25–34; Lu. 8:43–48)

Healing of Two Blind Men (Mt. 9:27–31)

Healing of a Dumb Demoniac (Mt. 9:32–34)

Feeding of the Five Thousand (Mt. 14:13–21; Mk. 6:34–44; Lu. 9:11–17; Jn. 6:1–14)

Walking on the Sea (Mt. 14:24–33; Mk. 6:47–52; Jn. 6:16–21)

Ship Immediately at its Destination (Jn. 6:21)

GALILEAN MINISTRY (Third Period)

Healing of Syrophenician Woman's Daughter (Mt. 15:21–28; Mk. 7:24–30)

Healing of a Man Deaf and Stuttering (Mk. 7:32–37)

Feeding of the Four Thousand (Mt. 15:32–38; Mk. 8:1–9)

Healing of a Blind Man (Mk. 8:22–26)

Healing of an Epileptic Boy (Mt. 17:14–21; Mk. 9:14–29; Lu. 9:37–43)

Coin in the Fish's Mouth (Mt. 17:24–27)

Healing of an Adulterous Woman (Jn. 8:2–11)

Healing of a Man Born Blind (Jn. 9:1–41)

PERAEEAN MINISTRY

Healing of a Stooped Woman (Lu. 13:10–17)

Healing of a Man with Dropsy (Lu. 14:1–6)

Raising of Lazarus (Jn. 11:1–46)

Healing of Ten Lepers (Lu. 17:11–19)

Healing of a Blind Beggar (Mk. 10:46–52; Lu. 18:35–43; cf. Mt. 20:29–34)

Healing of Zacchaeus (Lu. 19:1–10)

PASSION WEEK

Barren Fig Tree Withered (Mt. 21:18–20; Mk. 11:12–14, 20,21)

Healing of Malchus' Ear (Lu. 22:49–51)

AFTER CRUCIFIXION

Jesus' Resurrection (Mt. 28:1–7; Mk. 16:1–7; Lu. 24:1–8; Jn. 20:1–10)

Vanishing from Sight (Lu. 24:31)

Sudden Appearances to the Apostles through Closed Doors (Jn. 20:19,26)

Draft of Fishes (Jn. 21:1–11)

Jesus' Ascension (Mk. 16:19; Lu. 24:50, 51; Acts 1:9–11)

Jesus' Parables

GALILEAN MINISTRY

New Cloth on Old Garment (Mt. 9:16; Mk. 2:21; Lu. 5:36)
New Wine in Old Bottles (Mt. 9:17; Mk. 2:22; Lu. 5:37-39)
House Built on Rock and on Sand (Mt. 7:24-27; Lu. 6:47-49)
Two Debtors (Lu. 7:41-50)
Sower and the Seed (Mt. 13:1-23; Mk. 4:1-20; Lu. 8:4-15)
The Natural Growth of the Seed (Mk. 4:26-29)
Tares and Wheat (Mt. 13:24-30,36-43)
Mustard Seed (Mt. 13:31,32; Mk. 4:30-32; Lu. 13:18,19)
Leaven (Mt. 13:33; Lu. 13:20,21)
Hidden Treasure (Mt. 13:44)
Pearl (Mt. 13:45,46)
Dragnet (Mt. 13:47-50)
Unmerciful Servant (Mt. 18:23-35)

PERAEAN MINISTRY

Good Samaritan (Lu. 10:25-37)
Importunate Friend (Lu. 11:5-8)
Rich Fool (Lu. 12:16-21)
Watchful Servants (Lu. 12:35-38)
Goodman of the House (Lu. 12:39,40; cf. Mt. 24:43,44)
Faithful and Faithless Stewards (Lu. 12:42-48; cf. Mt. 24:45-51)

Barren Fig Tree (Lu. 13:6-9)
Wedding Guest (Lu. 14:7-11)
Great Supper (Lu. 14:15-24)
Counting the Cost of Discipleship (Lu. 14:28-35)
Lost Sheep (Lu. 15:1-7)
Lost Piece of Silver (Lu. 15:8-10)
Prodigal Son (Lu. 15:11-32)
Unjust Steward (Lu. 16:1-13)
Rich Man and Lazarus (Lu. 16:19-31)
Unprofitable Servant (Lu. 17:7-10)
Importunate Widow, or Unjust Judge (Lu. 18:1-8)
Pharisee and Publican (Lu. 18:9-14)
Laborers in the Vineyard (Mt. 20:1-16)
Ten Pounds (Lu. 19:11-27)

PASSION WEEK

Two Sons (Mt. 21:28-32)
The Vineyard, or Wicked Husbandmen (Mt. 21:33-46; Mk. 12:1-12; Lu. 20:9-19)
Marriage of the King's Son (Mt. 22:1-14)
Fig Tree and Young Leaves (Mt. 24:32,33; Mk. 13:28,29; Lu. 21:29-31)
Household and Porter Watching (Mk. 13:34-36)
Ten Virgins (Mt. 25:1-13)
Talents (Mt. 25:14-30)

Jesus' Discourses

JUDAEAN MINISTRY

New Birth (Jn. 3:1-21)
Water of Life (Jn. 4:4-26)

GALILEAN MINISTRY (First Period)

The Son and the Father (Jn. 5:19-47)

GALILEAN MINISTRY (Second Period)

Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7; Lu. 6:20-49)
Woes upon Impenitent Cities, Christ's Invitation to the Weary (Mt. 11:20-30)
Christ the Bread of Life (Jn. 6:22-71)
Against Traditions of the Elders (Mt. 15:1-20; Mk. 7:1-23)

GALILEAN MINISTRY (Third Period)

Humility and Forgiveness (Mt. 18; Mk. 9:33-50; Lu. 9:46-50)
Christ the Light of the World (Jn. 8:12-30)

Spiritual Freedom (Jn. 8:31-59)
The Good Shepherd (Jn. 10:1-18)

PERAEAN MINISTRY

Prayer (Lu. 11:1-13)
Denunciation of Blasphemous Pharisees and Scribes (Lu. 11:15-54)
Trust in God's Care, Watchfulness for Christ's Coming (Lu. 12)
Coming of the Kingdom of God and of the Son of Man (Lu. 17:20-18:8)

PASSION WEEK

Denunciation of Pharisees and Scribes (Mt. 23; Mk. 12:38-40; Lu. 20:45-47)
Destruction of Jerusalem, Signs of Christ's Coming, Last Judgment (Mt. 24-25; Mk. 13; Lu. 21:5-38)
Christ the Way, the Truth, the Life (Jn. 14)
The Vine and the Branches (Jn. 15)
His Going and Returning (Jn. 16)

A Harmony of the Gospels

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
EARLY LIFE OF JESUS				
Prologue				1:1–18
Luke’s preface			1:1–4	
Genealogies of Jesus	1:1–17		3:23–48	
The announcement to Zacharias			1:5–25	
The annunciation to Mary			1:26–38	
Mary’s visit to Elisabeth			1:39–56	
Birth of John the Baptist			1:57–80	
The announcement to Joseph	1:18–25			
Birth of Jesus in Bethlehem			2:1–20	
Circumcision			2:21	
Presentation in the Temple			2:22–39	
Visit of the wise men	2:1–12			
Flight to Egypt and return	2:13–23			
From Childhood to Manhood at Nazareth			2:40	
In the Temple at age of twelve			2:41–51	
Eighteen silent years			2:52	
Opening Events of His Ministry				
Ministry of John the Baptist	3:1–12	1:1–8	3:1–18	
Baptism of Jesus	3:13–17	1:9–11	3:21–23	
Temptation of Jesus	4:1–11	1:12, 13	5:1–13	
John the Baptist’s testimony				1:19–28
Jesus the Lamb of God				1:29–34
The first disciples				1:35–51
The first miracle—water made wine				2:1–11
PUBLIC MINISTRY				
Judaeen Ministry				
In Jerusalem at the Passover:				
First cleansing of the Temple				2:13–22
First discourse: the new birth				3:1–21
Jesus’ disciples baptize in Judaea				3:22; 4:1,2
John the Baptist’s further testimony				3:23–36
John the Baptist imprisoned by Herod	4:12	1:14	3:19,20	
In Samaria:				
Second discourse: water of life				4:1–42
Galilean Ministry (First Period)				
Preaching and fame	4:12–17	1:14,15	4:14,15	4:43–45
Healing of the nobleman’s son				4:46–54
First rejection at Nazareth, his escape			4:16–30	
Jesus dwells in Capernaum	4:13–16		4:31	
Call of the Four, great draft of fishes	4:18–22	1:16–20	5:1–11	
Healing of man with unclean spirit		1:21–28	4:31–37	
Healing of Peter’s wife’s mother	8:14–17	1:29–34	4:38–41	
Preaching and healing in Galilee	4:23–25	1:35–39	4:42–44	
Healing of a leper	8:1–4	1:40–45	5:12–16	
Healing of a paralytic	9:1–8	2:1–12	5:17–26	
Accusation of blasphemy				
The call of Matthew (Levi)	9:9–13	2:13–17	5:27–32	
Question about observance of fasting	9:14–17	2:18–22	5:33–39	
Parable of new cloth on old garment	9:16	2:21	5:36	
Parable of new wine in old bottles	9:17	2:22	5:37–39	

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
In Jerusalem:				
Healing of infirm man at Pool of Bethesda . . . . .	.....	.....	.....	5:1–15
Accusation of blasphemy . . . . .	.....	.....	.....	5:16–18
Discourse: the Son and the Father . . . . .	.....	.....	.....	5:19–47
In Galilee:				
Disciples pluck grain on Sabbath	12:1–8	2:23–28	6:1–5	.....
Healing of a man with a withered hand	12:9–14	3:1–6	6:6–11	.....
Widening fame	12:15–21	3:7–12	.....	.....
Galilean Ministry (Second Period)				
The choosing of the twelve apostles . . . . .	.....	3:13–19	6:12–19	.....
Discourse: the Sermon on the Mount	5–7	.....	6:20–49	.....
Parable of house built on rock, on sand	7:24–27	.....	6:47–49	.....
Healing of centurion’s servant	8:5–13	.....	7:1–10	.....
Raising of the widow’s son at Nain . . . . .	.....	.....	7:11–17	.....
Answer to John the Baptist’s question	11:2–30	.....	7:18–35	.....
Discourse: Woes on impenitent cities, Christ’s invitation to the weary	11:20–30	.....	.....	.....
Healing of a penitent sinner . . . . .	.....	.....	7:36–50	.....
Parable of two debtors . . . . .	.....	.....	7:41–50	.....
Women minister to Jesus . . . . .	.....	.....	8:1–3	.....
Healing of a man blind and dumb	12:22–45	3:20–30	(11:14?)	.....
Accusation of the Pharisees; blasphemy against the Holy Ghost . . . . .	.....	.....	.....	.....
Jesus declares his true kindred	12:46–50	3:31–35	8:19–21	.....
Parables of the kingdom of heaven: sower, seed, tares, mustard seed, leaven, hidden treasure, pearl, dragnet	13:1–53	4:1–34	{ 8:4–18; 13:18–21	.....
Stilling the tempest	{ 8:18, 23–27	4:35–41	8:22–25	.....
Healing of the Gadarene demoniac	8:28–34	5:1–20	8:26–39	.....
Raising of Jairus’ daughter	9:18–26	5:21–43	8:40–56	.....
Healing of a woman with issue of blood	9:20–22	5:25–34	8:43–48	.....
Healing of two blind men	9:27–31	.....	.....	.....
Healing of dumb demoniac	9:32–34	.....	.....	.....
Second rejection at Nazareth	13:54–58	6:1–6	.....	.....
Commissioning of the Twelve	{ 9:35– 11:1	6:7–13	9:1–6	.....
The martyrdom of John the Baptist	14:1–12	6:14–29	9:7–9	.....
Feeding of the five thousand	14:13–23	6:30–46	9:10–17	6:1–14
People would make him a king . . . . .	.....	.....	.....	6:15
Walking on the sea; the ship immediately at the land	14:24–36	6:47–56	.....	6:16–21
Discourse: Christ the bread of life . . . . .	.....	.....	.....	6:22–71
Discourse: against traditions of elders	15:1–20	7:1–23	.....	.....
Galilean Ministry (Third Period)				
Journey to Tyre and Sidon: Healing of Syrophenician’s daughter	15:21–28	7:24–30	.....	.....
Return by way of Decapolis: Multitudes healed	15:29–31	.....	.....	.....
Healing of man deaf and stuttering . . . . .	.....	7:31–37	.....	.....
Feeding of the four thousand	15:32–38	8:1–9	.....	.....
Pharisees and Sadducees demand a sign	{ 15:39– 16:12	8:10–21	.....	.....
Healing of a blind man . . . . .	.....	8:22–26	.....	.....

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Journey to Caesarea Philippi:				
Peter's confession concerning Christ	16:13–20	8:27–30	9:18–21	.....
Jesus' first foretelling of his death and resurrection	16:21–28	8:31–9:1	9:22–27	.....
The Transfiguration	17:1–13	9:2–13	9:28–36	.....
Healing of an epileptic boy	17:14–21	9:14–29	9:37–43	.....
In Galilee:				
Jesus' second foretelling of his death and resurrection	17:22,23	9:30–32	9:43–45	.....
Coin in the fish's mouth	17:24–27	.....	.....	.....
Discourse: humility and forgiveness	18:1–35	9:33–50	9:46–50	.....
Parable of the unmerciful servant	18:23–35	.....	.....	.....
In Jerusalem at Feast of Tabernacles				
Teaching in the Temple	.....	.....	.....	7:1–13
Healing of woman taken in adultery	.....	.....	.....	7:14–8:2
Discourse: Christ the light of the world	.....	.....	.....	8:3–11
Discourse: spiritual freedom	.....	.....	.....	8:12–30
Healing of a man born blind	.....	.....	.....	8:31–59
Discourse: the good shepherd	.....	.....	.....	9:1–41
Discourse: the good shepherd	.....	.....	.....	10:1–21
In Jerusalem at Feast of Dedication				
Accusation of blasphemy	.....	.....	.....	10:22–42
Peraean Ministry				
Final departure from Galilee to Perea	19:1, 2	10:1	9:51–56	.....
Teaches immediacy of discipleship	8:19–22	.....	9:57–62	.....
Sending forth of the Seventy	.....	.....	10:1–24	.....
Parable of the good Samaritan	.....	.....	10:25–37	.....
Visit to Mary and Martha at Bethany				
Discourse: prayer	.....	.....	10:38–42	.....
Parable of importunate friend	.....	.....	11:1–13	.....
Discourse: denunciation of Pharisees	.....	.....	11:5–8	.....
Discourse: trust in God's care,	.....	.....	11:15–54	.....
watchfulness for Christ's coming	.....	.....	12:1–59	.....
Parable of the rich fool	.....	.....	12:16–21	.....
Parable of the watchful servants	.....	.....	12:35–38	.....
Parable of the goodman of the house	.....	.....	12:39,40	.....
Parable of faithful and faithless stewards	.....	.....	12:42–48	.....
Preaching on repentance	.....	.....	13:1–5	.....
Parable of the barren fig tree	.....	.....	13:6–9	.....
Healing of a stooped woman	.....	.....	13:10–17	.....
Answers question as to who shall be saved	.....	.....	13:22–30	.....
Jesus' reproof of Herod and Jerusalem	.....	.....	13:31–35	.....
At dinner in chief Pharisee's house:				
Healing of a man with dropsy	.....	.....	14:1–6	.....
Parable of the wedding guest	.....	.....	14:7–11	.....
Virtue of hospitality to the poor	.....	.....	14:12–14	.....
Parable of the great supper	.....	.....	14:15–24	.....
Three requirements for discipleship	.....	.....	14:25–27	.....
Parable of counting cost of discipleship	.....	.....	14:28–35	.....
Teaching on saving of sinners:				
Parable of the lost sheep	.....	.....	15:1–7	.....
Parable of the piece of silver	.....	.....	15:8–10	.....
Parable of the prodigal son	.....	.....	15:11–32	.....

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Teachings of warning:				
Parable of unjust steward			16:1-17	
Parable of rich man and Lazarus			16:19-31	
Teaching on forgiveness, faith, service			17:1-10	
Parable of the unprofitable servant			17:7-10	
Raising of Lazarus at Bethany				11:1-46
Sanhedrin's plot to kill Jesus				11:47-53
Jesus' withdrawal to Ephraim, thence through borders of Samaria and Galilee to Perea			17:11	11:54
Healing of ten lepers			17:12-19	
Discourse: coming of the kingdom of God and of the Son of man			17:20-18:8	
Parable of the importunate widow			18:1-8	
Parable of Pharisee and publican			18:9-14	
Concerning divorce and marriage	19:3-12	10:2-12		
Blessing little children	19:13-15	10:13-16	18:15-17	
Instructions to a rich young ruler	19:16-22	10:17-31	18:18-30	
Dangers of wealth, rewards of selfless service	19:23-30			
Parable of laborers in the vineyard	20:1-16			
Jesus' third foretelling of his death and resurrection	20:17-19	10:32-34	18:31-34	
The ambition of James and John	20:20-28	10:35-45		
Healing of a blind beggar (or of two men)	20:29-34	10:46-52	18:35-43	
Healing of Zacchaeus at Jericho			19:1-10	
Parable of the ten pounds			19:11-28	
Jesus' enemies lie in wait for him				11:55-57
Anointing of Jesus by Mary of Bethany	26:6-13	14:3-9		12:1-11

PASSION WEEK

Sunday

Triumphal entry into Jerusalem	21:1-11	11:1-11	19:29-44	12:12-19
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Monday

Barren fig tree cursed	21:18,19	11:12-14		
Second cleansing of the Temple	21:12-17	11:15-19	19:45-48	

Tuesday

Fig tree withered	21:20-22	11:20-26		
Questioning of Jesus' authority	21:23-27	11:27-33	20:1-8	
Parables of warning to the nation:				
Of two sons	21:28-32			
Of the vineyard or the wicked husbandmen	21:33-46	12:1-12	20:9-19	
Of marriage of king's son	22:1-14			
Three questions by Jewish parties	22:15-40	12:13-34	20:20-40	
Jesus' irrefutable question about Christ	22:41-46	12:35-37	20:41-44	
Discourse: denunciation of				
Pharisees and scribes—eight woes	23:1-39	12:38-40	20:45-47	
Widow's mites		12:41-44	21:1-4	
Greeks (Gentiles) seek Jesus				12:20-36
Rejection of Christ by the Jews				12:37-50
Jesus foretells destruction of the Temple	24:1, 2	13:1, 2	21:5, 6	

Olivet Discourse: destruction of Jerusalem, signs of Christ's Coming, Last Judgment	{ 24:3- 25:46	13:3-37	21:7-38	
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	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Parables of warning to his disciples:				
Of fig tree and young leaves	24:32, 33	13:28, 29	21:29–31
Of household and porter watching . . . . .	.....	13:34–36	.....	.....
Of the ten virgins	25:1–13	.....	.....	.....
Of the talents	25:14–30	.....	.....	.....
Description of Last Judgment	25:31–46	.....	.....	.....
Conspiracy of chief priests and Judas	{ 26:1–5, 14–16	{ 14:1,2, 10,11	22:1–6	.....
Wednesday				
(The record is silent) . . . . .	.....	.....	.....	.....
Thursday				
Last Supper: observance of Passover, washing of disciples' feet, naming of betrayal, instituting of Lord's Supper, foretelling of Peter's denial	26:17–35	14:12–31	22:7–38	13–17
Discourse: Christ the way, truth, life . . . . .	.....	.....	.....	14:1–31
Discourse: the vine and the branches . . . . .	.....	.....	.....	15:1–27
Discourse: his going and returning . . . . .	.....	.....	.....	16:1–33
Intercessory prayer . . . . .	.....	.....	.....	17:1–26
Friday				
In Gethsemane, his thrice-repeated prayer	{ 26:30, 36–46	{ 14:26, 32–42	22:39–46	18:1
Betrayal and arrest	26:47–56	14:43–52	22:47–53	18:2–12
Healing of Malchus' ear . . . . .	.....	.....	22:51	.....
Jewish ecclesiastical trial:				
Before Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas . . . . .	.....	.....	.....	18:13–23
Before Caiaphas and Sanhedrin	26:57–75	14:53–72	22:54–65	18:24–27
Peter's denial				
Before Sanhedrin	27:1,2	15:1	22:66–71	.....
Judas hangs himself (cf. Acts 1:16–20)	27:3–10	.....	.....	.....
Roman civil trial:				
Before Pilate	{ 27:2, 11–14	15:1–5	23:1–5	18:28–38
Before Herod (Antipas) . . . . .	.....	.....	23:6–12	.....
Before Pilate	27:15–31	15:6–20	23:13–25	{ 18:39– 19:16
Crucifixion at Golgotha (Calvary)				
Seven last sayings: Lu. 23:34, 43; Jn. 19:26, 27; Mt. 27:46 (Mk. 15:34); Jn. 19:28, 30; Lu. 23:46	27:32–56	15:21–41	23:26–49	19:17–37
Darkness, earthquake; veil of Temple rent	27:50–54	15:33, 38	23:44, 45	.....
Burial in the tomb	27:57–61	15:42–47	23:50–56	19:38–42
Saturday				
Sealing of tomb, guard set	27:62–66	.....	.....	.....

THE FORTY DAYS FROM RESURRECTION TO ASCENSION

Resurrection:

The empty tomb	28:1–8	16:1–8	24:1–8	20:1–10
The guards' report to Sanhedrin	28:11–15	.....	.....	.....

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Ten Appearances of Jesus during Forty Days:				
To Mary Magdalene .....	.....	16:9–11	.....	20:11–18
To the women	28:9, 10	.....	24:9–11	.....
To two disciples on road to Emmaus .....	.....	16:12, 13	24:13–35	.....
To Peter (I Cor. 15:5) .....	.....	.....	24:34	.....
To apostles, Thomas absent (I Cor. 15:5) .....	.....	16:14	24:36–48	20:19–25
To apostles, Thomas present .....	.....	.....	.....	20:26–31
To seven apostles at Sea of Galilee .....	.....	.....	.....	21:1–23
Great draft of fishes				
The morning repast				
Peter's restoration to grace				
To apostles (and five hundred disciples) (I Cor. 15:6)	28:16–20	16:15–18	.....	.....
To James (I Cor. 15:7)				
To all the apostles				
Promised the baptism of the Holy Ghost .....	.....	.....	24:49	.....
(Acts 1:4–8; I Cor. 15:7)				
Ascension .....	.....	16:19	24:50–53	.....
Two angels forecast Christ's Second Coming (Acts 1:9–11)				
Apostles go forth to preach, teach, heal .....	.....	16:20	.....	.....